

At-home support for parents with intellectual disabilities

GERMANY – NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA / MOBILE E.V. – ACCOMPANIED PARENTHOOD

MOBILE – Selbstbestimmtes Leben Behinderter e.V., an NGO based in Dortmund, Germany, developed the Accompanied Parenthood (Begleitete Elternschaft, BE) project in 2006. Working with 8–12 families each year, BE supports parents with intellectual disabilities to raise their children at home, assisted by educators in the areas of life skills, teaching, and childcare. BE is now offered by a second NGO in Dortmund, enabling parents to choose between the two. Moreover, the BE project has contributed to the new Federal Participation Act (BTHG) of Germany.

Problem targeted

There is a lack of support for parents with intellectual disabilities seeking to raise their children at home. In most cases they receive neither support nor funding.

model. MOBILE started in 2006 by supporting one family; between 2006 and 2011 the NGO ran BE pilot projects; and by 2022 it was able to support up to 12 families per year.

“They then confirmed: Okay, you’re doing well. But you must decide that for yourself”

Mother of programme beneficiary

Solution, innovation, and impact

MOBILE’s BE project pairs participating parents with an educator or a social worker who provides advice, hands-on assistance, and connects them to other relevant services. This support covers three areas: (1) the upbringing of children, such as looking after their health and education; (2) support in matters related to family life, such as establishing daily routines or navigating a divorce; and (3) support in administrative and other practical tasks, such as budgeting and housekeeping. MOBILE is also an advocate for BE, having contributed to designing a law enshrining the right to accompanied parenthood for parents with intellectual disabilities. The NGO also runs an online portal that provides information about the BE project and guidelines for accompanied parenthood to help other service providers interested in the

Outlook, transferability, and funding

The first BE pilot project was funded 80 per cent by the National Welfare Foundation and 20 per cent by MOBILE. Now, the NGO is contracted by the local Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt) and the national Rehabilitation Agency (LWL) as a specialist BE service provider. MOBILE covers the costs of the information portal. The NGO plans to recruit new educators for its BE project and to continue advocating for accompanied parenthood to become a more widely available service. MOBILE’s BE model has been replicated by another NGO in Dortmund, which means all families who request the service in the city are supported. Similar services have been created in other cities in North Rhine-Westphalia, often with the support of MOBILE.

FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2006

- In 2022 seven educators supported 12 families in Dortmund.
- The employees of MOBILE e. V. advise other organizations on setting up a support service BE.
- *A project of Civil Society.*



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