



Case study: Social challenges in the Brandenburg region and the role of social entrepreneurship

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Summary

The East Brandenburg region, located in close proximity to the German capital Berlin, reveals a complex social landscape characterized by a variety of unique challenges. Despite its idyllic charm, the region faces significant social dynamics that are influenced by both local and supra-regional factors. As part of the ERUA sub-project "Promoting Entrepreneurship in the Social Sciences", 21 experts were interviewed about the social challenges that characterize the East Brandenburg region in general and Frankfurt (Oder) in particular, and what business opportunities and start-up ideas could arise from them. This case study was carried out by the Viadrina Start-up Center and is intended to form the basis for further support projects for students interested in starting a business and their ecosystem in the region.

Social challenges and the data situation to date:

A significant social challenge in East Brandenburg manifests itself in structural unemployment, particularly in areas with low economic dynamism. Studies by the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) show that despite positive nationwide trends on the labor market, structurally weak regions such as East Brandenburg are confronted with an above-average unemployment rate (IAB study Regional Labor Market Forecasts - Status 2024). This situation results in increased social inequality and requires targeted measures to create sustainable job opportunities and promote professional integration.

Another key issue is demographic change, which poses specific challenges for East Brandenburg. The region is facing a continuous decline in population figures and an increasingly ageing society. Research by the Berlin Institute for Population and Development

emphasizes the need to improve the quality of life for older residents and at the same time create incentives for young families in order to counteract migration trends (Berlin Institute study: Neu im Dorf - Wie der Zuzug das Leben auf dem Land verändert - Stand 2023). These demographic shifts require a strategic reorientation of regional policy and infrastructure planning in order to meet the needs of a changing population structure.

Furthermore, the promotion of social integration and inclusion is considered a key concern in East Brandenburg, particularly in the context of growing diversity and proximity to the metropolis of Berlin. Studies by the Federal Agency for Civic Education emphasize the importance of an inclusive social policy to combat prejudice, discrimination and social exclusion and to strengthen social cohesion in an increasingly diverse society (source: Teilhabe für alle?! Life realities between discrimination and participation - status 2017). Given the cultural diversity and proximity to the capital, a coordinated and inclusive approach is essential to create an inclusive community and realize the region's full potential.

In conclusion, the East Brandenburg region faces a number of complex social challenges that require multidisciplinary research and a holistic policy strategy. By identifying and addressing these challenges in a targeted manner, East Brandenburg can strengthen its position as a liveable place and promote an inclusive society that meets the needs of its residents.

At this point, social entrepreneurship can represent a promising opportunity to tackle the social challenges described in East Brandenburg and develop innovative solutions. By founding companies with a clear social objective, local communities can be strengthened, jobs created and social integration promoted. Studies such as that of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWK) on social innovation and social enterprises in Germany show that social enterprises not only achieve economic success, but can also have a positive social impact on their environment (source: National Strategy for Social Innovation of Public Welfare-oriented Enterprises - Status 2023). By promoting and supporting social

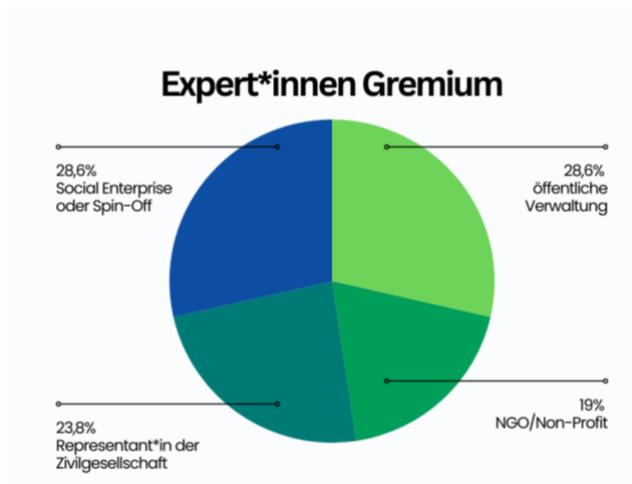
entrepreneurship, new perspectives can be opened up for tackling the social challenges in East Brandenburg that go beyond traditional approaches and enable innovative solutions.

