New pilot project to strengthen family assistance

Providing better, quicker and more tailored assistance to families: this is the goal of the pilot project by the district of Osnabrück called “Stärkung von Prävention in den Hilfen zur Erziehung” (Strengthening prevention in family assistance programmes), which was officially launched today.

With the support of the Bertelsmann Stiftung, the district of Osnabrück is using a Social Impact Bond (SIB) for the first time. The SIB will help expand family assistance services for parents and improve the efficiency of these services. The district of Osnabrück is thus embarking on a whole new method for financing: the project will be pre-financed by a social investor and implemented with the help of additional partners. Only once the goals defined by the district of Osnabrück are attained will the investor have their money returned to them, along with a risk compensation. Public funding that is saved by the district of Osnabrück when the project is successful will be retained in the child services budget, where it can be used for future prevention programmes.
Strengthening prevention in family assistance programmes

In 2014, over a million young people and their families received family assistance. The prevalence of socio-pedagogic family assistance has been increasing for years. Despite the existence of numerous preventive parenting programmes that have proven more effective and faster in helping some of the affected families, the potential of these programmes has scarcely been tapped. This is due, in part, to the high costs and risks connected with introducing these programmes. The SIB has given the district of Osnabrück a new opportunity to test the Triple P parenting programme that has been successfully implemented in over 25 countries. Selected parents who are entitled to family assistance services are now being granted access to Triple P parenting courses. These include programmes of varying intensity that give parents precisely the assistance they need. The district of Osnabrück hopes to thus provide parents with better help more quickly so that they no longer require assistance.

The goal of the project is not to save money, but rather to strengthen prevention in family assistance and to thus provide families with the individual support services they require to overcome the challenges they face. If the project results in a reduction of the financial costs for family assistance, these funds will be used in full for additional preventive services for families in the district.

Matthias Selle, District Councillor and board member responsible for youth

The goals of the project are ambitious; it will be a true test, as Germany has had very little experience with SIBs. The family assistance planning procedure used to select the appropriate families and their training programme is very rigorous. Specialised professionals from Lega S Jugendhilfe are being trained to implement the programme with the families entitled to the support.

The training courses teach the specialised professionals how to use Triple P to provide families with tailored and sustainable assistance.

Thomas Dirscherl, Managing Director of Triple P Germany
Testing Social Impact Bonds as a new financial instrument

The Bertelsmann Stiftung wants to use the pilot project to test the potential of SIBs as a new financial instrument and driver for innovation for social projects. Brigitte Mohn, member of the executive board at Bertelsmann Stiftung, believes that it is essential to explore new forms of cooperation for the public sector, social investors, and service providers in order to establish a new culture of social innovation:

\emph{We can only find effective solutions for social challenges and implement these in the long term by working together.}

Brigitte Mohn, member of the executive board at Bertelsmann Stiftung

This does not mean questioning existing social services. Instead, additional resources should be mobilised to complement existing family assistance services. The non-profit analysis and consultation organisation Phineo helped to develop the project, and will act as its central coordinator.

\emph{If the SIB succeeds in helping families in the district of Osnabrück in the long term, the financial model can become a precedent for other communities. The SIB is an example of how the public sector, social investors, and non-profit organisations can be brought together to work towards helping those who need special assistance. Capital is employed effectively and the financial risk for the district is minimised.}

Andreas Rickert, CEO Phineo gAG

For more information on the pilot project “Stärkung von Prävention in den Hilfen zur Erziehung” (Strengthening prevention in family assistance programmes), please download our information brochure!
Publication

Strengthening Prevention in Family Assistance Programmes in the District of Osnabrück

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