

# Introduction

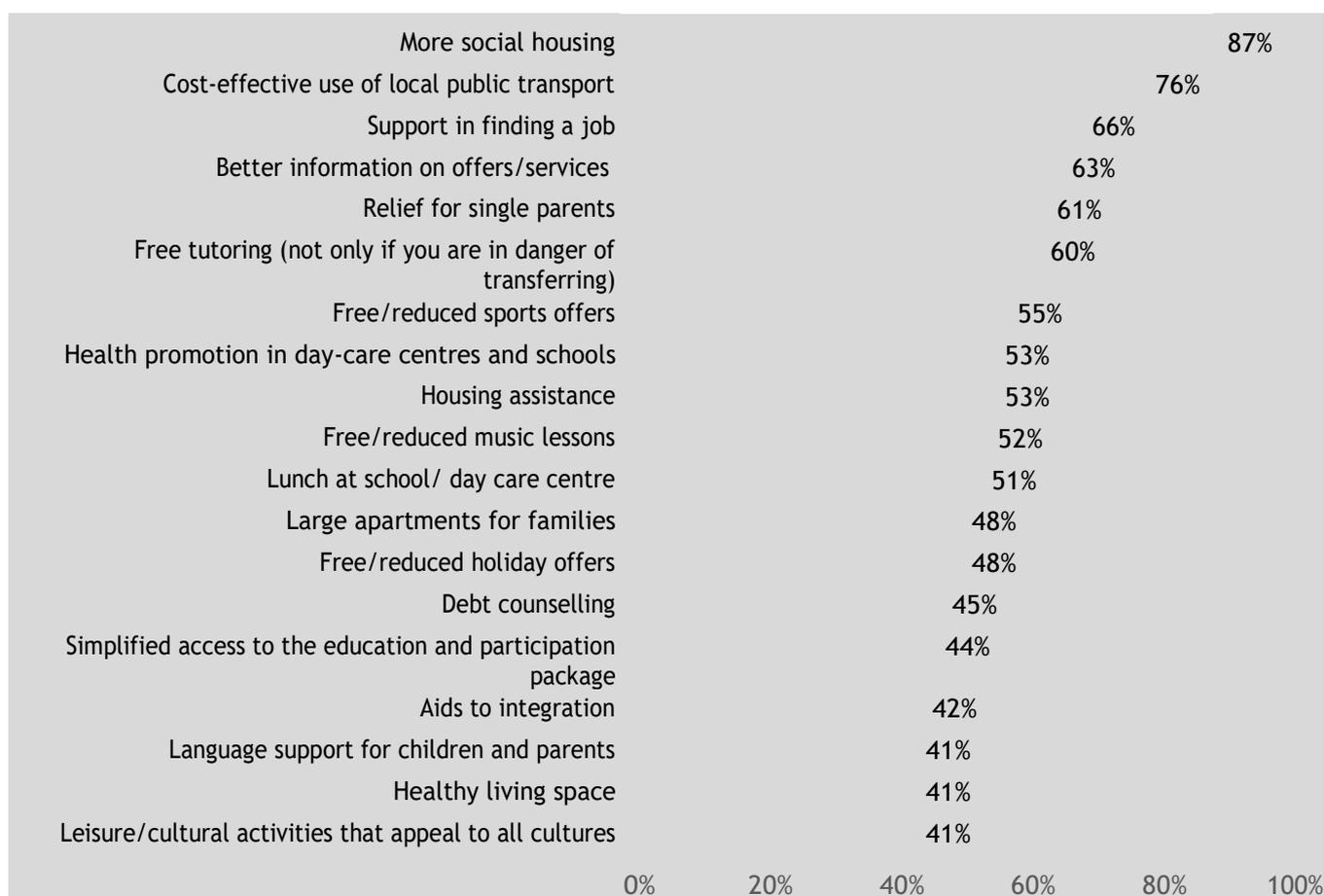
## How it all began

Not talking about families and child poverty, but talking *with* families - that is the starting point of the Tübingen approach. Listening to parents, children and adolescents as experts in their own matters and developing concrete steps for improvement from this is what distinguishes the Tübingen Way.

