

THE GERMAN INITIATIVE 'LOKALE BÜNDNISSE FÜR FAMILIE'

JAN SCHRÖDER

1. OVERVIEW

More than 13,000 institutions, thereof more than 4,000 business companies, work together in 500 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'. Together they realize more than 5,200 projects for more family-friendliness of the German society on the local level. And often have fun doing so! Symposia concerning the balance of family and work life, a ticket for ten hours of child care, cheap diaper baskets for young parents, workshops concerning the education of children, grandpa- and grandma services and a safe way to school may serve as small examples for the huge variety of these projects. Every single one of these 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' is self-organized and decides by itself what has to be and what will be done.

In every one of these 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' partners from different groups of society come together in an outcome-oriented manner, e.g.: business companies, local governments, social organizations, churches, trade unions, chambers of industry and commerce and the families themselves. Starting as partnerships to realise projects many 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' develop to local networks with strong social bonds. Even on the national level step by step a family of the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie', the 'Bündnisfamilie' develops.

The idea was brought up in 2004 by the former German family minister Renate Schmidt. At that time she started the initiative 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' together with the President of the association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce Ludwig Georg Braun. Her vision was: all over Germany 100 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' are working by the end of 2006. In November 2004 the hundredth 'Lokales Bündnis für Familie' joined the initiative! By the end of 2006 more than 350 were active and nowadays we can count 500 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'.

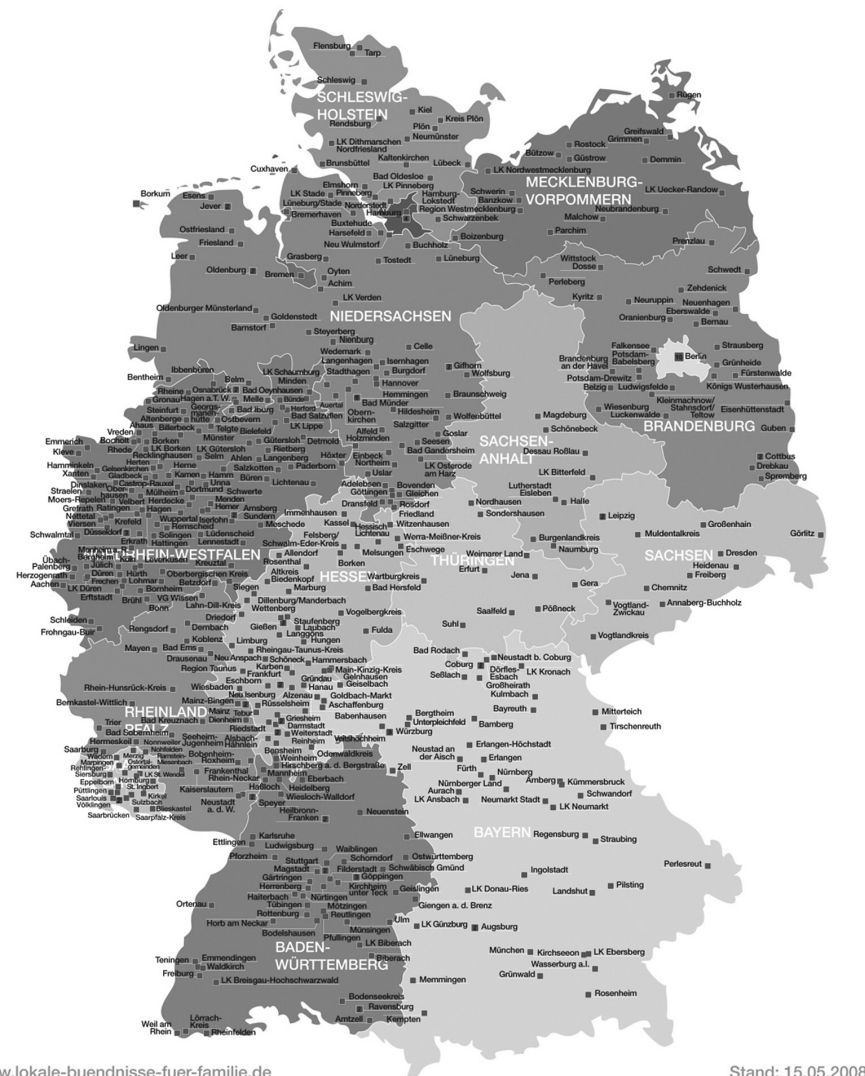
A service agency acting nationwide was installed by the Federal Ministry and supports this development. It just entered the fifth year of work. Here 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' can request support in building up and developing their organizational structures. Support is also given in questions of relationship to press and other media. And finally networking and knowledge transfer are main assets since the service agency focusses on sustainability of the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'.

