

Strengthening Prevention in Family Assistance Programmes

In the District of Osnabrück



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Together with other partners, the district of Osnabrück is carrying out a pilot project from September 2017 to September 2021. This project aims to strengthen prevention in family assistance programmes.

It is aimed at families in need of individual assistance due to family-related challenges. Tailored supervision is required for these families in order to ensure that their children and adolescents can grow up successfully. Particularly preventive assistance programmes can help support parents at an early stage so that they can better respond to the demands of parenting.

This pilot project will test whether these families receive the assistance they need more effectively and quickly through a preventive parenting programme than from current assistance programmes. To this end, parents who are legally entitled to individual assistance can choose to receive access to levels four and five of the Triple P (Positive Parenting Programme). Triple P is a preventive programme that has been implemented and extensively evaluated for over 30 years. It consists of services of varying intensity that are intended to give parents exactly the assistance they need. By teaching parents everyday parenting skills, the programme helps them to improve their relationship with their children, promote their individual development, and respond constructively to challenging parenting situations. Parents who take part in the pilot project retain their legal claim to individual parenting assistance.

The project is carried out with the support of a Social Impact Bond (SIB), which enables private

pre-financing of the project. The district of Osnabrück, the investor Kreissparkasse Bersenbrück, and the service provider Lega S Jugendhilfe have established a partnership. The non-profit consulting organisation PHINEO gAG is acting as the coordinator of the project.

The district of Osnabrück has decided to use a SIB as a financial instrument because it is an impact-related payment model, and thus creates incentives for achieving specific impact goals. If the project succeeds in helping families in the long term, the results of which will be measured using both subjective and objective criteria, the Kreissparkasse Bersenbrück will regain its investment from the district of Osnabrück and will then be able to reinvest in the pre-financing of preventive social projects. The goal of the project is not to save money with the family assistance programmes, but rather to contribute to the successful upbringing of children and ensure additional funding for preventive services.

The public funds that are saved by the SIB when the project is successful are retained in the child services budget of the district of Osnabrück. These funds will be used for future prevention programmes.

Another goal of the pilot project is to explore the potential of SIBs as a new tool for impact-oriented management of preventive social services. The Bertelsmann Stiftung supports this initiative for testing new instruments and partnerships for more social impact. With this in mind, the pilot project will be scientifically evaluated by an independent research institute.

1. *What is the motivation behind the pilot project?*

Many parents in Germany require assistance in raising their children. In the year 2014, more than one million young people and their families received family assistance services.

About 21% of these young people benefit from socio-pedagogic family assistance.¹ There are also preventive assistance services that help parents to gain the skills they require in order to independently and adequately meet the needs of their children at an early stage. However, the potential of these services has scarcely been tapped in Germany. The district of Osnabrück is therefore working to improve prevention and assistance services for families.

2. *What is Triple P?*

Triple P is an evidence-based parenting programme that is acclaimed in both research and practice. The programme has been continuously researched and developed for over 30 years. It is currently being implemented in 25 countries across the world and has been proven to be effective and helpful in various cultures, socio-economic groups, and family structures.

Triple P helps to improve self-regulation, problem-solving abilities, and the independence of families. The most important feature of the Triple P programme is its behaviour-based method, which is characterised by practical exercises.

Triple P provides services of varying intensity in order to give parents the exact amount of support they need. The parenting programme consists of five levels, each with an increasing intensity of assistance.

3. *How will the project be implemented?*

Over the course of three years, 48 families with children between the ages of two and twelve will receive access to Triple P at the most intense levels of assistance (levels four and five).

The families will be identified using a procedure designed for planning assistance programmes carried out by the general social services, provided by the youth welfare

office of the district of Osnabrück. Families are required by law to take part in this procedure before receiving family assistance. The families who volunteer to participate in the project will be selected according to special criteria. This target group was specifically defined for the pilot programme. There are additional target groups who may qualify for Triple P training programmes including the other levels of the programme.

