

Dear colleagues !

fatal: males lacking in kindergarden



We keep working on this problem...  
On the next page we inform about current developments  
in our research project on  
Men in Early Childhood Education in Austria

Thanks for your interest in our project.  
We are looking forward to working together in 2009  
and would enjoy meeting you on the EECERA conference in  
Strasbourg.

With best wishes for X-mas and 2009 -

Prof. Dr. Josef C. Aigner  
Dr. Tim Rohrmann      Mag. Bernhard Koch  
Mag. Claudia Schwaizer      Mag. Barbara Strubreither  
Dr. Anton Perzy      Dr. Gerald Poscheschnik

### **News December 2008**

The research project „elementar – Men in Early Childhood Education“ got positive resonance in Austria. Since we started the project in April 2008 interest in the topic of men in ECE is increasing in the media as well as in professional and scientific debates.

### ***Statistics: few men in Austria***

In the first project period a lot of statistic material was analysed. In the year 2007/2008 there were 528 men working as pedagogic professionals in Austrian ECEC and after-school-services (“Kindertagesheimen”) – 1,4 percent of the pedagogic professional workforce. The highest proportion, five percent, was to be found in after-school-services (“Hort”). In ECEC the proportion of male workers is below one percent.

There are major differences between states and regions of Austria. In Vienna there are 200 men working, who make up around two percent of the pedagogical work force, whereas in several regions there are nearly no men to be found.

In vocational training the number of male students has been increasing over the last decades. It was as late as the beginning of the eighties that the secondary school training, which is the standard way to the profession, was opened for boys/men. From only three Students in that time the number of male students went up to 251 in the year 2006/2007. The relative proportion of male students also has been growing continuously, but is still not higher than three percent. Moreover, after school many students decide to continue with further education instead of working in the field.

### ***Questionnaires and interviews started***

The empirical part of the project involves several target groups: pupils prior to career decisions, students in vocational training, people working in ECE, and dropouts. After a review of the literature we started in summer 2008 with a pilot phase of group discussions with men and women of the different target groups.

In the last time we have been working on several questionnaires. The empirical part started with a survey of pupils in the process of occupational decision. More than 500 pupils of seven secondary schools took part. The first impression is that adolescents have diverse opinions about men as ECE workers. Some express rejection (“somebody who is fit for nothing and has two left hands”), while others see it as an attractive profession (“I can well imagine to work in that field”, “males can work in ECE as well as women”).

As a next step, we aim at including all men 1. working in ECE and 2. being in training for ECE in Austria in a paper-and-pencil survey. As for comparisons, female workers and students are also included in the sample. In January 2009 the survey of students in vocational training for ECE will be conducted.

Another approach of the research project is conducting in-depth interviews with workers and students. Here also men as well as women are included. We just started with the first interviews, where we met men who were competent in the field and felt to be “at the right place”. They are as well able to cope with the special challenges of the work in crèches with 1 ½ to 3 year old children, where there are only very very few men in Austria. Another impression was that professionals as well as children benefit from a gender-mixed workforce. There are positive feedbacks from parents, also.



#### **Information and publications**

On our homepage <http://www.uibk.ac.at/ezwi/elementar/index.html.en> we inform about our project and inform about publications, some of it available for download. We are especially happy to present a german version of the Norwegian brochure “Men in kindergardens” from Pia Friis, leader of Bjerkealleen kindergarden in Oslo. The brochure includes background information, reports about practical experiences of and with men and a lot of ideas how to get more men to the field. The german version can be downloaded from our homepage: <http://www.uibk.ac.at/ezwi-elementar/literatur>

The research project has been presented to the public on several congresses and meetings. In autumn 2009 it will take part in a german symposium for men working in ECE in Hannover, North Germany.

Moreover, we are in contact with international experts, and are glad to be part of the network *KOME – Knowledge on Men in Early Childhood Education*. We will join the EECERA conference in Strasbourg in August 2009, where we intend to join in a self organized symposium on men in ECE.

If you have any questions or remarks on our project, please contact us. We enjoy sharing experiences and working together on understanding gender in ECE and bringing more men to the field.

#### **Innsbruck University, Faculty of Education, Austria**

email: [elementar-ezwi@uibk.ac.at](mailto:elementar-ezwi@uibk.ac.at)

web: <http://www.uibk.ac.at/ezwi/elementar/index.html.en>

<b>director</b>	Univ. Prof. Dr. Josef C. Aigner
<b>team</b>	Dr. Tim Rohrman, Mag. Bernhard Koch, Mag. Claudia Schwaizer, Mag. Barbara Strubreither
<b>expert advice</b>	Univ. Assist. Dr. Anton Perzy, Univ. Assist. Dr. Gerald Poscheschnik
<b>term</b>	2008 – 2010
<b>funding</b>	Austrian Science Research Fund (FWF)