In a first step this paper decomposes the initiative as it exists in the year 2008 into its structural elements after giving a short overview of the German family policies. In the next step the path of development leading to the seen structure is outlined and finally everything is put together again by adding the construction principles and driving powers to the structural elements.

In this manner it can be shown that subsidiarity, solidarity and market forces work together to produce the common good 'family-friendliness' which enables families as well as family-members to choose their private way to combine work and family life.

LOKALE BÜNDNISSE FÜR FAMILIE
AKTIONSTAG 2008
FÜR KLEINE GROSSES LEISTEN!
 Eine Initiative
 des Bundesministeriums für Familie, Senioren,
 Frauen und Jugend und des Europäischen Sozialfonds

500 Lokale Bündnisse für Familie



2. GERMAN FAMILY POLICY – A SHORT OVERVIEW

Time, infrastructure and income – this is what families need to realize the freedom of choice in arranging their family and work life. German family policy has a focus on this goal, 'freedom of choice', and these three issues. They have been stressed in the seventh national report on family issues.

In consequence family policy relies strongly on partnerships with other institutions. First of all because time and infrastructure are influenced by many partners: business companies, communes, trade unions, social organizations and public transportation may serve as example. And secondly because the facilities of the National government to influence work and family life on the local level are limited. These partnerships work because in the last years it has been widely understood that family-friendliness is not only a social but an economical benefit for society. A family-friendly society has a stronger national economy and stronger business companies than a society where this common good is not or little present.

Several studies have outlined these economical effects. This leads us to the elements of German family policy:

- working on public attention for the importance of family-friendliness by playing on the entire keyboard of public relations is one essential part,
- ensuring income especially for working parents like the "Elterngeld" is another and finally
- the forming of societal partnerships is the third branch of this new and sustainable policy which was started in the year 2003 and continued by the new minister for family affairs Ursula von der Leyen in 2005.

Altogether this new German family policy is different from the classical welfare policy – it is a societal policy.

Partnerships are formed on the national as well as on the local level. On the national level in 2003 the ministry formed the 'Allianz für die Familie' together with the head organizations of German economy, the national association of the chambers of commerce, industry and handcraft, trade unions, foundations active in the field of compatibility of work and family life as well as scientists and politicians. The partners of the 'Allianz für die Familie' start initiatives and projects which support the described development of German society. One of the major assets is the initiative 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'.

It follows the goals:

- Time and infrastructure for family life
- Societal engagement for family-friendliness
- Sustainability of the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'.

3. STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS OF THE INITIATIVE 'LOKALE BÜNDNISSE FÜR FAMILIE'

Many different partners and networks shape the face of the initiative 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'. Every one of them takes over specific functions, acts with a specific attitude toward the common good 'family-friendliness' and interacts with the other partners. This paragraph gives an overview on who is active in the initiative and what they do for the success of the initiative. This functional approach sets the basis for understanding how the initiative works. Nevertheless it is limited like any other organigram. It has to be seen in connection with the construction principles and the driving powers described later on.

3.1. *The Ministry*

The idea to start the initiative was developed in the German ministry of family affairs. Since then one major branch of its activity is the financing and steering (see 4.2) of the service agency 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' as well as the managing of the whole initiative. Financing in the necessary scale is possible through the financial aid of the European Commission. It must be mentioned that the single 'Lokales Bündnis für Familie' doesn't receive any financial aid by the German Ministry of Family Affairs.

Another branch of activities of the ministry deals with initiatives, studies, projects and publications to create and disseminate knowledge useful for the initiative. Some of these are realized within the 'Allianz für Familie' or together with other partners. This sets up a strong basis of knowledge and awareness which is crucial for the success of the initiative 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'. In this context one has to mention the intense work on public relations by the ministry which is essential for the mobilization of partners.

Furthermore several projects initiated and financed by the ministry produce in-depth knowledge of the potentials and functional principles of 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'. In 2006 and 2007 studies were realized concerning the economical benefit and the internal network-structure of 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'. 2007 and 2008 three 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' are supported in developing methods, instruments and proceedings in the outcome-oriented management of 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'. Since 2004 six projects have been realized to develop specific solutions for more family-friendliness and thus to demonstrate the potentials of networks on the local area. The development of family-cooperatives and solutions for family-friendliness in hotels and restaurants may hold as examples for topics of these projects.