The Triple P parent training courses are provided by Lega S Jugendhilfe, whose personnel have been accredited as Triple P trainers. Depending on their requirements, families learn about different aspects of the Triple P programme and take part in individual or group courses.

Families who are entitled to take part in the Triple P parent training programme, and therefore in the pilot project, but choose not to do so will receive regular family assistance services.

4. *How does a SIB work?*

A SIB is a partnership between public authorities, social investors, and service providers with the goal of testing a preventive social service.

Through a SIB, new social investors become partners and new financing sources are established for preventive social work. Participation is risk-free for and offers benefits to the government due to the accompanying impact analysis.

The social investor initially invests capital to pre-finance a social service for several years. A service provider offers the courses for the programme. Once the project is completed, tests are conducted to verify whether the defined impact goal was attained.

Depending on the extent to which the goals have been attained, the invested capital including a risk compensation from the government is returned to the social investor. In exchange, the social investor bears the financial risk for any unattained goals. As such, the government only pays for demonstrable positive impact (see Figure 1).

5. *How do pre-financing and impact-related payment work?*

The Kreissparkasse Bersenbrück (a local bank) will be the social investor, and as such will pre-finance the project. The SIB thus provides additional funds which will in no way substitute public funding. If the assistance programme is very successful, the Kreissparkasse Bersenbrück will receive a risk compensation. Should this be the case, the

¹ Fendrich, S., Pothmann, J., Tabel, A. (2016): *Monitor Hilfen zur Erziehung*. 2016, Dortmund.

Kreissparkasse will donate the risk compensation they receive to a social facility or educational institution. This guarantees that the funds remain both in the district of Osnabrück and in the non-profit sector.

6. *How will the impact of the pilot project be determined?*

The project partners will analyse the impact based on data they receive from the district of Osnabrück and the service providers. A case is deemed successful when the family is proven to be better off after participating in the Triple P programme. To determine this, families are surveyed using standardised questionnaires (Strengths and difficulties questionnaire, SDQ; Questionnaire on parenting, EFB; Questionnaire on how satisfied families were with the Triple P programme, CSQ). Furthermore, for the programme to be considered successful, the family should not require any further assistance (family assistance) after completing the Triple P training programme.

7. *How will the SIB be scientifically evaluated?*

After four years, the impact of the Triple P trainings over the course of the pilot project will be evaluated using the data collected. The experiences gained by the district of Osnabrück, the Kreissparkasse Bersenbrück, and Lega S Jugendhilfe from working with the SIB model will be evaluated. The scientific evaluation will be carried out on behalf of the Bertelsmann Stiftung und published after completion of the project.

8. *Why did the Kreissparkasse Bersenbrück choose to be a social investor?*

On the one hand, as a regional financial actor with a strong sense of responsibility, the Kreissparkasse Bersenbrück would like to make an innovative contribution to public welfare. On the other hand, the Kreissparkasse is interested in using this prevention programme for families to test a new form of social investment, known as impact investing. When deciding whether to make this kind of investment, investors take into consideration not only the usual factors of “risk” and “return”, but also the “social impact” factor.