The aim of this case study is to identify current and very concrete social and societal challenges from the environment of the Viadrina start-up center and to discuss possible resulting business ideas in order to establish a strong ecosystem for social start-ups at the Viadrina and beyond in the medium term.

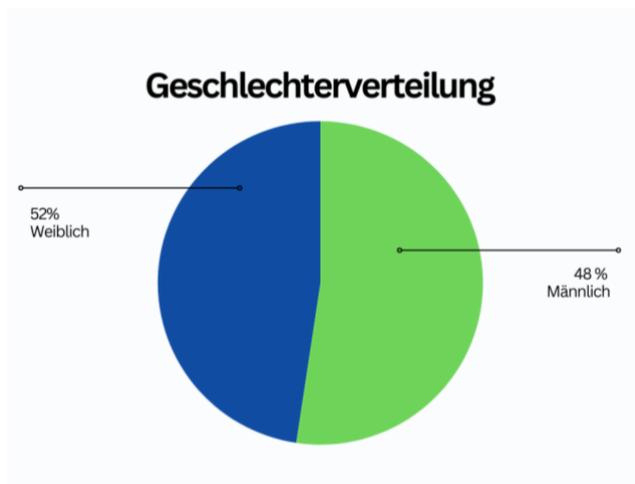
Methodology

Creation of a panel of experts

In order to identify relevant societal and social challenges, 21 experts from the immediate environment of Viadrina were selected who can identify relevant social challenges with potential for business opportunities and start-up ideas. The experts include employees of public administrations, NGO leaders, civil society representatives, including employees of chambers of commerce, social entrepreneurs, as well as people with access to and knowledge of relevant secondary social information.



The selection criteria for the experts were mainly based on their specialist knowledge. Additional criteria such as gender parity (48-52%) and the representativeness of the above-mentioned categories were also taken into account.



Conducting and evaluating the semi-structured interviews

The core of the interview is based on questions on the pre-defined topics of "Migration, exile and refugees", "Climate change", "Democracy and human rights, inclusion and gender equality", "Interculturality, multilingualism", "Arts & Edges". The qualitative interviews with

the members of the expert panel were conducted and evaluated by the ERUA sub-project team member from March to June 2024.

The interviews were conducted in person or online; and transcribed and analyzed using dictation.io and Chatgpt. The results of the information gathered from the interviews and the additional ideas gained through the AI analysis were analyzed to present a final list of challenges and business opportunities.

Social challenges

The case study has identified a number of societal challenges and potential business opportunities in the five key topic areas.



In the area of **migration, exile and refugees**, numerous challenges become apparent that delay or even prevent integration into the German labor market and active participation in social life. Migrants and refugees face considerable barriers, which are often due to language barriers, a lack of recognition of qualifications acquired abroad

and cultural differences. In addition, bureaucratic hurdles, such as lengthy procedures for obtaining work permits, make their integration more difficult. Prejudice and discrimination are also widespread and hinder the participation of migrants in society. The influx of workers from different countries also creates cultural, social and economic changes that influence the social structure and demographic change. There are various business opportunities here, such as improving the welcoming culture and integration through programs that promote integration into the labour market, including language courses and training opportunities. Technology-enabled job matching platforms using artificial intelligence can help connect refugees and migrants with suitable job opportunities. Furthermore, educational initiatives and partnerships can be developed with local communities, educational institutions and government organizations to provide holistic solutions to integration challenges. Another business area could be the creation of subsidized jobs for migrants, whereby the state could motivate companies to hire migrants by co-financing wages.

In the context of **climate change**, extreme weather conditions represent a key challenge that requires adaptation measures, particularly in regions affected by agriculture. The transition to more environmentally friendly lifestyles also poses a challenge, as it requires far-reaching social changes. Added to this are the sharp rises in energy prices, which are a particular burden on energy-intensive companies, as well as the increasing psychological strain on people caused by social challenges such as war and climate change. There are various business opportunities here, including educational initiatives and awareness-raising projects that increase understanding of climate change and help communities to adapt. In addition, companies that focus on sustainability, such as those that reduce packaging waste or promote environmentally friendly lifestyles, could be specifically supported. Another business opportunity is the production and marketing of renewable energy to combat climate change. Finally, projects promoting mental health and coping with stress in connection with social challenges could find support.