In 2013, the project "Good Opportunities for All Children - Actively Combating Child Poverty with Families" was launched with accompanying scientific research.

More than 250 families in Tübingen were interviewed about their everyday experiences in dealing with poverty and about suggestions for solutions - not by researchers or experts, but by people in their environment who have access to the topic, either through commitment or through their own experience of poverty. Volunteers and full-time employees were recruited and sensitized to the topic by means of a snowball procedure and were also surveyed. A total of over 400 people from all areas of the city - from sport and education to culture, leisure and social affairs - took part in the interviews. A comprehensive social area analysis of child poverty in Tübingen is thus available.

Fig. 1 Statements by the families: What kind of help should there be more of in Tübingen?



Source: Final project report Good Opportunities for All Children - Actively Combating Child Poverty with Families. University City of Tübingen 2014

The result of the family survey and the social space analysis: a Tübingen agenda with goals, fields of action and measures, derived from the most important results of the surveys. The issues that are most important to families have been incorporated directly into the agenda. The goals have been consistently implemented step by step ever since - following the approval and express support of the municipal council and the administrative leadership.

The Round Table on Child Poverty, founded in 2014 by the city, the League of Voluntary Welfare Workers and the Alliance for the Family, is the platform and hub for this. More than 50 actors from all areas of the city work together in it. This concept forms the common basis and is at the same time the result of five years of experience. For internal and external communication, the Round Table on Child Poverty uses the website of the Alliance for Families: [www.buefa-tue.de](http://www.buefa-tue.de). For interested readers, further information on all approaches and projects can be found here.

## What distinguishes the Tübingen approach

Three dimensions are fundamental:

### 1. Reference to specific living environment:

The most important areas of life are crucial for successful poverty prevention. We improve the opportunities for participation and development in the fields of action:

Social and cultural participation, livelihood security, Education and employment, health, and parental empowerment.

### 2. Social space orientation:

We look at all districts and suburbs and create inviting and supportive structures and services there. We check whether the offers in the districts and neighbourhoods are needs-based, accessible and known.

### 3. Reference to specific stages of life:

We create a prevention chain through interlinked support structures from pregnancy and birth to the start of a career. We focus on the transitions. We check whether there are good support services for every age.

## The Tübingen Way is resource-oriented

We see children and families as experts in their own right. Empowerment is important to us and for us this means: recognising strengths, using abilities, promoting self-determination, participation and involvement. It also means creating spaces, opportunities and possibilities so that self-help and active participation become possible. Taking up suggestions and providing resources for good ideas.

Resource orientation means: not reinventing everything. Seeing and using what already exists, cleverly networking what is already there and linking it to new ideas, avoiding duplicate structures and, above all, ensuring that good services are known.

Resource orientation also means that everyone who wants to participate is welcome. The Round Table on Child Poverty is open and thrives on broad and diverse participation from the entire urban society.

# Fields of action and approaches

## Field of action social and cultural participation

*Our guiding objective:  
Every young person can participate  
in the diversity of city life.*

For us, this means that all children, young people and families should be able to make use of Tübingen's facilities and discover their abilities, even if their wallets are small.

## How do we implement this?

The key project for promoting participation is the **Kreis BonusCard Junior (KBC)** in Tübingen. It includes around 80 strongly discounted to free offers in the areas of leisure, sport, culture, education, mobility and shopping. Introduced in 2010 as the Tübingen KinderCard, the concept was transferred district-wide in 2018. With the KBC, around 2,000 children and young people in the city area benefit from the wide range of offers every year. The city provides financial resources for this; however, without the considerable discounts and the commitment of the clubs and institutions, the KBC would not be conceivable.

