

THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

Johanna Röh is a master carpenter and lives in Lower Saxony in north-west Germany. After four years of travelling, she set up her own business in 2016. She initially rented a carpentry workshop and converted an old farmhouse for her business in 2018. After a long period with employees and trainees, she is now working alone again. Her USP is the use of local and ecological materials and surfaces.



Her daughter was born in 2022. She found it unfair that self-employed women in Germany - unlike employed women - are not entitled to statutory maternity leave. She complained loudly about this

in her 'Maternity protection for all!' initiative, which was well received by similarly affected female entrepreneurs.

They found it unfair to be left alone with the risk of insolvency during the postnatal period, when they are unable to work and therefore have inadequate protection.

THE IMPACTS OF INNOVATION

Women have formed a network and have since founded a non-profit organisation with over 100 members. Their petition gained momentum through social media and spread like wildfire. Johanna received "funding for political talent" and thus access to money and counselling. Her work triggered a process that was supported by many politicians, but also by associations and chambers. In the meantime, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs is carrying out a needs analysis and measures are being discussed in the Ministry of Economics. So far, those involved have only worked on a voluntary basis, but the aim is to expand the counselling initiative to include full-time positions and to offer events for self-employed pregnant women.

USEFUL LINK

<https://mutterschutzfueralle.de/>
<https://mutterschutz-fuer-selbststaendige.de/>
<https://www.johanna-roeh.de/>