In the areas of **democracy, human rights, inclusion and gender equality**, the threat to democratic values, the increasing polarization of society and the threat of extremism are key challenges. Discrimination based on origin, age and gender continues to be widespread in many areas, particularly in healthcare and the labor market. In addition, rural areas often suffer from a lack of infrastructure and alternatives, which is particularly noticeable in healthcare and employment. Social isolation and loneliness are also serious problems that particularly affect older people and those living in rural areas. However, these challenges also present business opportunities, such as promoting diversity and equality through workplace initiatives that reduce discrimination and increase equal opportunities. In addition, digital education initiatives could support schools that want to expand their digital education offerings, for example by working with external partners. Social justice and anti-discrimination

projects could also be promoted to reduce social tensions and improve inclusion. Finally, tolerance and understanding could be created through networks and platforms that promote exchange between different social groups. The use of AI and projects such as self-driving cars could also be used in rural areas to replace missing personnel and strengthen the crumbling infrastructure.

In the area of **interculturality and multilingualism**, language barriers in particular are identified as a significant challenge, especially for migrants and international entrepreneurs who have difficulties in dealing with authorities and institutions. The integration of people from different cultural backgrounds and language groups also poses a challenge, particularly in educational and business institutions. Added to this are the often complex bureaucratic hurdles that international students and entrepreneurs have to overcome. However, this also results in business opportunities: Support services for migrants could be expanded through mentoring, networking and access to educational and advisory resources to facilitate integration. Furthermore, language and intercultural skills development programs could be developed to improve participation in educational institutions and businesses. Counseling services to help international students and entrepreneurs overcome bureaucratic hurdles could also be a marketable business opportunity.

In the **Arts and Edges** sector, the case study shows that the financing of cultural projects is a major challenge. The dependence on public funding and the need for better networking and cooperation in the cultural sector make the financial planning and implementation of cultural initiatives more difficult. In addition, there are significant barriers for certain population groups, particularly people with a migrant background, to participate in cultural events. Business opportunities can also be identified in this area: For example, alternative funding options could be developed to promote the financial independence of cultural projects. Programs that promote the participation of different population groups in cultural events could also have economic potential. Finally, the networking of cultural and economic sectors could be promoted in order to strengthen the financial independence of cultural projects and at the same time enrich cultural diversity.

Overall, the case study shows that the social challenges identified can give rise to numerous business opportunities that not only contribute to economic development but also promote positive social change.

Social start-ups an opportunity for the East Brandenburg region?

The results of the case study show that social start-ups represent a significant opportunity for the East Brandenburg region. These start-ups offer innovative

solutions to the pressing social, environmental and economic challenges facing the region. They can promote integration, support sustainable development and strengthen social cohesion. The areas identified in the study illustrate how social start-ups can directly address the specific needs and challenges of the region.

For example, the study shows that there are considerable integration problems in the area of **migration, exile and refugees**, particularly due to language barriers, bureaucratic hurdles and prejudices. Social start-ups could take action here by developing innovative job-matching platforms based on artificial intelligence to connect refugees and migrants with suitable job opportunities. Such platforms could circumvent the existing bureaucratic hurdles and facilitate integration into the labor market. In addition, new technologies could be used to better connect companies and local authorities in order to make labor market integration more efficient. Another example is the development of programs for faster recognition of foreign qualifications, as proposed in the case study, or the provision of language and training courses that are directly tailored to the needs of the local labour market. Such initiatives would not only improve opportunities for migrants, but also strengthen the local economy by increasing the number of qualified workers.

In the area of **environmental change**, it is clear that the East Brandenburg region is particularly affected by the effects of climate change, such as rising energy prices and the need for adaptation measures. The case study highlights the opportunity to promote social start-ups that specialize in the production and distribution of renewable energy. Companies could develop innovative business models to improve access to sustainable energy resources while creating jobs in this growing sector. For example, social enterprises could be established to support local communities in the transition to renewable energy or offer educational programs to raise awareness of climate protection and sustainable lifestyles. Social initiatives could also help to promote environmentally friendly lifestyles by developing projects to reduce packaging waste or support local environmental projects. This would not only reduce the region's ecological footprint, but also promote sustainable economic development.

