



MAPPING COLLABORATION AND RESOURCE-SHARING BETWEEN ALTERNATIVE FOOD INITIATIVES IN NEUKÖLLN

From foraging and urban gardening projects to collective cooking and dining initiatives to anti-capitalist ecological supermarket collectives, Berlin — particularly Neukölln — is home to a number of promising alternative food initiatives (AFIs). These initiatives are working towards a socio-ecological transformation of the dominant food system from different standpoints. However, little is known about how the various stakeholders involved in transforming the food system collaborate and share resources, skills and knowledge within a specific local context. It was this research gap that inspired the X-Student Research Group “Mapping Food Movements in Berlin” to map alternative food initiatives in Neukölln.

To conduct this mapping, the project applied an actor-network analysis, selecting six central initiatives (Spore, Laib und Seele, Silent Rixdorf, Ernährungsrat, Torhauskollektiv and Robinhood) to represent the nodes of the AFI network. The group then collected empirical data using various qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis, resulting in a multifaceted archive. Subsequently, the group coded the different materials thematically in MAXQDA. The findings show that, while some initiatives collaborate, many are more closely linked and share resources at Berlin and federal levels rather than in Neukölln. This leaves potential for collaboration at neighborhood level. Secondly, the majority of the six case studies address more than one stage of the food system, with food distribution and food waste being the most frequently referred to. Thirdly, the resources that are most frequently shared within the network are skills, materials, and contacts. Fewer resources regarding infrastructure and labor were shared by initiatives, which indicates potential for further collaboration but also highlights systemic challenges, such as the common struggle of alternative food initiatives to secure stable financial structures and rely on volunteers.

Finally, the key findings were visualized in a map designed collectively with a professional designer. This map only represents a snapshot in time. Rather than providing a complete overview, it aims to serve as a source for future research in other Berlin neighborhoods and beyond, as well as providing the initiatives with a visual tool to understand each other's positions and potential alliances within the AFI network involved in local food system transformation.

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GRAPHIC DESIGNER: Estela Ribeiro

① Spore

Cultural space with ‘learning garden’

Spore centers ecological regeneration through soil care and community-based food practices. It engages with food production by cultivating perennial, annual, and medicinal plants, and supports preparation via collective cooking, fermentation, and preservation. The initiative treats soil not just as a medium, but as a living agent—placing it at the heart of a multi-perspective approach to healing and learning. “And then to put the soil at the center of the picture and to see as we proceed with the changing and ‘repairing’ soil. I’m not such a proponent of the kind of human centered narratives. We do alter things. So it also has its own agency. If we wouldn’t touch it, it would have been recovering here by itself. (...) We just speed up the process, you know? So in this process of speeding up the soil recovery – we also see what can we do here and what kind of products can we then take as the byproduct of the process of soil recovery.”



FOUNDED: 2020
**Hermannstraße 86, 12051
Berlin-Neukölln**

②

Silent Rixdorf

Garden Project

Silent Rixdorf is a private garden open to the public and dedicated to promoting art, culture, and tolerance. Over time, landscaping became another focus. A key recurring event is the distribution of surplus food collected mainly from Laib und Seele and Berliner Tafel. Everyone is welcome to come and take a share, with the highest priority being not to waste any food. For this reason, participation is high, with a broad mix of cultural and generational diversity. Contrary to common belief, most of the rescued food is of high quality: “Many people always think that rescued food is something that is no longer appealing or no longer good. That is not the case at all [...]”



FOUNDED: 2021
**Wanzlikpfad 3, 12043
Berlin**

③

Laib und Seele Britz

**One of three distribution points of Berliner
Tafel in Neukölln**

Laib und Seele addresses distribution and food waste by collecting surplus groceries from local stores and redistributing them to people in need every Monday. While the food is meant as a supplement, the program also fosters community and connection. Leftover items are passed on to Silent Rixdorf, extending the reach of rescued food and minimizing waste. “[...] people often use the church as a place to socialise and chat. Of course, we have many people who speak Arabic dialect, and some even speak English or Ukrainian. They meet up here and have a lively chat.”