9. *Why did the non-profit organisation PHINEO AG decide to be a coordinator?*

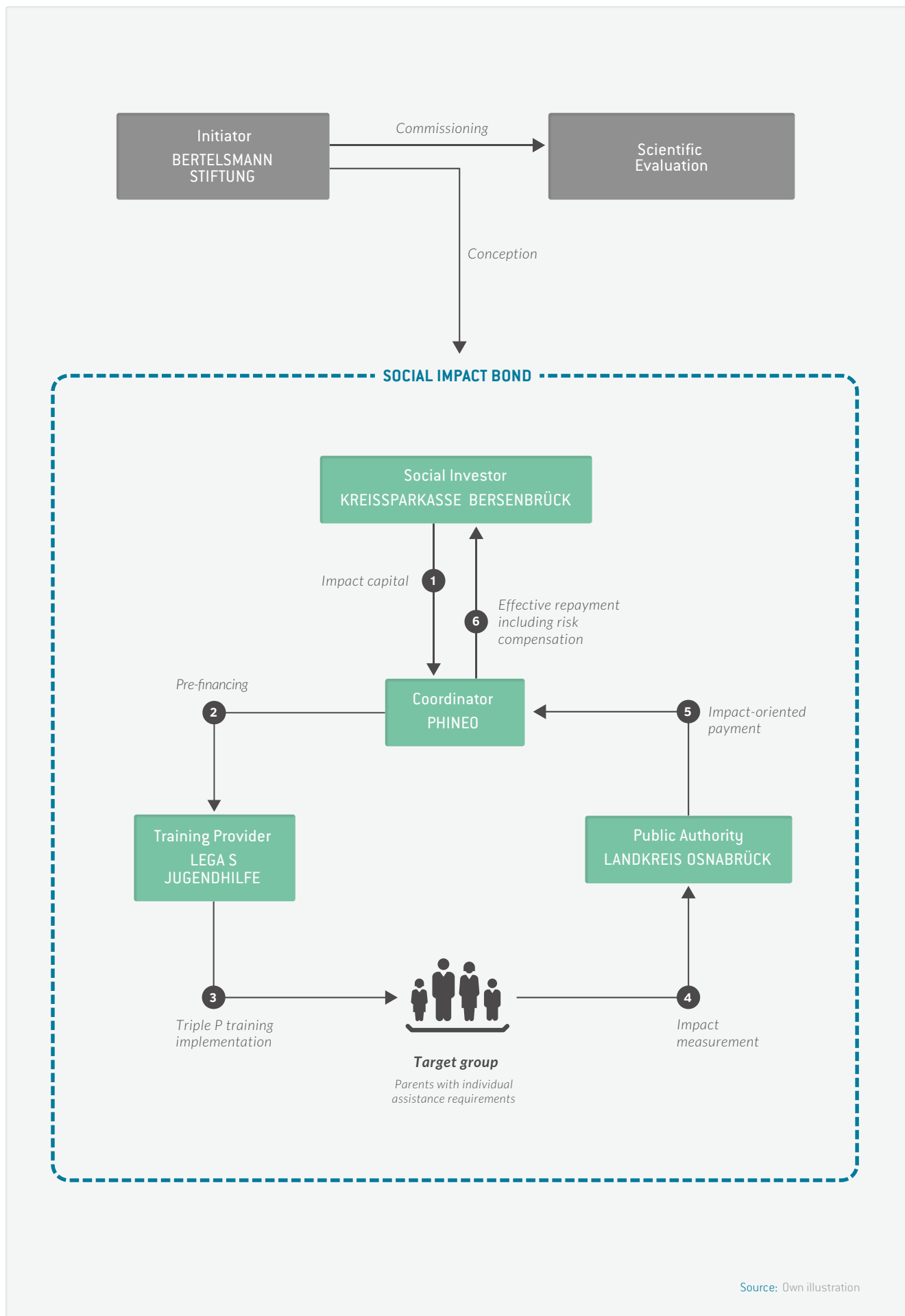
PHINEO is a non-profit analysis and consultation organisation that is committed to effective civic engagement. It was founded by the Bertelsmann Stiftung and additional partners. PHINEO is committed to ensuring more impact and transparency in the non-profit sector and is actively contributing to building up a market for impact investing in Germany.

Together with its project partners, PHINEO developed the pilot project in accordance with the expectations of the district of Osnabrück, and will act as the central coordinator and project manager throughout the duration of the SIB.

10. *Why is the Bertelsmann Stiftung supporting the pilot project?*

The Bertelsmann Stiftung is committed to create a society that offers equal opportunities for everybody ensuring that young and disadvantaged people can participate in society. For this reason, the Bertelsmann Stiftung is looking into how the strong and growing interest in civic engagement among the German people can be tapped even more effectively in order to support innovation and prevention and to increase the range of effective services. It is important to mobilise new financial resources and explore new means of financing in order to enable more positive social change.

Figure 1: Diagram of the Social Impact Bond in the district of Osnabrück





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