

„Keep going and don't stop reminding them of yourself” –Networks for successful out-reach-work

Final report of “Frühe Hilfen“ accompanying evaluation

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Summary

The objective of the accompanying evaluation was to identify learnings for the adaptation of existing and establishment of future early childhood interventions networks. The main question was, if and through which processes, *Frühe Hilfen* succeeds to effectively establish early childhood intervention networks and make a contribution to health equity. The evaluation process included interviews and focus group discussion with involved stakeholders as well as a comprehensive online with various groups of network partners. The chosen methods served to assess the functionality and effectiveness of the regional early childhood interventions networks.

Catchment Area

23 regional early childhood intervention networks cover a total of 53 from 118 political districts in Austria and are spread across all Austrian districts. Satisfaction with the status quo of network establishment is generally high. A majority of respondents said that networks were functioning well and that they were bit by bit being expanded and consolidated.

Network Management

Each regional network has got a “network management” resp. network manager/s. This was considered to be positive by a majority. The network managers were appraised to be doing a (very) good job, esp. in terms of communication and information.

Family Support

Relationship building and the family support workers' navigator function were seen to be equally important, since a trustful relationship needs to be established before it is possible to adequately refer families to other support offers.

Benefit

90 % answered that awareness-raising in relevant institutions that work with the concerning target groups had been successful. A majority of respondents is convinced that cooperation within the networks promotes and facilitates effective support delivery and that the offered support services meet the needs of clients.

Target group outreach

80 % of respondents said that target group outreach was successful. Until the end of 2016 1360 families were referred to early childhood intervention networks, often by facilities of the health care system. In 930 cases family support was taken up. In a majority of supported families it was possible to identify hidden capabilities and resources which could be activated to strengthen self-efficacy. This was mainly owed to relationship building between support workers and families.

Health equity

Current experience shows that disadvantaged target groups could be reached. Economic security was a common issue. FRÜDOK documentation reveals that the financial situation was a burden in 45 % of cases and housing circumstances were so in 24 %. In 31 % of cases there is a lack of social support.

Support by NZFH.at

Stakeholders on all different levels showed high satisfaction with the work of the Austrian National Centre for Early Childhood Intervention. It was perceived as highly professional, committed and service-oriented contact point that provides assistance in dealing with many problems. It was highlighted that the centre was always quick to react and that staff went directly to the regions when necessary, which was supportive in negotiations and partnership building. The offered materials, networking activities, training courses and the FRÜDOK documentation system were perceived to be very helpful.

Strengths of the Austrian model of regional early intervention networks

The needs based scope of action, the outreach support with its focus on relationship building, the preventive approach with special attention to the strengthening of family resources and the integration of family support into a network of different services were seen as major strengths of the model and perceived to be unique in the Austrian context.