FOUNDED: 2005
**Dreeinigkeitskirche
Lipschitzallee 7, 12351 Berlin**

④

Ernährungsrat

**Grassroots civil society group
advocating for food system
transformation in Berlin**

The Ernährungsrat advocates for a just and sustainable food system in Berlin, focusing on equitable access to food and fostering connections between consumers and producers—despite political boundaries that limit direct supply chain integration with surrounding rural areas. Through the FoodCLIC project, it addresses food poverty and promotes policy recognition of food access as a social issue—working to empower marginalized communities through inclusive food strategies. “A lot of it is about creating more recognition in society and policy of food poverty as a problem, and food environment or the control of food environments or the regulation of food environments as a solution to that. So that’s kind of what we’re focused on.”



FOUNDED: 2016
**c/o Berlin Global Village gGmbH
Am Sudhaus 2
12053 Berlin**

⑤

Robinhood

Community supermarket

Robinhood is a grassroots, community-driven supermarket that reimagines food distribution through radical inclusivity and anti-capitalist values. Operating on volunteer-based membership and consensus decision-making, RobinHood challenges dominant food economies by prioritizing local access, social equity, and environmental sustainability. Its model redistributes surplus and profit to fight poverty and injustice—making food activism a tool for systemic change. A central pillar is the concept built-for and built-from community: “The Kiez is everything!”



FOUNDED: 2019
**Altenbraker Str. 15, 12053
Berlin**

⑥

Torhaus Kochkollektiv

**Volunteer group preparing
meals using rescued food**

The Torhaus Kochkollektiv is a grassroots collective that reclaims food as a tool for sustainability and solidarity. Through mobile kitchens and public events, it engages in preparation by hosting communal cooking sessions using rescued ingredients. It also tackles waste by minimizing food loss and raising awareness about the environmental impact of consumption. The group promotes a holistic, inclusive philosophy—connecting food justice with climate activism, animal rights, and community empowerment. “We have the same ideology or philosophy towards sustainability, and that this should be addressed more in the food systems than it currently is, even within the climate activism. They talk more about transport and energy sources than food, even though food is huge. (...) Another goal of the collective is to foster community. (...) The idea of a constructive way to demonstrate and to come together to create a community”