Through the creation of the **coordination office for children's opportunities** (75 percent), it was possible to expand the participation offers for children and young people in line with their needs. The main tasks of the office are the attraction of new partners, the processing of all offers, the support of new projects and, above all, the good and always up-to-date information of families about available reductions and assistance. Here, the **network TAPs** - Tübingen Contact Persons for Child Poverty and Child Opportunities (see section Strengthening Families) plays a major role. Families and multipliers are informed about offers and activities through a regular newsletter.

With the **KreisBonusCard extra**, families on the poverty line (up to 20 percent above the ALG II limit) have also been able to take advantage of the reductions since 2015. The KBC extra can be applied for at many advice centres.

Smaller initiatives arose from the work in the Round Table, such as: SSC Tübingen and students from Rock Your Life e. V. (RYL) offer free monthly punting trips in the project **Stocherkahn für alle!** RYL also coordinates a **ticket exchange for** events for sponsor tandems. Youth engagement against child poverty plays an important role; this is also reflected in the **Wunschbaum e. V.** association, which has been organising Christmas presents and school supplies for children from families with little money for over ten years.

## What else do we want to achieve?

The **cooperation between the city and the district** in the prevention of child poverty is to be further expanded. Together we are working to ensure that

- the federal government's education and participation package is used even more, especially in the area of school transport and extra tuition,
- the innovations in the child allowance are made known,
- the participation offers for adults with KreisBonusCard are further expanded,
- poverty among the elderly is addressed and a KreisBonusCard is introduced especially for older people.

Another aim is to set up a **"Culture for All"** project to enable people on low incomes to access cultural events through free tickets and remaining places.

## Field of action livelihood security

*Our guiding objective:  
Every young person's basic  
material needs are covered*

This field of action deals with basic areas such as work, livelihood, housing and mobility. The last two points were by far the most frequently mentioned problem areas in the family survey. Another challenge was and is to ensure the basic provision and integration of the large number of refugee families.

## How do we implement this?

The Housing WG is committed to helping people with disadvantages find suitable housing. One success: the municipal agency for subsidised housing, the so-called **Clearingstelle Wohnen, which** was created in 2019. Its task is to ensure that housing is allocated according to urgency, to be the point of contact for those looking for housing and those renting, and to organise the necessary support if required, so that the rental relationship is also successful.

With the comprehensive **Fairer Housing action programme**, the Building Department is working hard to ensure that housing in Tübingen is affordable and that more subsidised housing is built.

Ensuring **mobility for all** was an important goal of the Round Table on Child Poverty from the very beginning. The result is that monthly tickets for Tübingen's public transport system are offered at a greatly reduced rate for children, young people and adults with a district bonus card and are used extremely frequently. Help with bicycle repairs is available free of charge in three districts.

In three districts with an accumulation of social problems there is **district social work** (Südstadt, Waldhäuser-Ost, Weststadt), docked to a district meeting place. The main tasks are general social counselling and mediation of help on the one hand and community work to promote self-help, commitment and networking in the district on the other. In a fourth neighbourhood, the southern city centre (around Brückenstraße), community work can be carried out for an initial period of three years thanks to the Martin Bonhoeffer Houses with the help of third-party funding, also in connection with a community meeting place in Brückenstraße.

The AG Arbeit offers a **counselling service** specifically for women returning to work, especially single parents. The Federal Employment Agency, the Contact Point Women and Work, the Job Centre and the Association for Single Mothers and Fathers (VAMV) work together to create synergy effects.

## What else do we want to achieve?

The existing offers and working groups are to be continued. In the area of transport, it is important to promote the free monthly student pass that has been available since 2019 via the education and participation package.

The **district social work in** the Weststadt has only just begun its work in 2019 and the citizens' meeting place in Brückenstraße is also just getting started. Here, it is important to make oneself known as a contact point for questions and support needs, but also as a caretaker for the neighbourhood.

The same can be said for the new **Clearing House Housing**: the focus is on the development and implementation of housing placement.