3.2. *The single 'Lokales Bündnis für Familie'*

As mentioned above in a 'Lokales Bündnis für Familie' different partners from all parts of local society come together to create 'family-friendliness'. Among these partners one can find small and big business companies, social associations, communes, trade unions, churches, chambers of trade and industry, job centres, sports associations, nurseries, hospitals, kindergartens and so on. Every one of them has individual goals. Within the 'Lokales Bündnis für Familie' they develop solutions which serve these individual goals as well as the common goal of 'growing family-friendliness of the local society'.

Let's look at a typical example. German school holidays last about 13 weeks per year. German employees enjoy something around 6 weeks of holidays. So often enough employees have to deal with several weeks without child-care for their schoolchildren. This is a problem for the employers too, because parents are distracted, some may become sick and altogether quality and output of work drop. In many 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' employers have found partners to provide child care in the holidays. Costs are shared between companies, parents and other stakeholders, knowledge is introduced by nursery teachers, rooms and playgrounds are allocated by firms, staff is found by job centres – and in the end: children are happy and have exciting holidays, employees have a higher attachment to their company, work flow is better and some nursery teachers may have even found a new part-time-job. Economical and social goals are served likewise.

And this is the main reason why nationwide more than 4,000 companies and almost all of the nationwide 81 chambers of industry and commerce engage in 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'. Altogether far more than 13,000 institutions of all kinds are active and realize more than 5,200 projects for more local family-friendliness. Every one of these 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' is individual in its topics, projects, participants and its way to organize itself. Some of them form loose networks, others have a strong project-oriented structure and still others exist in the form of round tables. To realize the effectiveness of these networks it is necessary to keep in mind that a main outcome of the 'Bündnis'-work is that all participants become more family-friendly themselves. And this reflects in their everyday work and not only in the 'Bündnis'-projects. These projects may be found in seven fields of action:

- compatibility of work and family life
- child care

- education
- living together of the generations
- family-friendly environment
- civil engagement and
- health and care

By far the most important ones – measured by the all over amount of engagement – are the first two mentioned fields of action.

Every one of the ‘Lokale Bündnisse für Familie’ has a self-defined organizational structure as an individual program of action. Structure and program depend on the origin, the goals and the interests of the local partners who join the network.

3.3. *The ‘Bündnisfamilie’*

All 500 ‘Lokale Bündnisse für Familie’ together form the ‘Bündnisfamilie’ – the family of ‘Lokale Bündnisse für Familie’. This ‘Bündnisfamilie’ is characterized by a feeling of belonging together. Within the ‘Bündnisfamilie’ a lot of social contacts and networks exist and knowledge flows between the ‘Lokale Bündnisse für Familie’. This knowledge covers the three topics:

- working principles of networks,
- hints for the successful realization of projects and
- means of public relations.

‘Bündnisfamilie’ is more than merely a word for the sum of all ‘Lokale Bündnisse für Familie’. It uses all the connotations of the word ‘family’ and thus it somehow expresses the spirit of the initiative (see 6.3): ‘As a ‘Lokales Bündnis für Familie’ you are not alone but you are part of a big nationwide movement towards more family-friendliness.’

3.4. *‘Bündnisfreunde’*

‘Bündnisfreunde’ – the friends of the ‘Bündnisse’ – this is how we call partners on the national or federal state level who support ‘Lokale Bündnisse für Familie’ in their work. These partners are large business companies like Rama (Unilever), JAKO-O (a company selling toys), Adidas and Douglas, almost all federal states, associations of German towns, villages and counties, foundations acting in the field of family policy, the national associations of handicraft, industry and trade, the national association of trade unions as well as national associations of social welfare institutions and politicians acting on the local level. ‘Bündnisfreunde’ either

have a close relationship to the national ministry of family affairs or to the service agency – sometimes even both.

Every one of these institutions supports the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' in a different way. Some of them are members of the 'board of the trustees' and thus demonstrate the importance of the initiative by appealing for engagement within the initiative. Many of the federal ministers for family affairs personally engage for the initiative in public. Some 'Bündnisfreunde' give advice to 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' concerning financing projects or necessary knowledge for the realization of projects. The federal state Brandenburg e.g. shows 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' how to achieve European financing for their projects.

