

Press release

How state support works in the crisis

An interim assessment by 5 research institutes and the Bertelsmann Foundation

Bonn, 23.03.2022. The various Covid19 support packages have had the anticipated stabilising effects on many solo self-employed workers and small entrepreneurs. Direct payments such as the Überbrückungshilfe and the possibility of furlough for employees subject to compulsory social insurance have opened up room for manoeuvre for companies to deal with the crisis. These are the conclusions of the "ReCOVerry" study; Entrepreneurial action and state support measures in the pandemic", prepared by IfM Bonn together with the *Institute for Work and Technology at Westphalian University of Applied Sciences in Gelsenkirchen (IAT)*, *University of Jena*, *Institute für Mittelstandsforschung at the University of Mannheim*, *The Network "Integration through Qualification (IQ)"*, and the *Bertelsmann Foundation*.

At the same time, the study shows that the support packages were only one of the elements that decided the viability of businesses. The entrepreneurial spirit and creativity of the self-employed were also essential. Those who actively dealt with the exceptional economic situation were usually able to open up perspectives for their own business. For example, many entrepreneurs in the catering and retail sectors established new distribution channels or digitised parts of their business model.

However, the overall positive picture should not obscure deficiencies in the implementation and communication of Covid19 support packages. Entrepreneurs from knowledge-intensive as well as and the catering and retail industries indicate that the support measures would have been more effective if they had been accompanied by communication and information measures appropriate to the target groups.

Furthermore, the experts recommend the development of a financial instrument to secure a minimum income for the solo self-employed and small entrepre-



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neurs. The study indicates that the simplified access to social assistance for solo self-employed workers, freelancers, and small entrepreneurs has only been used to a limited extent. It would also be conceivable, for example, to include living costs for this group in the Überbrückungshilfe in the future. Furthermore, It would be helpful to build up structures to cope with future crises. One building could be a permanent council of experts. This council should ensure that in the event of future crises, action can be taken quickly, and in a needs-oriented and targeted manner.

The study "Entrepreneurial Action and Government Support Measures in the Covid 19 Pandemic" is available on the Institute für Mittelstandsforschung Research (https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/BSt/Publikationen/GrauePublikationen/NW_ReCOVery.pdf).

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