# Field of action education and profession

## *Our guiding objective:*

*Every young person receives the best development, educational and professional opportunities. Every young person can discover and develop their abilities.*

## How do we implement this?

Child day-care facilities in Tübingen support the development of each individual child; targeted programmes are used in particular for language support, such as the state programme "Kolibri" and the establishment of language day-care centres with the support of the federal government's support programme. The provision rate for children over the age of three is 100 per cent, and childcare facilities are available for around 80 per cent of children aged one to three. As child and family centres, two children's homes also offer counselling and educational services for parents.

All **schools in Tübingen** have the goal of supporting children according to their talents and abilities and of balancing out social differences. The city promotes this by providing extensive socio-educational support for children, families and teachers through school social work, school childcare, group pedagogy and school support. At Tübingen's primary schools, after-school care is free of charge, as are lunch and study time.

The **Intercultural Network for Parents' Education Tübingen - INET** of the Equality and Integration Office makes an important contribution to the creation of educational justice. INET already existed before the founding of the Round Table on Child Poverty. 144 voluntary and qualified multipliers with a migration background accompany immigrant families in all questions concerning school and education.

The **sponsorship projects** Learning in Tandem (LeiTa), Rock Your Life (students as peers) and Patentino (sponsorships for children of mentally ill parents) also play a key role. More than 50 godparents, also from other sponsors, accompany children and young people on their way through life.

Extracurricular support is provided by a well-developed **range of municipal youth centres/meeting places and youth welfare services** run by **independent organisations**, including media workshops and comprehensive holiday programmes.

The contribution of the **sports, music and cultural clubs** as well as the specific **educational offers of independent institutions** such as Mädchentreff, Pfunzkerle, Tübinger Initiative für Mädchenarbeit and many more should not be underestimated. There is a wide range of support measures for entry into training and employment, including the K.I.O.S.K. project, which is aimed at young refugees and care leavers.

Through regular subsidies and **project funding**, the city supports the further development of measures to promote equal opportunities at school and at work.

## What else do we want to achieve?

The existing approaches are to be continued and further developed.

Together with the district of Tübingen, we would like to further increase the **take-up of the federal education and participation package**. The aim is to ensure that the state aid actually reaches those affected.

The establishment of further children's and family centres in the city is to be promoted.

The support of children and young people from **refugee families** will continue to be a focus: Facilitating access to services, helping them get along in daycare, school and training.

## Health field of action

### *Our guiding objective:*

*Every young person grows up in a health-promoting environment.*

## How do we implement this?

**Health promotion in daycare centres** is a matter of course. Much emphasis is placed on promoting the physical and mental health of children. This is achieved by teaching children to enjoy exercise, healthy eating and strengthening their self-confidence. Individual daycare centres participate in specific programmes (e.g. school fruit programme, state programme "Join the healthy boat", cooperation with sports clubs).

**The key project** Swimming for All Children offers free swimming courses for children and young people with KreisBonusCard Junior. Being able to swim is a survival insurance for every child and a great piece of quality of life. The project is organised on a purely voluntary basis and financed mainly by donations; within four years, around 400 young people have already been taught to swim safely.

On the initiative of the youth working group, **holiday and leisure activities at weekends have** been expanded and made accessible, mostly free of charge. Offers such as Sport am Samstag - SpaS plus) contribute to foster the promotion of physical activity among young people, as to the "Ludomobil" from the youth work department and the newly acquired game box for the WHO district. The concept is to be transferred to other districts.

Since September 2018, the University City of Tübingen has been using a new method for community prevention. **CTC - Communities that Care** is based on a scientifically sound concept. The aim is to create offers that are tailored to the specific needs of children and young people. CTC aims to mobilise many stakeholders for effective prevention and thus strengthen the healthy development of young people in Tübingen.

The district and the city jointly finance the **consultation hours of a pediatric nurse** in some refugee accommodations.