Social start-ups can also play an important role in the areas of **democracy, human rights, inclusion and gender equality**. The study shows that there is discrimination based on origin, age and gender in the region and that the risk of social polarization is increasing. Social start-ups could actively contribute to solving these problems through projects that promote diversity in the workplace, create safe spaces for intercultural exchange and support initiatives to combat discrimination. For example, social enterprises could be created that specifically create job opportunities for disadvantaged groups or develop platforms that promote intercultural dialog and understanding. They could also support educational initiatives that promote the

acceptance and understanding of democratic values, for example through workshops and training courses on human rights and social justice.

The results of the study also show that there are considerable language and integration barriers in the region in the area of **interculturality and multilingualism**. Social start-ups could take a targeted approach here to develop programs for language support and intercultural skills development. For example, they could offer advisory services for migrants and international skilled workers to help them overcome bureaucratic hurdles and better integrate their skills into the labor market. Such initiatives would not only improve social integration, but also strengthen the region's economic potential by using diversity as a competitive advantage.

In the field of **art and culture**, the case study offers interesting perspectives for social start-ups. The financing of cultural projects is a challenge and many initiatives are heavily dependent on public funding. Social start-ups could develop alternative financing models that promote the financial independence of cultural projects and at the same time increase the participation of different population groups in cultural activities. One example would be the development of crowdfunding platforms for cultural projects or the promotion of art initiatives that specifically include disadvantaged groups and thus contribute to cultural diversity and social cohesion.

Conclusion: Are social start-ups an opportunity for the East Brandenburg region?

Yes, social start-ups are a significant opportunity for the East Brandenburg region. They offer innovative approaches to solving specific regional challenges and contribute to strengthening the local economy and social cohesion. By promoting integration, sustainability, cultural diversity and social justice, social enterprises can improve the quality of life in the region and make it more attractive to new residents and investors.

What role can the European University Viadrina play?

The European University Viadrina can play a central role in this process. With its international students from the fields of economics, cultural studies and law, the university has enormous potential to promote social start-ups. The university could serve as an incubator for social innovation by offering educational and training programs that encourage students to develop and implement social business ideas. For example, students could work in interdisciplinary teams on real projects that address the challenges identified in the case study and develop innovative solutions. The ERUA sub-project "Promoting Entrepreneurship in the Social Sciences" pursues this approach by sensitizing and inspiring students in the future through versatile

learning and teaching formats on the topic of social entrepreneurship / social innovation.

In addition, Viadrina could use its networks to promote partnerships between students, local businesses, NGOs and public institutions. Such collaborations could provide students with practical experience and valuable contacts while contributing to regional development. Through the involvement of its international students and the existing knowledge in the fields of business, culture and law, Viadrina could become a driving force for social innovation in East Brandenburg.

The university can also help to promote a culture of social entrepreneurship by organizing events and workshops that raise awareness of social start-ups and provide the necessary skills and knowledge. This could further drive the creation and success of social enterprises in the region and support sustainable, positive development for East Brandenburg. The start-up center and its extensive network in business, politics, administration and civil society in Frankfurt Oder and East Brandenburg play a central role here.

About: Social Entrepreneurship @ Viadrina with the new university network project ERUA

The ERUA project (European Reform University Alliance) is an alliance of European reform universities that are committed to innovative approaches in higher education, intercultural exchange and the promotion of mobility and research. It comprises universities from Denmark, Germany, France, Bulgaria and Greece, which are working together to shape a future-oriented European educational landscape. The sub-project "**Social Entrepreneurship @ ERUA/Promoting Entrepreneurship in the Social Sciences**" aims to integrate social innovation and entrepreneurial approaches into the curriculum and activities of the Alliance universities. It aims to sensitize and empower students and faculty for social entrepreneurship by providing knowledge, skills and networks necessary to address social challenges in a creative and sustainable way. Thus, it aims to foster entrepreneurship in the social sciences in the ERUA university community, potentially collaborating with STEM disciplines to address societal challenges in the higher education ecosystem. Specific objectives include increasing the employability of students through the creation and consolidation of start-up and spin-off companies, connecting ERUA universities with their social environment and its problems,

transferring and applying academic knowledge to solve European social challenges, improving entrepreneurial infrastructure/resources in higher education institutions to address societal challenges, and developing an entrepreneurial spirit among internal and external stakeholders of ERUA universities.

