

Early Childhood Prevention in Germany and the contribution of Caritas

Family policies matter!

Symposium on family policies from four EU Member States

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Frühe Hilfen



1. Early Childhood Prevention:
the discussion in Germany
2. Early assistance within Caritas
(„Frühe Hilfen in der Caritas“, 2010 – 2013)
3. Major findings of external project evaluation

Discussion in Germany

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- ▶ Relation of private and public responsibility for the growing up of children is changing

(2) The care and upbringing of children is the natural right of parents and a duty primarily incumbent upon them. The state shall watch over them in the performance of this duty.

Article 6 Basic Constitutional Law for the Federal Republic of Germany

Discussion in Germany

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- ▶ Importance of the first years of a child for further development
- ▶ UN Charta of Children's Rights (2010)
- ▶ Kevin and Lea-Sophie
- ▶ "Early Prevention and Intervention for Parents and Children and early Warning System"
- ▶ Federal Child Protection Law (since 2012)

Main challenges of successful early prevention and intervention:

- ▶ ACHIEVING ACCESS to the target families
- ▶ IDENTIFYING NEEDS
- ▶ MOTIVATING FAMILIES to accept help
- ▶ TAILORING THE OFFERS of support TO NEEDS of families

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„Frühe Hilfen in der Caritas“



Early assistance within Caritas (2010 – 2013) (Roll up)

Project of German Caritas Association

- ▶ in cooperation with 16 Diocesan Caritas Associations
- ▶ and 91 local partners

Diocesan Caritas Association:

- ▶ 50 % personnel for coordination
- ▶ at least 4 local project partners within the diocese

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Local Partners:

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- ▶ networking with all Caritas services that have access to the target group
- ▶ „Speciality“ of the Caritas project:
build up an offer for low level relief and support run by or with the assistance of volunteers
- ▶ professional coordination of volunteers

What were the offers provided by volunteers?

Relief and support offers run by volunteers (or with the help of volunteers)	In percent of all local partners
Godparenthood	76 %
Open Café / Café for parents	18 %
Mother – Child – Group (mother – child interaktion; peergroup exchange)	13 %
Welcome Service (Clinic, Parish) (Congratulation, information; advice)	9 %
Others	29 %
TOTAL	145 %

Volunteers involved in the project

- ▶ 1.105 Volunteers
- ▶ ♀ 92 % and ♂ 8 %,
- ▶ 82% active as Godmother/father
- ▶ *Ø 11 hours/month* with the families

Number of Godparenthoods started

- ▶ 1.426 families
- ▶ 43 % married; 43 % single mothers
- ▶ 44% of families: 3 or more children

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The evaluation was accompanied and supported by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ).

Main challenge:

ACHIEVING ACCESS

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Families gain access to project offers mainly through

- ▶ their immediate social structures
- ▶ professionell network as part of the project
- ▶ personal address is most successful
- ▶ especially through pregnancy advice services

Access for volunteers:

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Volunteers gained access to the project mainly through

- ▶ newspapers articles (48 %)
(„win – win“)
- ▶ Personal advice of friends and others (19 %)
- ▶ Advertisements/Flyers (18 %)

Typical duties
of Godmothers and Godfathers:

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In general: relief of requirements in every day live

- ▶ Looking after the kid(s) once or twice a week
- ▶ Support parents with baby care
- ▶ Encourage social interaction
- ▶ organisational support (help to fill out forms etc.)
- ▶ Spending leisure time with the family

IDENTIFYING NEEDS

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Major findings: Families

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„In average parents were very satisfied how the godmother fitted into the family and how she treated the family and the children“.

There´s a positive correlation (pre – post):

- ❖ Parents feel less excessive demand
 - ▶ regarding requirements of everyday live
 - ▶ and handling their children
- ❖ Parents feel more safe handling their children

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Essentials for parents:

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- ▶ „to have a partner for conversation“
- ▶ „that somebody is present“
- ▶ to be relieved from looking after the children
- ▶ **99 % said godparenthood was helpfull**
(77 %: „very“; 11 % „rather“; 11 % „a bit“)
- ▶ 96 % recommend this offer to other families

Major findings volunteers:

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„There is high accordance of the expectations of volunteers with those of the families“.

With regards to the volunteers that has several impacts:

- ▶ they need less support
- ▶ they feel less excessive demand
- ▶ they feel more safe regarding their tasks and role
- ▶ in general: higher level of satisfaction

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Major findings:

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„Most important quality feature of voluntary work is reliable and professional attendance through a professional coordination of volunteers.“

„The findings of the evaluation underline the importance of a successful matching: the fitting worked well and expectations of parents and volunteers have been fulfilled very satisfactory („key process“)

IDENTIFYING NEEDS and TAILORING THE OFFERS of support TO NEEDS of families

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Thank you for your attention!

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