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Area of action “Pre-school support“

Analysis of cantonal reports for 2014

During the reporting year, the Confederation and the cantons spent around CHF 6.8 million to improve pre-school support. These financial resources were mainly devoted to the creation of language and health services for small children or parental education.

In the area of action of pre-school support, several cantons relied on already existing strategies, concepts or guidelines (or those elaborated in 2014) and/or existing legislation. A number of cantons also intend to develop a concept for 2015/2016. Established strategies and existing legislation reveal the crucial importance of helping young children in their development process.

Networking and awareness raising

Networking and coordination work is very important at both the political and technical level. This includes networking between cantons and their communes as well as with non-state actors. It also includes efforts by many Cantons to encourage networking and coordination through regular meetings between the various cantonal offices. In addition, the cantons have allocated resources for knowledge transfer. Important information channels include initial information meetings, information brochures and contact points as well as parental counselling.

Quality control

Pre-school education, guidance and nurturing are also provided in day-care centres and play groups, which serve to complement family settings. Along this line, the cantons provide support for the initial and continuing training of professionals. Topics such as interculturality, working with parents as well as language and writing courses are essential in the area of action "Pre-school support". In addition, continuing training courses and intercantonal events are useful opportunities for interaction between professionals. In 2014, the French-speaking cantons offered intercantonal continuing training courses on "valorisation of early childhood".

Getting parents more involved

Unlike services intended as a complement to family upbringing, pre-school support measures require the active involvement of parents. Within the framework of various services, parents receive assistance in their role of raising their children. A major challenge has been how to reach socially marginalised migrant families. As a result, various measures have been taken to facilitate access to services. In 2014, for example, intercultural communicators were brought in to explain various support measures and facilitate access to services. Pro-

grammes to visit people in their homes were also launched. The parental education programme "schritt:weise" is one example of the latter. This programme has proven very successful in several cantons.

Services for children of temporarily admitted foreigners and refugees

One-third of all cantons provide pre-school support in the form of specific projects for children of temporarily admitted foreigners and refugees. This mainly involves language learning at an early age. In the Canton of Graubünden, for example, 160 children under the age of five received targeted linguistic and social support while their parents attended German courses.

Language learning: "Tell me a story"

Launched in 2006, the project sponsored by the Schweizerisches Institut für Kinder- und Jugendmedien (Swiss Institute for Youth Media - SIKJM) focuses on the entire family. It includes parental education as well as pre-school lessons to improve speaking and reading skills. Within the framework of this project, families meet together several times each month for storytelling sessions, which enable both parents and children to maintain their mother tongue and improve their speaking and reading skills. In 2014, the project expanded across Switzerland. All in all, storytelling sessions were held in 51 locations, including the French-speaking region of Switzerland (where the project is known by the name of "1001 histoires"). Around 1,500 families met each other in 14 cantons and tell each other stories in 17 different languages.

Additional information: Schweizerisches Institut für Kinder- und Jugendmedien (SIKJM), www.sikjm.ch