About the start-up center

The Start-up Center is the cross-faculty institution at the European University Viadrina and the interface for all areas relating to business start-ups. Students, alumni and academic staff from all faculties and degree programs can receive individual advice, support and assistance, from finding the right idea to practical preparation and the start-up phase.

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List of social challenges and business opportunities

1. migration, exile and refugees

Expert code	Social challenge	Business opportunity
PA #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigration-related obstacles, especially in the labor market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the welcoming culture and access to resources for migrants and refugees, including language courses, integration into the labor market and reducing bureaucratic hurdles.
PA#2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The challenge is to integrate migrants into society more quickly by giving them faster access to the labor market and language courses. Difficulties in the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad can hinder the integration of migrants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faster access to the labor market and language courses through entrepreneurial initiatives that provide opportunities for employment and language courses.
PA#7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labor migration and demographic change: The influx of workers from different countries is shaping the region and leading to cultural, social and economic changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce educational initiatives to counter demographic changes and prepare the population for the demands of the labor market. Building partnerships with local communities, educational institutions and government organizations to develop and implement holistic solutions to social challenges. Investing in the local economy to create jobs and promote economic opportunities for all sections of the population.
NGO#13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of refugees and migrants: People from various countries such as Cameroon, Syria, Eritrea, Somalia, Kenya, Afghanistan and others who come to Frankfurt and need to be integrated. Prejudice and discrimination: Overcoming prejudice and discrimination against refugees and migrants, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating inclusive spaces: Social enterprises create places where people from different backgrounds can come together and work on projects together.

Expert code	Social challenge	Business opportunity
SE#14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bureaucratic hurdles: Lengthy procedures for work permits and other administrative processes slow down integration. Recognition of qualifications: Many refugees bring qualifications and work experience with them that are often not recognized, which makes good labour market integration more difficult. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job matching platforms: Using AI and other technologies to match refugees with suitable job offers. Such platforms can take into account language preferences, qualifications and the needs of the local labor market. Networking and partnerships: Building networks between local businesses, non-governmental organizations and government agencies to facilitate integration and create long-term employment opportunities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discrepancies in the education system: Differences in education levels between refugees from different regions, as you mentioned between Afghans and Ukrainians, require differentiated approaches to integration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative educational programs: Development of programs for fast and effective recognition of qualifications acquired abroad or bridging programs that retrain refugees for the local labor market.
CS#16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in the social structure due to migration: visible cultural differences and integration problems among migrants from Syria and Afghanistan. Social and cultural differences mean that migrants are not yet fully integrated into society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for the professional integration of migrants and the provision of jobs.
SE#17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of migrants into the labor market: There are considerable challenges when integrating migrants into the labor market. The main obstacles include insufficient knowledge of German and cultural differences, such as a lack of punctuality and adaptation to the work culture. Unemployment and visible unemployment: Many people, especially migrants, who are visible in the city during working hours are not employed. This indicates a structural problem with integration into the labor market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alliance between policy and employers: The government should work more closely with employers to promote the integration of migrants. Companies could play a crucial role by offering jobs that improve language skills and create social connections. Subsidized jobs for migrants: One possible approach is for the state to co-finance wages for migrants to offset the additional costs and challenges of integration (such as language barriers and cultural adjustments). This could increase the willingness of companies to hire migrants.

2. ecological transition

Expert code	Social challenge	Business opportunity
PA#1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change and the need for adaptation measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate and empower communities to raise awareness of climate change and support adaptation measures.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability and the transition to a greener lifestyle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting projects and companies that focus on sustainability, e.g. initiatives to reduce packaging waste or promote an environmentally friendly lifestyle.
NGO#9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects of climate change, especially in arid regions such as East Brandenburg (Bad Belzig). 	-
CS#10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental stress due to social challenges such as war and climate change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for projects to promote mental health and stress management, particularly in connection with social challenges.
CS#16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy prices: Sharp rises in energy prices have a significant impact on production companies that consume a lot of energy. 	-
NGO#18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change and alternative energies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies that produce alternative energies to combat climate change.
CS#19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of corporate social responsibility and its impact on the local community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies that actively participate in community projects and are committed to improving the quality of life, including environmental initiatives or educational programs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