Others realize projects in public relations together with the service agency. Rama for example realized the national campaign 'Mehr Kinder besser betreut' with more than 1,000,000,000 media contacts. JAKO-O presents the development of the initiative regularly in its catalogues. And the national association of towns and villages realizes nationwide symposia on topics of family-friendliness.

And finally networking is supported by a lot of 'Bündnisfreunde'. First of all they support the networking of 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' and thus the development of a strong 'Bündnisfamilie'. And secondly they bring in their own networks on the federal or national level.

3.5. *The service agency 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'*

The service agency offers five different kinds of service to the initiative. It is maintained by the consultancy JSB Dr. Jan Schröder Beratungsgesellschaft mbh & Co. KG. The work of the agency is financed by the German Ministry of Family Affairs and the European Social Fund. Details concerning the value of this structure and the way of managing the initiative and the agency may be found in paragraphs '6.4 Structure' and '4.2 Managing the unmanageable'. The services offered by the agency comprise the following:

Consultancy for constitution and further development of 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'. Consulting aims at the organizational development of the local networks including the finding of participants. Inspiration is given concerning goals and projects for more family-friendliness. Consultancy follows the idea 'help for self-help' and the consultants help intensively during the first steps of network-building. Afterwards they restrict themselves to short impulses for the further development. The idea behind this is a

strong belief that it is very important for 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' to take over responsibility for their own development in a very early stage. Understanding this type of consultancy is crucial for understanding the manifestation of subsidiarity within the initiative.

Public relations. First of all the service agency helps 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' to learn about the way public relations works. This comprises measures, techniques and strategies as well. In consequence the initiative has hundreds of small local press offices and not only the single press office of the service agency. The latter is especially active on the regional and local level to contact the press and to inform them about the developments within the initiative. E.g. every month a 'Bündnis' of the month is chosen and local newspapers as well as regional radio stations love to report about such approvals.

Networking: the development of the 'Bündnisfamilie' (see 3.3) crucially depends on knowing each other personally. Internet may help to get in touch but the personal contact between partners from different 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' is crucial. Symposia and regional meetings are important means to support networking and the development of the spirit of the initiative (see 6.3). The website supports networking by supplying addresses and knowledge about what 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' do. Furthermore networking is assisted by the messages of the internal communication. One is 'We don't deal with copyright questions – we deal with the question of copying right!'

Developing the quality of projects. know-how to realize projects has been gathered in more than 5.200 projects by now. Nobody can write all this down. But the service agency works to make this know-how accessible by describing projects realized often and by building up an internet-based database of projects to enforce the 'copying right'.

Building up and developing strategic partnerships: as shown in '3.4 Bündnisfreunde' give different forms of support to 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'. Part of the work of the service agency is to develop concepts of cooperation and realising them together with partners on the Federal or National level. Essential parts of this work are the discussion of shared goals and a decision which means of cooperation is adequate.

All these services have gone through a lot of changes during the last four years (see 4.1). To support these changes internal quality management as well as an outcome-oriented management have continuously been developed.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF THE INITIATIVE

Since 2004 the initiative has seen extremely different phases of development. The nucleus in 2003 consisted of some good examples and the intention of the German Ministry of Family Affairs to convince others of the idea of 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'. The service agency was founded rather quickly and then things began to develop in a pace nobody really had foreseen. This gave rise to undreamed-of possibilities for the enlargement of the common good 'family-friendliness'. On the other side the ministry and the service agency had to cope with undreamed-of challenges too: the arising huge numbers of partners and demands stood for a pile of work as well as for new chances of development made possible by the large numbers and the feeling of belonging together in the 'Bündnisfamilie'.

A phase model was developed in the second year of the initiative giving orientation for the development. It was followed by stepwise implementing of an outcome-oriented management model. This makes the common good 'family-friendliness' accessible to management efforts in an initiative characterized by a limited influence of the partners on the National level. Because of the subsidiary setting one may speak of the 'management of the unmanageable'.

New developments are still going on. And most of these developments are due to the creativity and strong will of the partners in the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'. Management will follow these changes and most probably new phases will occur soon.

