# The team spirit of Halle's people

***How is it possible to build up foundation capital despite of low interest rates? The Bürgerstiftung Halle pinned its hopes on fund-raising – and was successful.***

Ausgezeichnet mit dem FÖRDERPREIS AKTIVE BÜRGERSCHAFT

Donors and team of Bürgerstiftung Halle | Photo: Kai Bienert

In front of the building that gave its name for “Max goes to the opera“. | Photo: Kai Bienert

## How is it possible to build up permanent endowment despite of low interest rates? The Bürgerstiftung Halle pinned its hopes on fundraising – and was successful.

*In September 2013, the people of Halle read in their newspapers that they should please donate 100,000 euros to their community foundation, to the Max Fund, and this as quickly as possible. Or to be more precise in the coming nine months by May 2014, when the foundation celebrated its ten year anniversary. During this time, the Drosos Foundation from Switzerland would double every donated euro. The community foundation in the Eastern German city of Halle tried to lure the people with the prospect that 100,000 euros could soon be doubled to 200,000 euros.*

*To donate money to the Max Fund: this sounded nice, but what was this Community Foundation? Ingrid Häußler, the board chair and former mayor said: “For a long time, the idea of donating money was foreign to the people here in Halle. People knew our projects but not the Community Foundation.”*

Among the foundation‘s projects that are well known in Halle is: ”Max goes to the opera.” Volunteer mentors visit the cultural institutions of the city together with kids from low-income families and families with poor access to education. They go the opera, theaters, concert halls, and museums. Thus far, 177 tandems have been arranged. Since 2010, the project has been supported by the Swiss Drosos Foundation.

*Wolfgang Röpe, who has lived for more than 25 years in Halle, has been a cultural mentor for more than two years now. Every six weeks, he and “his mentee” visit the opera, a theater, or an exhibition in a group of 12 mentees. Röpe said: “Culture-wise Halle has a lot to offer and this should be accessible to everyone in the city.” He added that this project is also enriching himself, and that he, in any case, wants to stay with the project.*

*But the support by the Drosos Foundation will end in summer 2015. To gain long-term security to finance the project and to become more independent of donations, the Community Foundation decided to collect funds for the Max Fund and launched a fundraising campaign.*

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The Bürgerstiftung Halle is one of the 380 community foundations in Germany.
www.aktive-buergerschaft.de/english/finder

With a smart strategy and its professional implementation by a fundraiser, people donated 107,588 euros within nine months to the Community Foundation. Together with the Matching Fund of the Swiss Foundation, 207,588 euros were collected right on the tenth anniversary of the Community Foundation that was established in 2004. With these funds, the permanent endowment of the foundation increased to half a million euros.

***When the campaign was launched, the Volksbank Halle donated 15,000 euros. In addition, further promises for donations came in. These promises were published step by step to motivate further potential donors to join the campaign. In addition, the foundation pinned its hopes on word-of-mouth marketing. During the Christmas season, the Community Foundation sent 500 letters to possible donors. A postcard campaign was launched afterwards, additional further press releases and posters were hung up at every second advertising pillar, saying: "Donate!" This visualization made the campaign well-known. Dieter Lehmann, architect and for years the chairman of small- and medium-sized enterprises in Halle, said: "They had a barometer that looked like a ring-the-bell game, where everyone could see the current sum of donations." Originally, he and his organization wanted to help the local dental clinic with a charity performance at the opera in March 2014. When he learned that the community foundation was still short of money to fully take advantage of the 100,000 euros from the Matching Fund, the association decided to donate the 6,000 euros from the opera gala to the community foundation. By doing so, he even exceeded the top level of the donations barometer. Mid-May a family father of Halle saw that 4,300 euros were still missing and he quickly transferred the necessary funds.***

## Facts and Figures of the Community Foundation of Halle

Founded in 2004 | Permanent Endowment when it was founded: 35,000 euros | Current Permanent Endowment: 552,652 euros | Funding sum for non-profit projects in Halle: 103,916 euros | Donors: 681 | Volunteers: 70 | Full-time staff: three | State of play: 12/2014 | www.buergerstiftung-halle.de

The Community Foundation of Halle is supported by the Volksbank Halle (Saale) eG.

Jury members of the Award Förderpreis Aktive Bürgerschaft | Photo: Kai Bienert

## The Jury's Rationale

"The Community Foundation Halle receives the award 'Aktive Bürgerschaft 2015' in the category ‚mitStiften' for its fundraising campaign ‚100,000 Euros for the Max Fund'. The Jury honors the fact that the foundation acquired the donor for the Matching Fund, the professional implementation of the campaign but also that the Community Foundation Halle successfully coped with a double challenge: In an Eastern German city in which the tradition of foundations has been interrupted for decades and during times of low interest rates for the foundation's assets, it created broad public attention and social relevance for the idea of foundations in Halle."
Werner Böhnke, chairman of the foundation board of the Foundation Aktive Bürgerschaft and the Jury

The category 'mitStiften' honors community foundations that successfully raise funds on site and build up assets for the foundation to safeguard their independent, non-profit activities. With this prize, the Foundation Aktive Bürgerschaft wants to honor and acknowledge the engagement of community foundations for society. This should be a stimulus for other people and institutions to get involved in the activities of community foundations in their cities and regions. In addition, the prize is to serve the exchange of experience among community foundations. The prize is awarded in four categories and the overall prize money amounts to 40,000 euros.

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