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Strategies to increase the proportion of male child care workers – understanding processes of change

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Abstract

The research project is aimed at jointly developing, adopting and analysing measures for increasing the proportion of male child care workers in a selected region in Austria, involving all stakeholders.

The low proportion of male childcare workers in pre-school education is regarded as a problem by educational scientists and policy makers all over Europe. The FWF-funded “elementar/public fathers” project (Aigner/Rohrmann (2011) and other recent studies have helped improve our knowledge of how men chose this career and what their related experiences are. Indirectly, the findings also revealed factors which could help increase the proportion of men. On a European level, however, there is no comprehensive and scientifically well-based study with regard to how measures, or packages of measures, affect the view men have on child education and a career as male kindergarten teacher. Nor do we know why several measures taken to raise the proportion of men have not produced the desired results.

Methodology. The parties’ attitudes and behaviour will be measured at the beginning and at the end of the project. Control groups will be included. Processes of change will be documented and analysed from the perspective of political science, psychology and pedagogy. Discussion sessions with focus groups will be analysed. The research team hopes to gain insights into the effectiveness of measures taken and to find out to what degree a change in attitudes and professional images can lead to an increased number of men working in childcare facilities.

First analyses show that in the model region several measures have been started, but with hardly any effect on the number of men. Nevertheless there seems to be a welcoming atmosphere for men, and many men are in general interested in child care work. A quotation system for male applicants for the training institutions is under discussion. The preliminary findings will help to put the issue of “gender balance” in the work force on the political agenda in Austrians ECEC system. According to the European Commission, “there is a pressing need to make a career in the ECEC sector more attractive to men in all EU countries” (EC 2011, 7).

References:


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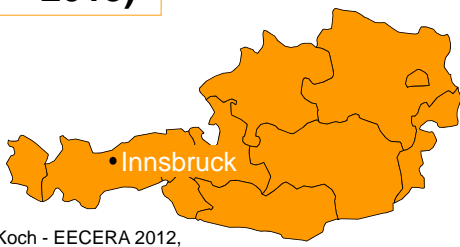
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elementar
men in early childhood education and care



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**Strategies to Increase the
Proportion of Male Child
Care workers (2012 – 2015)**



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Oporto

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Project objectives

1. Developing an intervention programme to increase male representation in pre-school education, based on the findings of the baseline study and the previous 'public fathers' project (2008-2010), together with the stakeholders of a region (Tyrol)
2. Accompanying analysis of political, administrative and 'interpersonal' negotiations; analysis of resistance and factors of success
3. Evaluating empirically how the intervention programme affects attitudes, career choice and proportion of men in training and practical work

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Overview

Those measures will involve:

- *young men prior to their career choice,*
- *unemployed men,*
- *teachers,*
- *decision makers,*
- *politicians and*
- *administrative staff.*

The research team will take a closer look at resistance present in the childcare system itself and the resistance in (young) men to change their attitudes.



Overview

- The parties' attitudes and behaviour will be measured at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the project.
- Processes of change will be documented and analysed from the perspective of political science, psychology and pedagogy.
- There will be discussion sessions with focus groups, which will be scientifically analysed.
- The research team hopes to gain insights into the effectiveness of measures taken and to find out to what degree a change in attitude and professional image can lead to an increased number of men working in childcare facilities.



Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1.1 – prejudices

Hypothesis 1.2 – role models

Hypothesis 2 – male job seekers

Hypothesis 3 – training courses also for men

Hypothesis 4 – management activities



Overview of qualitative and quantitative interviews:

	Target Groups	Number		
		Questionnaire (persons involved)	Group discussion	Interview (case study)
1	young men and women prior to their career choice	3 (600)	2	4(1)
2	Male job seekers	3 (40)	2	4 (1)
3	Coworker in training institutions	3 (30)	3	4
4	Managers of child care centers	3 (30)	3	4
5	Female child care workers	3 (10)	2	4
6	Policy maker team	3 (10)	3	4
	Total	18 (700)	15	24



1 young men and women prior to their career choice

At career information days in different schools, a male child care worker will present his profession

Quantitative research: The attitudes of all male and female youth will be measured with a questionnaire prior to the intervention, immediately afterwards and one year later

Qualitative research:

a group discussion with male opponents, who ridicule men who are interested in the profession

- a group discussion with male youth, who are interested
- Interviews with men, who are generally interested in the occupation (N=4).



2 Male job seekers

the staff of the labour agencies are briefed to advice male job-seekers to also consider 'educational work'. In the context of a career information event organised by the labour agencies a male kindergarten teacher will be present and inform male job seekers about the occupational field and training opportunities.

Quantitative research: Attitudes will be measured with a questionnaire before the intervention, immediately afterwards and one year later.

Qualitative research: two group discussions, Interviews with men, who are generally interested in the occupation (N=4)

**3 Coworkers and managers in training institutions**

In the two training facilities in the model region measures will be developed which are aimed at significantly raising the proportion of men in training.

The objective will be to install networks for men, mentors, offer training and workshops which focus on topics like “outdoor”, “sport”, “men and women as educators” and to reflect the “female culture of care”

Quantitative research:

Attitudes will be measured with a questionnaire before the intervention, immediately afterwards and one year later.

Qualitative research

- three group discussions (regarding cultural conditions which deter men from starting training)
- Interviews with teachers/directors (N=4).

**4 Managers of child care centers**

In the context of an advanced training for managers their attitudes will be investigated at the beginning, midterm and end of the project with a questionnaire.

Three group discussions with the following topics will be carried out: strategies to recruit men, social interaction in mixed gender teams, public image of kindergarten, activities, pedagogical approach, exchanging experiences with managers whose team includes men, job advertisements, personal contacts and hiring non-military national service conscripts.

Four Managers of child care centres will also be interviewed with a semi-structured guideline.



5 Female child care workers

It is important to understand the resistance of (some) female child care workers.

group discussions with exclusively female participants

10 female child care workers will be interviewed with a questionnaire at 3 different dates during the project period.

Four semi-structured interviews will be conducted.



6 policy maker group (Stakeholder group)

members: member of the regional government; director of the training institutions; the main public child care provider, city of Innsbruck ; the main private child care provider, the Federal Employment Service; school administrator; department of education of the regional government; trade union, two politicians on a national level.

- Attitudes and behaviour will be measured with a questionnaire at three times (before, midstage, end of project).
- Twice a year there will be meetings in which the development of the project and the interim results will be discussed and further treatments planned.
- Three of the meetings will be structured as group discussions and analysed (content analysis).
- Four members of the policy group will also be interviewed with a semi-structured interview guideline.



The overall analyse of the data has to consider the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods

The results in the model region (e.g. number of application etc.) will be compared with other regions in Austria (see "statistical data collection").



**Strategies
to Increase the Proportion of Male Child Care Workers (2012 – 2015)**

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