4.1. *Phase Model*

Four phases characterize the development of the initiative 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie': the phase of acclamation, the phase of affirmation, the phase of societal onset and finally the phase of sustainability; in German: 'Akklamations-, Affirmations-, Aufbruchs- und Nachhaltigkeitsphase'. These phases are characterized by the development of the structural elements, specific messages in public relations and the setting of services kept in hold by the service agency. Though phases overlap and none of them really ever ends their start can clearly be distinguished looking backwards. The following table illustrates the attributes of these phases.

Phase	Structural elements	Message	Service by the service agency
Acclamation	Rising number of 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'	Organize 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' – it's worthwhile!	Consulting in questions of network building and public relations
Affirmation	develops into a 'Bündnisfamilie', starts the dissemination of knowledge	See, it works!	+ networking + transfer of knowledge
Societal onset	gets support by strong societal partners	Society changes!	+ binding of partners
Sustainability	and intensifies knowledge transfer in questions of networking, project work and press relations and develops self-supporting regional support structures.	It's a lasting phenomenon!	+ intensifying all services concerning aspects of sustainability

4.2. *Managing the unmanageable*

Why unmanageable? Simply because of the subsidiary structure of the initiative: Nobody can tell 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' what to do. They define themselves what is necessary for more family-friendliness on the local level. The ministry does not directly influence the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' in their decision about what is important on the local level.

Nevertheless: management is still possible. Influencing of the initiative works by disseminating information and defining the services offered by the service agency. Doing this the specific needs of the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' play an important role. Management is a 'bottom-up' as well as a 'top-down' process. The service agency is set up as a link between the partners 'ministry' and 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'.

After this general introduction let's have a closer look: First of all management deals with watching developments within the initiative. Secondly management means changing the wording and services offered by the serv-

ice agency. This may be illustrated by a simple example. In the end of the year 2004 more than 100 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' were part of the initiative. This made it possible to arrange meetings not only on the national but also on the federal level – a level where regional identity is existent in Germany. In these meetings the seed of the spirit of the initiative started to sprout. This led to the following: in the middle of 2005 the word 'Bündnisfamilie' was used the first time by the service agency. And it was accepted by the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' because it gave a feeling of 'Bündnis'-identity loaded up with positive connotations. This was another push for the growing of the spirit of the initiative.

The way this management works changed a lot within the last four years. Watching developments relied on personal impressions of the ministry and the service agency in the first one and a half years. The huge pace of changes didn't give much time for development of any measuring or evaluation instruments. In 2006 a first external evaluation of twelve 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' was done to measure economic effects and to illustrate the organizational structure of 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'. This gave valuable results for the consulting services of the service agency and inspired the development of self evaluation tools for the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' introduced in 2007. Parallel to this mapping developed – maps of engagement in network development, network maps and so on... In other words: monitoring became more professional. In the upcoming next two years evaluation will be enforced – concerning the image, outcome and way of working of the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'. This will be everyday monitoring as well as scientific evaluation.

The second branch of management – the changing of messages and services of the service agency – was professionalized as well. This was quite a challenge because the resources available did not grow with the number of 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' and the rising number of services offered. So prioritization became important more and more as well as the realization of synergies and the cooperation with partners. 'Don't do anything which somebody else can do for the initiative!' became central for the development of the service agency. Further on management-instruments like portfolio-matrix, scenario-techniques and outcome-diagrams supported a systematic comparison of expected outcome and invested resources and thus supported decision-making. A specific outcome-oriented contract between ministry and JSB ensured the realization of the decisions made.

Altogether management in the beginning was an act of incremental development, typical of a pioneer business. With growth and experience the necessity of systematic management grew and professionalization took place, typical of a growing business.

5. SOLIDARITY, SUBSIDIARITY AND MARKET FORCES – CONSTRUCTION PRINCIPLES OF THE INITIATIVE

Subsidiarity makes the initiative attractive. Solidarity makes it strong. And market forces work in favour of the initiative. In short this describes the interaction of the three construction principles of the initiative.

5.1. *Solidarity*

Solidarity has three different forms of appearance in the initiative: solidarity between individuals, solidarity of individuals with society, solidarity between the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'.

Examples of solidarity between individuals are projects like 'Wunschgroßeltern' or 'Sozialpaten'. In 'Wunschgroßeltern'-projects young families and elder people without grandchildren come together and develop family-like bounds – the wish to have a grandmother, a grandfather or a grandchild is fulfilled in this way. 'Sozialpaten' are individually engaged people with a lot of life experience, who 'adopt' others and help them e.g. in financial questions, in contact with authorities, in difficult situations within the family or in other questions of daily life.