FOUNDED: 2020
**Columbiadamm 10, 12101
Berlin**



Berlin University Alliance



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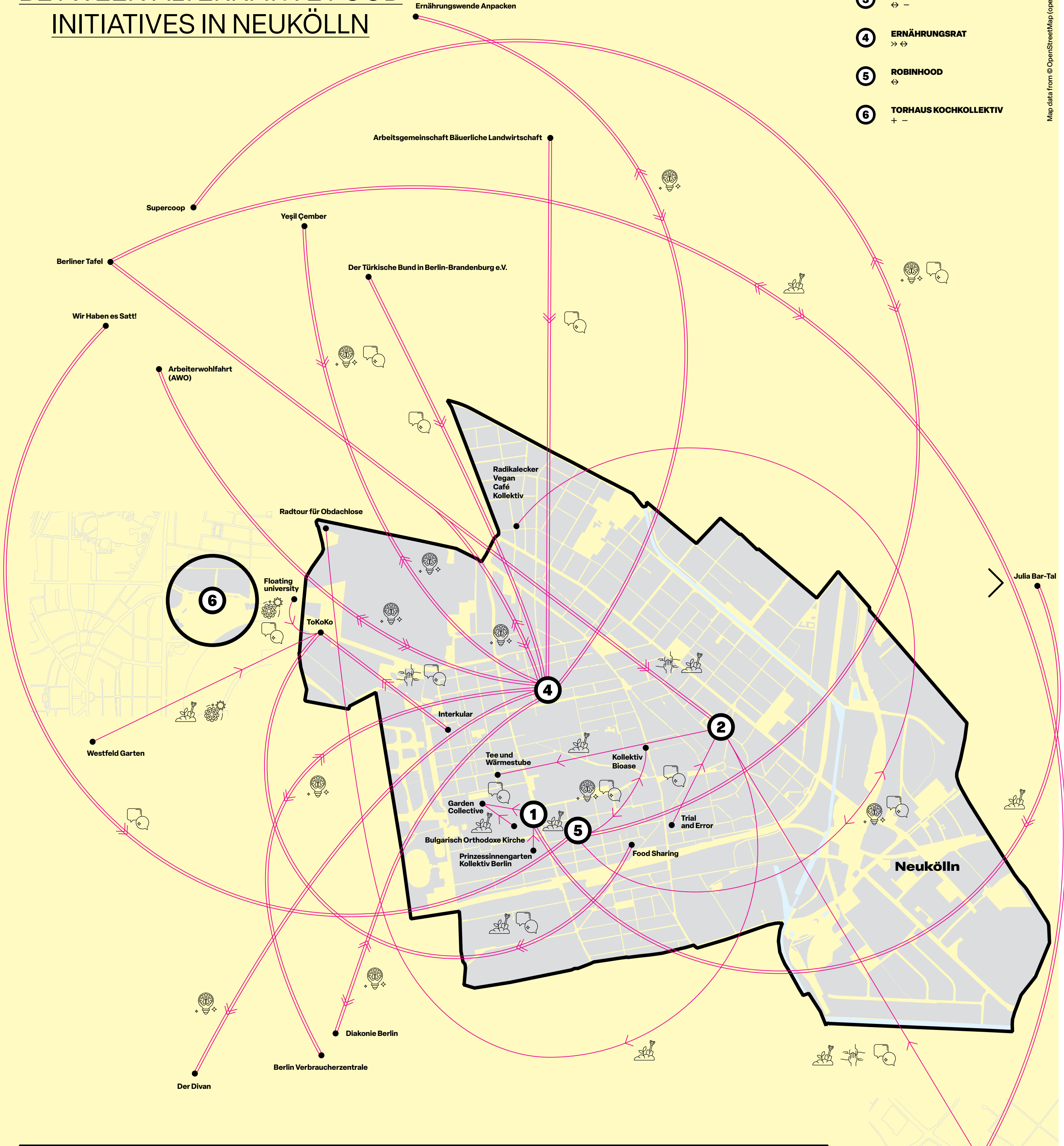


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Brandenburg

- 1 **SPORE**
>> +
- 2 **SILENT RIXDORF**
↔ -
- 3 **LAIB UND SEELE BRITZ**
↔ -
- 4 **ERNÄHRUNGSRAT**
>> ↔
- 5 **ROBINHOOD**
↔
- 6 **TORHAUS KOCHKOLLEKTIV**
+ -

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LEVEL OF COOPERATION	RESOURCES	FOOD SYSTEM
Neukölln	Contacts Sharing networks, connections, or facilitate personal introductions that support collaboration or access to resources. Infrastructure Providing access to shared spaces, tools, equipment, or facilities used across initiatives. Labor Exchanging time and effort—volunteering, working, or helping hands to sustain the initiatives efforts.	Food Production Initiatives that grow, harvest, or cultivate food. Distribution Initiatives that transport or share food, connecting producers with those who prepare and consume it.
Berlin	Materials Circulating physical resources like soil, seeds, compost, or produce essential for food-related activities. Skill sharing Offering knowledge, expertise, or hands-on training to build collective capacity.	Preparation Initiatives that transform raw ingredients into meals through cooking or processing. Consumption Initiatives where food is eaten, shared, or accessed by residents of the neighborhood.
Federal		Waste Initiatives focused on reducing, reusing, or recycling food.