An overview of the multitude of activities in the field of health promotion was drawn up as an incentive for all those involved.

## What else do we want to achieve?

The previous approaches and cooperations will be pursued further. The AG Gesundes Aufwachsen (Working Group on Growing up healthy) will continue to look for solutions to problems, such as the shortage of midwives or healthy nutrition.

One focus is on **recruiting actors from the health sector** to participate in the TAPs network and the Round Table on Child Poverty. In a first step, the gynaecologists in Tübingen were contacted and informed within the framework of their "Qualizirkel" (regular meeting formats). The same is planned for the medical profession in the field of paediatrics and adolescent medicine as well as for midwives and pharmacies.

**Swimming lessons at primary schools** are to be better equipped and thus secured.

The new children's house in the Weststadt is to be developed into a **children's and family centre (KiFaZ)** with a focus on health promotion. Children's houses run by non-municipal sponsors are also on the way to becoming a "Growing up healthy" in Tübingen.

# Strengthening parents

*Our guiding objective:  
All mothers and fathers are strengthened in their parental responsibility.*

## How do we implement this?

The youth and family counselling centre and the youth welfare service of the district, pro familia, the psychological counselling centre of the churches and other providers offer **advice and help for parents and families** in Tübingen. These and other institutions work closely together. The family education centre and other partners make an important contribution to strengthening families through education and encounters.

Parental responsibility is also strengthened by the possibility to meet, exchange and help each other. The **open family meetings** initiated by the Alliance for the Family, the **district meetings**, the elkiko family centre and many other groups are invaluable for this.

A key project is the **TAPs network** (Tübingen Advocates for Child Poverty and Child Opportunities). Here, multipliers from areas having interaction with families are trained on the topic of child poverty in Tübingen. More than 150 people have been attracted, most of the day-care centres, municipal youth centres and many schools are involved, as well as associations, district centres, church congregations and authorities. The TAPs provide valuable information and help with questions. They make a significant contribution to ensuring that help is well known and that the institutions act in a poverty-sensitive manner.

The **EfA - Entlastung für Alleinerziehende (Relief for Single Parents)** service focuses on supporting single **parents**. The Tübinger Familien- und Altershilfe e. V. offers free neighbourly help for them. This allows time off or appointments for health care, it facilitates getting additional qualification or the re-entry into work.

In Tübingen's daycare centers and schools, a broad **participation and involvement of parents** in the daily life of the facilities is desired. There are many opportunities for this, be it in the parents' council, in the support association or in activities.

The **district social work** in four Tübingen districts, the **parent information cafés** and the **newsletter** for families with a KreisBonusCard complement the approach of making it easier for families to get help.

## What else do we want to achieve?

We would like to continue the proven projects and approaches and expand them as needed. The **district meeting places** are supported in becoming even more places for young and old and in developing suitable offers also for disadvantaged families.

The **EfA** offer, which is in great demand and highly appreciated by families, must be secured in the coming years.

The **network of TAPs** will continue to be maintained and expanded - especially to include TAPs in the area of health.

The development of **child and family centres (KiFaZ)** is being pursued, as day care centres can reach all families at an early stage. In addition to care, educational, counselling and meeting opportunities are to be provided. In the children's house Aischbach in the Weststadt a close cooperation with the district social work is planned and a close cooperation with the children's house and the school in the immediate neighbourhood is foreseen. The establishment of further child and family centres is planned for Waldhäuser-Ost and Südstadt.

# Prevention chain

The intensive cooperation of administration, organisations, associations, individuals and regular institutions in the Round Table Child Poverty across all areas and ages requires a lot of knowledge about each other and good coordination. In other cities, the image of the prevention chain has been coined for this purpose.

## Making diversity manageable

Depending on the age and situation, there are various accesses and offers. It is important for children, young people and families to know which services are available for their specific needs. The prevention chain shows which services are available and who is responsible.