Solidarity of individuals with society is found in all areas of the initiative. Why do people engage in establishing the local networks and do much more than project work? Why do companies like JAKO-O, a German toy company, publish information about the initiative in their toy catalogues? Why do more than 1% of the inhabitants of Isselburg come together and found a 'Lokales Bündnis' in their town? Many of these people are driven by far more than individual interest to realise certain projects – let it be altruistic or economical interest? They engage themselves because they feel solidarity with the whole society – on the local as well as on the national level. They engage because they are convinced that it is worthwhile to change society in a human way. They engage because they feel enlarging the common good 'family-friendliness' is a good thing worth the effort.

Finally we can find solidarity among the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' themselves. Ab initio one of the central messages of the service agency was: 'Don't care about copyright-questions! Copy things right, learn from each other – this is the right way to achieve as much family-friendliness as possible'. Probably because of the widespread solidarity of the second kind – solidarity of individuals with society – this message was turned into action. The whole 'Bündnisfamilie' is a network with a huge flow of knowledge between the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'. Partnerships between coordi-

nators develop, partners of one 'Bündnis' travel to the other one to tell their success-stories. All together there is an up-coming feeling of 'We belong to one big family!' The 'Bündnisfamilie' itself is developing from a knowledge-oriented partnership to a national social network.

5.2. *Subsidiarity*

From the beginning subsidiarity is a trademark of the initiative. The German Ministry of Family Affairs offers assistance to local partners without demanding that these partners take over the political goals of the ministry. The main reason for this approach of an enabling policy: time and infrastructure for families are mainly influenced by local partners and circumstances. This means that in every city, in every county, even in every village family-life is different. Thus only local partners possess the necessary knowledge and the influence to produce the common good 'family-friendliness'. In addition one has to keep in mind that in Germany local actions of the central government are restricted by law. In conclusion the German ministry established the service agency for local consulting and nationwide networking. Furthermore the national network 'Allianz für die Familie' supports the initiative.

Altogether the initiative is an excellent example of subsidiarity: the responsibility for family friendliness is located on the local level. The national level supports the local level in those fields of work where knowledge, experience, activating elements or organizational power is needed. This support is given without influencing the topic of the individual projects on the local level. Nevertheless in the end we find a 'win-win' situation because most 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' engage in the field of better compatibility of family and job life as well as in projects for better child care. Exactly these are the main fields of interest for the Federal Government and the co-financing European Union. Additionally building of networks is a goal of the European Social Fund and societal engagement is a central goal of the Federal Ministry of family affairs as an element of the new sustainable family policy. The newest development in creating 'win-win' situations are partnerships between the Federal Ministry and 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' to develop new ideas for child care.

Subsidiarity as a construction principle may be found in even more places within the initiative. More than 50 'Lokale Bündnisse' exist on the county level – typically areas with 100,000 to 300,000 inhabitants. Many of them deal with initiating further 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' in the

county villages (mostly less than 30,000 inhabitants) or supporting the existing 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' by knowledge-transfer. Several of the German states do the same. Big national partners like the trade unions, the associations of the chambers of crafts, industry and commerce, the national associations of communes and counties as well as several foundations support the initiative. They generate and spread arguments for engagement and information on the topic of family-friendliness and convince their members to engage. They take part in big events of the initiative as the yearly actions on the International Day of the Family (May 15th). This development is enforced by the actions of the German ministry and the service agency.

At the local level we find another exciting development. Amongst the local authorities and the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' the relationship is characterized by strong changes. In the beginning of the initiative local authorities supported 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' following the principle of subsidiarity. With the steady growth of many of the 'Bündnisse' they start to be partners of the communes – meeting at eye level.

Concerning subsidiarity let's give a last glimpse to the service agency itself. It works like a sort of intermediate organization – not really subsidiary and not really centrally organized. It was built up by the consultancy JSB Dr. Jan Schröder Beratungsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG, which won several competitions initiated by the German Ministry of Family Affairs to explore the market for this kind of services. The range of supporting services offered by the service agency is defined by the individual needs of the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie', by the general development of the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' and by the interests of the German Ministry of Family Affairs as well.

5.3. *Market forces*

Market forces lead to a high interest of business companies and local authorities to engage in 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'. Staffing policy, product policy, public relations and the attractiveness of sites for companies and families are the major topics in this field.

