

Who we are:

Start Somewhere is a social business with the goal to improve the living conditions of people in informal settlements (slums) in developing countries.

How it all started:

2011, the architect Oliver von Malm visited Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya, one of the largest slums in Africa, on a trip around the world. There he met dedicated teachers who taught children in the slum without any salary and also worked at night to provide the students with food. Inspired by these people, Oliver wanted to start somewhere and decided to support the schools: The „Start Somewhere“ initiative was born.



What we do:

Thanks to support in the form of donations and cooperation with local NGOs, we were able to significantly improve the conditions in the schools since 2011:

- providing over 600 students with daily breakfast and lunch
- acquisition of school materials
- expansion of infrastructure



Education is the most effective and sustainable way to improve the quality of life in developing countries.

Our school construction project:

In 2016 the teachers approached the architect Oliver von Malm to build a new school building. As part of his master's thesis, Oliver not only designed a school, but also developed the idea for a mortarless construction system made of hollow concrete blocks, produced in local workshops.



Our vision:

In the future, buildings in slums will no longer be constructed from wood, clay and corrugated iron, but will be built by the slum dwellers from locally produced hollow concrete blocks in a functional and appropriate architecture.



Through the sustainable construction system developed by Oliver von Malm, consisting of interlocking and degradable hollow blocks, not only the living conditions of the slum dwellers are significantly improved, but also the overall economic situation. Most of the added value is created in the slum: local jobs are being created and the economy is strengthened from the inside.

How we want to achieve that:



Together with PERI, one of the world's largest suppliers of formwork and scaffolding systems and a team of civil engineers, structural engineers and materials scientists, we have developed the new construction system. In September 2019, we were able to build the first hollow concrete block workshop in Kibera and employ four local workers. Now the wall blocks for the new school are being produced there, which is will be the first building of this type to be

constructed in Kibera in mid-2020. The Deutsche Investitions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft mbH (DEG), a subsidiary of KfW Bank, is supporting the project in partnership with PERI. The implementation is being co-financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) as part of a develoPPP project of DEG.



Donate now:

Start Somewhere currently finances the support of the schools through donations. Every donation helps to keep on financing food and infrastructure, to build a new school and in the long run to transfer the vision of a sustainable house building system to poor regions all over the world. Through this multiplying effect, many people in developing countries could benefit from the concept.

Contact and further information:

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