The many actors in the Round Table also need an overview in order to be able to refer individual cases to the right agency.

This "rough" overview (see Figure 2) is supplemented by a constantly updated overview of help and services, flyers in simple language and target group-specific materials.

## Identify gaps - further develop offers

The prevention chain also serves to identify gaps in the support system and to develop the services accordingly. The life course perspective is helpful for this, it facilitates the analysis of the current situation and the assessment of the need for action. The Round Table on Child Poverty continuously examines and reflects on what is needed, who is needed and which approach makes the most sense.

## Strengthening interdepartmental cooperation

Particularly at the interfaces and transitions between the individual services and assistance, breaks can sometimes occur. We want to avoid this. For example, the regular facilities work continuously to ensure that cooperation across departments and resources is successful in the interests of the children, young people and families.

In Tübingen, the transition from day care to primary school is based on a proven cooperation between the two institutions. Standards and principles have been developed together to ensure that no child is lost: Joint educational partnership between parents, daycare facilities and school; a joint view of the child's readiness for school and any need for support or assistance as well as school visits with the children to get to know the new place of education. The transition from primary to secondary schools is also individually supported by the pedagogical staff with comprehensive information for the parents.

In the BUS project (counselling and support system at primary schools), for example, the teachers, the pedagogical specialists from the care sector and the school social work work closely together with special education and youth welfare. There are binding rules for multi-professional cooperation.

The prevention chain is not something static, but a working tool that is pulled up at regular intervals: What do we have? Who is active in which topics? What is missing? What do we need to improve, rethink or develop further?

# Social space orientation

People live in social spaces. The immediate living environment, the neighbourhood, the district have an influence on the quality of life and the possibilities of growing up healthily. This is especially true for children, but also for adults.

Social space orientation is a guiding principle in the design of social services in Tübingen. Therefore, data is collected specifically for all individual social areas. It is evaluated how the population structure, income situation and other social indicators develop in the neighbourhoods. The Tübingen Social Concept (2015) and the Social Report (2019) provide a differentiated analysis and basis. Social reporting is carried out on a regular basis, and goals and priorities for action are updated.

For each social area (districts and suburbs), structures are being set up that enable access to help and promote commitment. At the centre of this are the Tübingen district meetings as places where encounters and commitment, participation and educational offers for all as well as networking of activities in the neighbourhood take place. There are currently 14 district meetings and more are being set up, especially in the suburbs.

In neighbourhoods with special social problems, there is district social work in municipal or independent sponsorship, docked onto the district centres. This provides general social counselling in the neighbourhood on the one hand and community work on the other. Depending on the need, there are further offers, e.g. for young people, for refugees and for families with specific problems.

The Tübingen Way means evaluating and checking whether our approaches and offers reach people in all parts of the city.

Associations, churches and initiatives in the neighbourhoods are important partners; with their diverse offers they shape life in the neighbourhood. It is important to make these offers well known and to network them in the district. Through citizen participation processes in the districts and especially in the suburbs, we strengthen social interaction and promote civic involvement.

Goal is to create caring and inclusive communities where people of all ages, rich and poor, with and without disabilities, immigrant or native, can live well. The participation and response in these processes is very high. Concrete improvements and offers, from the citizens' bus to on-site holiday care, are being implemented in the process.

# Evaluation and quality assurance

The Tübingen Way is only sustainable and promising if our goals and results are constantly reviewed.

All focal points and projects are evaluated regularly, at least twice a year, with regard to their implementation status. Advice is given on what the next steps should be and what support can be provided by whom. Questions are asked: What is being achieved, who is using the offers, how is the response, what is changing, etc.?

The evaluation is both qualitative and quantitative. We use available instruments for evaluation and quality assurance and make them available to all participants in an easy-to-use form.

There are specific individual evaluations of larger projects (e.g. KreisBonusCard, swimming for all children). For this purpose, we use the model of the Rostock impact levels and the monitoring method based on the LVR Landesjugendamt Rheinland (see diagrams).