In growing numbers companies realize qualified personnel is getting rare in Germany. As a reaction to this measures of work-life balance become an element of staffing policy in an increasing number of companies. But, for example it is not easy for most companies to realise childcare by themselves, be it child care during the long school holidays or child care

in the evening hours when the normal kindergarten is closed. 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' are the ideal place to find collaborators with the necessary knowledge and competences.

In addition engagement in a 'Lokales Bündnis für Familie' may lead to new product ideas. For example a company in Halle nowadays sells the product 'family-friendly living' instead of the product 'four-room apartment'. The new product consists of the apartment plus childcare in the near neighbourhood plus play yards plus... It was realized with assistance of several partners, e.g. the local authorities, a private association of parents, local youth clubs and others more.

Last but not least companies realise that being family-friendly is good for the image: family-friendliness not only attracts employees but family-friendliness sells. In 2006 the initiative realised a campaign together with Unilever under the brand 'Mehr Kinder besser betreut'. The deal was: good image for the product Rama and public visibility for the initiative 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'. To do this in a credible way Unilever itself increased its internal efforts to raise the family-friendliness of the working conditions.

Local authorities don't act on product markets, but they do act on site markets. Every day companies and families decide where to live or to build up a new plant. So-called 'soft' factors like 'family-friendliness' or 'cultural attractions' become hard factors in this competition in an increasing amount. Publications of the German Ministry of Family Affairs like the Family Atlas enforce this competition. The national associations of counties and villages recommend their members to engage in 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' to influence this soft factor positively. At the end of the year 2007 it was put on the record that 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' are strategic partners of the villages to improve the landscape of child care.

6. WHY DOES IT WORK? – DRIVING POWERS OF THE INITIATIVE

Without the people acting within the initiative structural elements, construction principles and a phase model are nothing. They are the clue to understanding the success of the whole initiative. Family-friendliness is not just anything for them, it is a goal worth much more effort than necessary to realise local projects. This attitude of many of the partners finds its reflection in the spirit of the initiative. Professional structures, communication and management of knowledge support the development of this spirit as they help partners to fulfil their goals.

6.1. *Family-friendliness*

Family-friendliness is a very specific common good. In realising it a huge variety of other goods are realised: economic values like family-friendly jobs, family-friendly goods and services or social values like a better living-together of the generations. This makes it easy for institutional partners with very different background to engage in producing the common good together because at the same time they help to fulfil their own institutional goals. And they do this in a very efficient way in the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'.

Yet another attitude makes this common good special. In comparison with goods like 'healthy environment' success may be achieved much faster. Within a few months, e.g. it is possible to establish child care during the school holidays, whereas projects concerning environment usually have longer life-cycles. These elements of quick success are essential for the working of 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' – they make it fun to be and stay engaged.

And interesting enough – in Germany as in a lot of other countries – nobody really powerful felt responsible for the common good 'family-friendliness'. This makes it easy for 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' to establish themselves because no institution sees a competitor in them.

6.2. *People*

How to describe more than 10,000 people? Outcome- instead of problem-orientation comes to mind – no endless discussions of problems or definitions of the word 'Familie' but finding solutions characterizes the way of working in 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie'. People are open for and interested in other opinions – this attitude is the core of finding new solutions and 'win-win' situations.

Who are these people? A major part of the partners in the 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' are representatives of institutions – quite a large number working at the management level. They bring in both their personal and institutional power which makes the initiative different from grass-root movements where people act as individuals. This configuration ensures access to resources and influence on many fields important for developing the common good 'family friendliness'.

And last but not least – most civil movements preferably accept people with altruistic attitudes as real participants. 'Common goods can only be

produced when the partners want to do good things in an altruistic or idealistic way!' seems to be common belief within many civil movements. Not so in the initiative 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' – here you can find altruistic or idealistic people as well as people with economic motives – and many of them follow both motives. And probably all of the partners have a humanistic idea of man.

6.3. *Spirit*

The best way to feel the spirit of the initiative is visiting one of the many events where 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' meet. These events are something like a family festivity as well as a forum for discussion, exchange and development of new ideas. Positive action and change lie in the air as well as a feeling of belonging to an exciting movement not yet seen in Germany. Scientists already state the initiative is one of the biggest civil movements seen.