3. democracy and human rights, integration and equality

Expert code	Social challenge	Business opportunity
PA#1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding democracy and the threat to democratic values Social polarization and the question of how to bring people together again 	-
PA#2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is discrimination based on origin, age and gender, especially in the healthcare sector and on the labor market. There is concern that rural areas are being neglected and that there is a lack of alternatives, particularly in the areas of healthcare and infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support initiatives aimed at raising awareness of and eliminating discrimination and creating employment opportunities in companies that promote diversity and equal opportunities. Developing entrepreneurial solutions to improve healthcare and infrastructure in rural areas and promoting initiatives to create alternative employment opportunities locally.
PA#3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many have little money and few prospects; the cities' investments in infrastructure are limited. Tensions between the social classes: Growing gap between rich and poor; tensions between long-established residents and newcomers. Real estate market: Unaffordable construction projects; influx of wealthy Berliners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability and innovation: Supports long-term, sustainable and innovative projects. Strengthening the local economy: creating jobs and economic impetus; diversifying the economic base.
SE#4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discrimination and racism in society and in educational institutions. Issues relating to coexistence and questions of social justice that are present on a daily basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for projects and initiatives that promote social justice and anti-discrimination Creating safe spaces for open discussions and the exchange of ideas.

Expert code	Social challenge	Business opportunity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student and young life in FFO and the financially precarious situation of young student entrepreneurs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of networking opportunities and groups for young female entrepreneurs with similar interests and challenges. Taking responsibility as an entrepreneur and contributing to society through innovative approaches such as everyday/normal products with a social impact.
PA#5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of attractiveness of the region for young people and families. questions of urban planning and cultural offerings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies could partner with local educational institutions to provide tailored education and training programs aimed at improving the skills and attractiveness of the region's workforce. Companies could lobby or advocate for policies to make the region more attractive to employees and improve the stability and predictability of working conditions.
PA#6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Female entrepreneurship: The participation of women in entrepreneurial activities is declining, especially at the University of Viadrina. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide targeted programs and resources for women in the start-up phase to encourage their participation and success in entrepreneurial ventures. (Not explicitly mentioned, but possible solutions derived from the challenges)
SE#8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical care: It should be noted that medical care in the region is sparse. Mobility: Mobility is highlighted as a problem in rural areas, especially for families with children who are dependent on cars due to the uncertainty and lack of flexibility of public transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships between social enterprises, non-profit organizations and government agencies to pool resources and develop joint solutions. Promotion of creative and cooperative projects that are tailored to local needs and can improve the quality of life in the region.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education: It is mentioned that there is a lack of educational opportunities in certain areas, especially in rural areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentoring and support for people from disadvantaged groups to broaden their horizons and identify career opportunities.

Expert code	Social challenge	Business opportunity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The understanding of democracy: There are tensions and conflicts between different political and ideological groups that lead to a lack of understanding and acceptance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networking events and platforms to promote exchange between different social groups and to foster tolerance and understanding.
NGO#9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political upheaval and instability. Polarization at a political level that divides the community. 	-
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of capacity and resources for additional educational offerings in schools, particularly in the area of digital education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital education: Provide resources and support for schools to address the lack of digital education opportunities, possibly through collaboration with external partners or the introduction of teacher training programs. -> Mobile offers that are supra-regional (e.g. initiatives such as Junge Tüftler, Tablet Schönau).
CS#10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insecurity and unemployment, especially in the precarious living conditions that prevail in Frankfurt and Brandenburg. Rising prices and financial burdens that exceed income levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiatives to educate and support people in precarious living conditions in order to improve their prospects and increase their participation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political uncertainty, particularly with regard to upcoming elections and the rise of extreme political groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting political engagement and democratic values to counter insecurity and extremism.
CS#11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loneliness and social isolation, especially in rural areas. Lack of infrastructure and shopping facilities in rural regions. Difficulties with student transportation and limited mobility, especially for young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of this could be projects that improve the infrastructure and understanding between generations in rural regions, offer mobility solutions for young people or provide innovative approaches to support companies with succession planning.

