

Best Children & Youth Education Solutions CEO (Berlin): Carsten Stier



blu:boks gGmbH was founded in 2009 as a non-profit organisation headquartered in Berlin-Lichtenberg. On the back of CEO Carsten Stier's success in the awards programme, we took a closer look at the extraordinary work the company is doing, and the leader spearheading it all.

"blu:boks BERLIN - The self-esteem manufacturer"

They say that children are our future. It makes sense then to ensure that all children have the best possible start and support, regardless of background and situation. blu:boks has built its substantial reputation through helping children find their 'spark', their joy, their creativity – the team's messaging labels it a 'self-esteem manufacturer', and this rings absolutely true.

For Carsten, blu:boks' mission is crucial to enriching lives and impacting regions on a level that cannot be overestimated. After all, the scope of the issue the company is tackling is massive, as he moves on to explain. "More than 12,000 children are affected by child poverty in the Berlin-Lichtenberg catchment area. Everyone is welcome at blu:boks! The reality of life of the children and young people is recognized with respect, pedagogically accompanied and life-affirming perspectives are found together. This is how the blu:boks formation works. This is how you develop self-esteem. And this is how children and young people can build trusting relationships.

"In Berlin-Lichtenberg, the charitable work of blu:boks encounters a very heterogeneous demographic. People from the most diverse backgrounds come together here, and many have difficult or no access at all to cultural and artistic offerings. blu:boks offers everyone free and barrier-free art and culture in their immediate living environment and with many projects and initiatives strengthens intercultural exchange and

neighbourly cohesion between residents of all generations - regardless of their age, origin and goal, skin color, gender identity, cultural background, health condition or professional background."

It's not a secret that one's economic background can massively influence future success, and so the services and solutions offered by companies like blu:boks play a vital role in levelling the playing field, nurturing those that would otherwise be overlooked. "The mission has always been finding, appreciating and developing social and emotional skills of socially disadvantaged children and young people in order to sustainably strengthen the self-esteem. "We look for, find and promote the individual strengths of children in order to let them grow into confident co-creators of society," Carsten adds.

Ultimately, it's clear that passion drives Carsten and blu:boks, enforcing its mission and purpose. Here, this award-winning CEO offers some concluding thoughts to reiterate the importance of the company's purpose, offering a stark highlight to the importance of the team's work – both now, and for the future. "For young people who are not accepted and not taken seriously, we show up and step up every day. So that they become strong. Resilient. Courageous. As an organization completely dependent on donations and funding, we experience this training as well. We also go through ups and downs, we also hold on to faith and we also fight for recognition - even when nothing is the same anymore, when times are more obscure and harder than before. We hold fast. We hold on to the children and young people who have no one else

to accompany them, to support them and to promise them: you can - we stand by you - we are at your side. And we hold on to our values: We hold on to the belief that every child is a wonderful and unique creature, who deserves to be recognised and uplifted."

Carsten Stier was born in East-Germany to a hard working family of a plumber (father) and economist (mother). The youngest of three children, he went to the United States and travelled the world before he started to study theology in 2002. After graduating with a master's degree, he went on to study acting and theatre in Berlin, which he also graduated from in 2010. Empathetic and creative leadership has always been an interest of Stier as he read many leadership books, went to seminars and trained in various positions to teach, coach and mentor the young and old. In 2016 he was offered the role of leader in the blu:boks and quickly doubled attendance of children and families. He also wrote a book about how to lead a youth organization – from vision to daily business. In 2020 he joined the team of CEOs, where he co-leads with Marlies Hebrechtsmeier (CEO) and Torsten Hebel (founder).

More about his work, strength and stories: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/carsten-stier/>

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