One part of the memory of the initiative is the First German Family day. In the middle of Berlin the initiative 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' with more than 1,500 hosts had more than 20,000 guests – on a brilliant sunny day! The German President congratulated giving the initiative the title of a location in the 'Land of Ideas'. And the initiative proudly showed what is going on in Germany. Pictures of this event illustrate the spirit of the initiative. One thing you can see: people enjoy being part of the initiative. In Germany you seldom hear the word 'Spaß' in connection with efficient and meaningful work – in the initiative you do. It's part of the spirit.





Most probably this family feeling develops because ‘Lokale Bündnisse für Familie’ attract a specific type of people. No money is given by the government. So only those engage who are really willing to change something towards a family-friendly society. And they keep going because the initiative and other parts of the German family policy give them the feeling they do the right thing at the right time. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation come together – and give rise to the specific spirit which makes many of the protagonists engage much more than usual.

6.4. Structure

The operation of the service agency was given to the private consultancy JSB Dr. Jan Schröder Beratungsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG with specific knowledge in outcome-oriented management and the consulting of networks. This specific public-private partnership helps the whole initiative to work in the way it does. By outsourcing the ministry not only buys knowledge and manpower. The PPP-structure makes it possible for the service agency to operate in kind of a semi-independent way.

Through cooperative outcome-oriented management its actions are linked to the new sustainable family policy. Its mandate is to realize one of the central ideas of this policy: only the cooperation of different institutions, especially covering business companies, makes family friendliness possible in a broad manner. On the other hand the mandate does not comprise telling the local partners what to do or not to do to achieve more family-friendliness. Management is a management by goals relying strongly on

confidence in the work of the service agency. Confidential cooperation between ministry and service agency was one criterion in the call for bids because of its high importance.

Consequently in finding ways to cooperate with 'Bündnisfreunde' or in developing the consulting at the local level the service agency is quite free in the choice of means as long as they meet the goals agreed upon with the Ministry of Family Affairs. As a result of this the service agency could develop its own institutional identity and is experienced as a rather independent institution by partners in all areas of the initiative. This plus the developing spirit helped to set off unseen forces for a cooperative movement towards a family-friendly society. This structure probably gives strong support to the seen subsidiarity of the initiative.

6.5. *Communication*

'Do good things and talk about them!' From the beginning this was a central message distributed and realized within the initiative. Good public relations of the ministry and the whole initiative turned family-policy into a 'winning topic'. This is the result of independent nation-wide studies. Family policy is no longer seen as a part of social welfare but it is seen as an important part of societal development – with economical importance. More than 20.000 press articles – mostly in local newspapers concerning local actions – together with campaigns and actions of the 'Bündnisfreunde' have left quite an impression.

And on the local level communication helps to develop the spirit of the 'Bündnisfamilie' and enforces the learning from each other as well as attracting new partners to engage in a 'Lokales Bündnis für Familie'. Communication in combination with the proven positive results of 'Bündnis'-work leads to statements as the following by a High German official in a federal ministry 'You can't walk past 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' if you want to do good family policy nowadays.' Just remember: in 2004 nobody knew about the idea and 4 years later an unforced statement like this!

6.6. *Know-how transfer*

'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' produce know-how: know-how in realizing projects, know-how in organizing networks and partnerships and finally know-how in public relations. The great value of this know-how: it is not academic but pure practice. One can speak of the initiative 'Lokale Bünd-

nisse für Familie' as a great nationwide laboratory for realizing family-friendliness on the local level and making it public. But it is more than a laboratory. Know-how is spread throughout the 'Bündnisfamilie' – a nationwide network of knowledge develops day by day.

Let's have a look at how this distribution of knowledge works. Every single bit of know-how is connected to people – people who have experienced difficulties and the great feeling of success. Speaking in general terms there are two ways of distributing this know-how. Separating it from the people with experience and writing it down – knowledge then is paper-based or linked to any other medium of information. Or bring people into contact. The initiative stresses especially the latter. Events, internet, consulting – every product of the service agency aims at bringing people together – at the local, regional, federal and national level. Know-how transfer is accompanied by social networking this way. The term 'know-how transfer' which usually has rather technical connotations turns into a major contribution to the spirit of the initiative.

7. CONCLUSION

The initiative 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' can only be understood as a whole. The academic approach may put flashlights on single parts of the initiative. Some more parts may be found on the web-site www.lokale-buendnisse-fuer-familie.de. But you don't get the whole picture unless everything is brought together in reality. I say the following coming from High Energy Physics as a scientist and usually dedicated to analytical work:

Only feeling the initiative is understanding the initiative!
And I'd cordially like to invite you to do so!