Expert code	Social challenge	Business opportunity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ageing population and migration from rural areas, leading to a decline in the population and the economy. Difficulties in retaining or attracting young people to the region, especially in comparison to more attractive cities. 	
SE#12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of trust in democracy and erosion of trust in the government. 	-
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loneliness, especially among older people, and the lack of points of contact for young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects such as "Miteinander füreinander" in Beeskow, which creates encounters through art and culture, thereby combating loneliness and promoting community.
NGO#13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precarious living and housing situations: Support for people living in difficult social and financial circumstances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowerment and support: Helping people to integrate and overcome social and economic barriers, e.g. through training opportunities and employment support.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial and bureaucratic challenges: Difficulties in applying for and managing the grants required to carry out social projects. Sustainability of the projects: Ensuring that social projects can be run sustainably and over the long term, especially in the face of uncertain finances and funding. Space and infrastructure: The need for suitable spaces and infrastructure for the implementation of social projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexibility and adaptability: Social enterprises can react more flexibly and creatively to social challenges than traditional state structures. Sustainable financing: search for new sources of funding and innovative approaches to secure financial support for projects
PA#15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of democracy: There are concerns about the appreciation and understanding of democratic values in society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concrete proposals for initiatives and projects are not mentioned, but the importance of networks and digital platforms to tackle social challenges and develop solutions is emphasized.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthcare: The accessibility and quality of healthcare services appears to be a problem. Mobility: This could pose challenges in terms of transport infrastructure and accessibility, especially in rural areas. 	-

Expert code	Social challenge	Business opportunity
CS#16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education: Problems in early childhood education and in schools, particularly with the integration of children with a migration background. High workload for teachers and unfilled positions in schools, which makes integration and education more difficult. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social enterprises could become active in the education sector in order to improve integration programs and educational opportunities.
NGO#18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical care in rural areas. Community life and work in rural regions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service providers in the healthcare sector that offer innovative solutions for medical care in rural areas. Companies that specialize in communal living and are committed to improving community life in rural areas.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of the various target groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social enterprises that are committed to the integration of various target groups, whether through employment opportunities or social projects.
CS#19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The attractiveness of the region for young professionals and people who want to live there. The question of career prospects and employment opportunities, especially for students and young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies that are committed to creating jobs and employment opportunities for young people in the region, e.g. through training programs or support for business start-ups.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need for infrastructure improvements and services, especially in rural areas. The lack of medical care and other important services in remote areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies that focus on using technology to improve access to goods and services in rural areas, e.g. AI-driven supermarkets or mobile medical services. Companies that are committed to strengthening the social infrastructure, e.g. by providing affordable housing or supporting non-profit organizations that help disadvantaged population groups.
PA#20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poverty due to care: Caring for elderly people or people with health problems leads to financial burdens and an increased risk of poverty. 	-

Expert code	Social challenge	Business opportunity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loneliness in old age: Loneliness in old age is perceived as an increasing problem. Income problems in old age: Low incomes and rising living costs in old age lead to financial problems. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational opportunities for children: Ensuring adequate educational opportunities for children is a challenge, especially in the fight against child poverty. Children and families: Social issues affecting children and families are of great importance and must be addressed by various means. 	-
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing and cost of living: The high proportion of single households and rising housing costs pose particular challenges. Small rental properties and the burden of high rents affect purchasing power and lifestyle options. 	-
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff shortages and working conditions in the social sector: The staff structure is often thin and there is a large pay gap. Insecure forms of employment and fixed-term contracts increase the pressure on employees. 	-
SC#21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy supply: Ensuring a continuous supply of electricity, gas and district heating and the affordability problem for some households. Public transportation: The importance of public transportation and the problems that arise when it is no longer reliably available. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographic change and skills shortage: Challenges due to demographic change and the associated skills shortage. Education and integration: The importance of education as a resource and the need to promote curiosity and openness in society. Attractiveness of the city: Difficulties in attracting qualified workers to a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create attractive working conditions: Companies can attract and retain skilled workers by offering flexible working hours, comprehensive benefits and excellent training opportunities. Promoting education and training: Social enterprises can launch educational initiatives to improve the skills of the workforce and thus

Expert code	Social challenge	Business opportunity
	city that is perceived as less attractive and with a lower quality of life.	<p>counteract the shortage of skilled workers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration and social inclusion: Social enterprises can develop and implement programs to integrate migrants and promote social cohesion in society. • Innovation and digitalization: By embracing digitalization and streamlining processes, social enterprises can increase their productivity and find new solutions to existing problems.