The results of the evaluations are presented twice a year in the Round Table on Child Poverty and regularly in the municipal council. This enables a discourse on objectives and, if necessary, corrections; it ensures broad political support and is a prerequisite for the provision of the necessary resources. An evaluation of the overall effects of the implemented measures is planned.

During this evaluation, families are again to be interviewed directly.

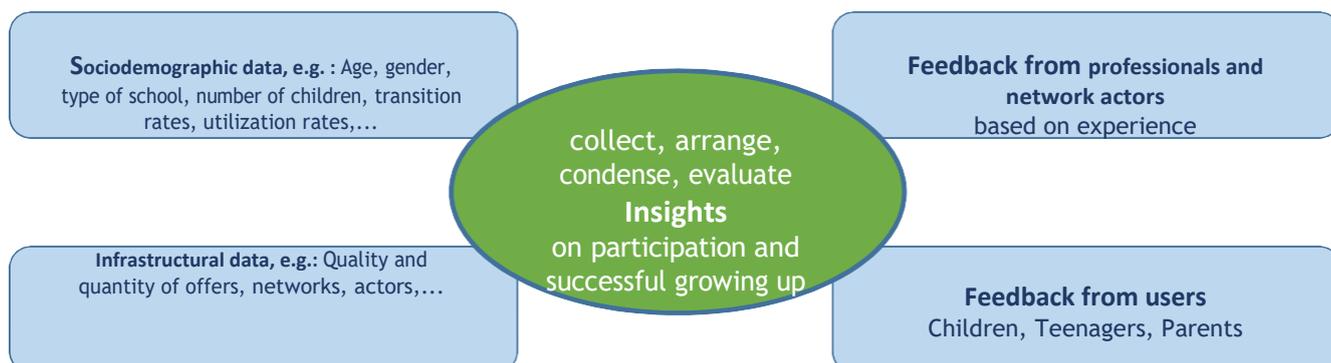
We learn continuously in the process. In annual workshops for all participants, we deepen selected topics with external expert support. Previous focal points were: municipal concepts of child poverty prevention, work with the prevention chain, intercultural competence and empowerment. In 2020, the focus will be on inclusion with the aim of reaching children, young people and parents with disabilities even better.

Fig. 3 Impact levels



Own representation. Cf. Rostock 2020

Fig. 4 Monitoring



# The Tübingen Way

## At a glance: Ten key points

## Six secrets of success

1. Basic decision in the municipal council and mandate from the top management for systematic child poverty prevention.
2. Taking everyone along on the path, activating the urban community, winning over many multipliers: Citizens, associations, initiatives, professional associations, churches, social institutions, city administration and district.
3. Listen to and involve families as experts on their own matter.
4. Develop goals, measures and steps that address the concrete needs of families: Tübingen action programme "Good opportunities for all children".
5. Round table on child poverty as a broad network. Steering group and project groups for the implementation of the agenda.
6. Three dimensions in view: Social spaces (urban districts and neighbourhoods), age (prevention chain from birth to work) and areas of life (housing, work, health, etc.).
7. The focus is on facilitating access and promoting participation by opening up services and making them affordable for all.
8. Continuous evaluation of the results and effects, the procedures and offers.
9. Regular reports, consultation and decision-making in the municipal council. The municipal council pays attention to the objectives of participation in its resolutions.
10. Shared learning through annual workshops for all stakeholders with external expert guidance.
  - Anyone and everyone is welcome: The network is open to newcomers.
  - Everyone has equal rights: City administration, municipal council, citizens and associations work hand in hand.
  - Good ideas are enabled, supported and implemented quickly.
  - What helps families in a concrete and practical way is set in motion. That is more important to us than lofty concepts.
  - Results are evaluated twice a year and made visible to all. Successes are recognised and celebrated.
  - Together we are strong: We-feeling through the common agenda, everyone benefits from the cooperation
- 11.