4. interculturality, multilingualism

Expert code	Social challenge	Business opportunity
PA#1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language barriers and difficulties in dealing with authorities and institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating support services for migrants and international entrepreneurs, including mentoring, networking and access to educational and advisory resources.
PS#3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges of multilingualism; integration of Polish-speaking children. 	-
PA#6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucratic and language barriers for international students and prospective entrepreneurs. • Bureaucracy and access to funding: Bureaucracy and complex application procedures are a hurdle for many organizations, especially those that do not have sufficient resources or language skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer counseling services to overcome bureaucratic obstacles for international students and prospective entrepreneurs, provide multilingual support. (Not explicitly mentioned, but possible solutions derived from the challenges)

Expert code	Social challenge	Business opportunity
PA#7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interculturality and multilingualism: Due to labor migration and immigration, the composition of the population has changed, which requires increased intercultural cooperation and language support in educational institutions and companies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of programs to promote language skills and intercultural awareness in order to facilitate the integration of migrants and migrant workers.
NGO#13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building a multicultural community: creating an inclusive environment where people from different cultures can come together, accept and support each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting initiative and responsibility: Encouraging people to contribute their ideas and take responsibility in order to get involved and develop in the community.
SE#14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural and language barriers: These hinder full participation in social and professional life 	-

5 Arts and Edges

Expert code	Social challenge	Business opportunity
PS#3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financing of projects: Dependence on public funding, especially in the culture and arts sector; need for better networking and collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces dependence on public funds and enables alternative financing. Integration of culture and the economy: Improves the connection between cultural sectors and the economy; promotes the financial independence of cultural projects.
PA#6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in cultural events: For certain groups, especially people with a migration background, there are considerable reservations and barriers to participation in cultural events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of programs that facilitate access to cultural events and promote the participation of different population groups. (Not explicitly mentioned, but possible solutions derived from the challenges)

Expert code	Further social challenges	Subject area(s) in which it can be included
PA#5	Skills shortage in the companies.	3
PA#15	Communication skills and institutional competence: There are difficulties related to communication and management within the institutions that lead to a lack of certain skills or their inefficient use.	3
CS#16	Shortage of labor: Increasing shortage of labor, not just skilled workers. Companies are struggling to find successors and new employees, especially among the older generation (55+).	3
	Networks and personal contacts: Importance of networks and personal contacts in brokering job and company successions. Difficulty in supporting these processes electronically or via platforms.	3
SE#17	Early retirement age (retirement at 63): Many people retire at 63, which can be seen as anti-social and a burden on the younger generation, who have to bear the financial consequences.	3
CS#11	Challenges in company succession, especially in small and traditional companies.	3

Expert code	Other opportunities identified for social enterprises	Subject area(s) in which it can be included
PA#5	Companies could support programs to integrate job seekers who are struggling with obstacles such as language barriers or lack of work permits by offering language courses or advocating for long-term residence permits.	1/4

SE#12	Initiatives such as the concept to emphasize regionality and quality of a particular company (not named), which aims to strengthen the local economy and pay fair wages to employees.	3
	Promoting start-ups and new business ideas: The work-life balance of the younger generation can create space for creative and innovative business ideas. Social entrepreneurship can take advantage of this dynamic to develop sustainable business models that tackle social problems.	3
PA#20	Economic interests and social responsibility: Social enterprises must also think and act economically in order to maintain their jobs and finance their activities. An open approach to economic interests in combination with social commitment is important in order to appear authentic and transparent.	3
	The importance of corporate culture and leadership: A good management culture, intensive cooperation with employees and serious involvement in projects are crucial. These organizations ensure that external expectations and internal conditions are well aligned, which leads to a high level of employee identification with their employer.	3
CS#11	FFO and LOS need networks, more networking opportunities that are lively, exciting and sustainable for companies.	3
