



Masculinities and Care: Analysis of needs for gender-sensitive early childhood education

National report of the Early Care and the Role of Men (ECaRoM) project – Austria

Veronika Suppan and Elli Scambor

Institute for Masculinity Research and Gender Studies, June 2022

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ECaRoM – Early care and the role of men

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1. Policies, research and projects in the field of early childhood education in Austria

1.1. The early childhood education system in Austria and policy context

The first chapter provides an overview of the ECEC (Early Childhood Education and Care) situation in Austria. Starting with the crèches and continuing through the compulsory kindergarten year to the primary school level, the following chapter presents an overview of the participating children, the pedagogues and their training as well as the legal framework.

Crèches and kindergartens

In Austria, there were 9,549 institutional pre-school childcare facilities in the school year 2020/2021. Of those, 4,582 were kindergartens and 2,417 were crèches and infant care facilities. 73 percent of kindergartens were financed and organised through public funds (federal, provincial and municipal), whereas the majority of crèches were financed by private sponsors (Statistik Austria, 2021a).

373,881 children were enrolled in day care centres throughout Austria in October 2020. The majority of them, consisting of 226,923 children, were part of kindergarten groups. The attendance rate of early childhood educational facilities in Austria is at approximately 94 percent among children aged 3 to 5 (309,787 children in 2018); a lower percentage (88.5 percent) is reported for the province of Styria. Among children under the age of 3 (69,699 children in 2018) there are significant differences between the different provinces in Austria: in Vienna the attendance rate is highest at 44 percent, while in Styria it is lowest with 15.6 percent. Since 2009, attending an early childhood educational facility the year prior to school enrolment has been obligatory for all children (Statistik Austria 2021a).

According to statistics, 35,218 people were employed as pedagogical staff in Austria's 4,664 kindergartens in the school year 2015/2016, of which only 1.6 percent were men*. In comparison, in the school year 2020/2021, 2 percent of the pedagogical kindergarten staff were men*. The proportion of men* among kindergarten staff was highest in the province of Vienna (5.2 percent), while the province of Lower Austria had the lowest proportion of men* (0.8 percent) among kindergarten staff (Statistik Austria 2021a).

Table 1: Proportion of men* among kindergarten staff in the school year 2020/2021

2020/2021 Province	Total kindergarten staff (in absolute numbers)	Proportion of men* among kindergarten staff (in percent)
Vienna	5,685	5.2
Vorarlberg	2,012	2.2
Tyrol	3,335	2.0
Upper Austria	7,113	1.9
Carinthia	1,289	1.6
Styria	4,690	1.4
Salzburg	2,163	1.2
Burgenland	859	1.2
Lower Austria	9,055	0.8
TOTAL	36,201	2.0

Primary schools

In Austria, compulsory schooling begins at the age of 6. Most children attend primary school. Only a small proportion (1.3 percent) of school-age children attend a special needs school. Children who are of compulsory school age but not yet ready for school are taught at pre-school level of primary schools, although these children only amount to 0.05 percent of the children of compulsory school age. In the transition from the four-year primary level to the lower secondary level, there is a differentiation either into “new secondary school”¹ or into the “elementary level of general education”² (Statistik Austria 2021b).

In the school year 2019/2020, there were 3,014 primary schools in Austria, with 2,897 of them (96 percent) being public schools. In the same school year, a total of 344,282 pupils attended primary school. 178,466 (52 percent) of them were boys* (Statistik Austria 2021b).

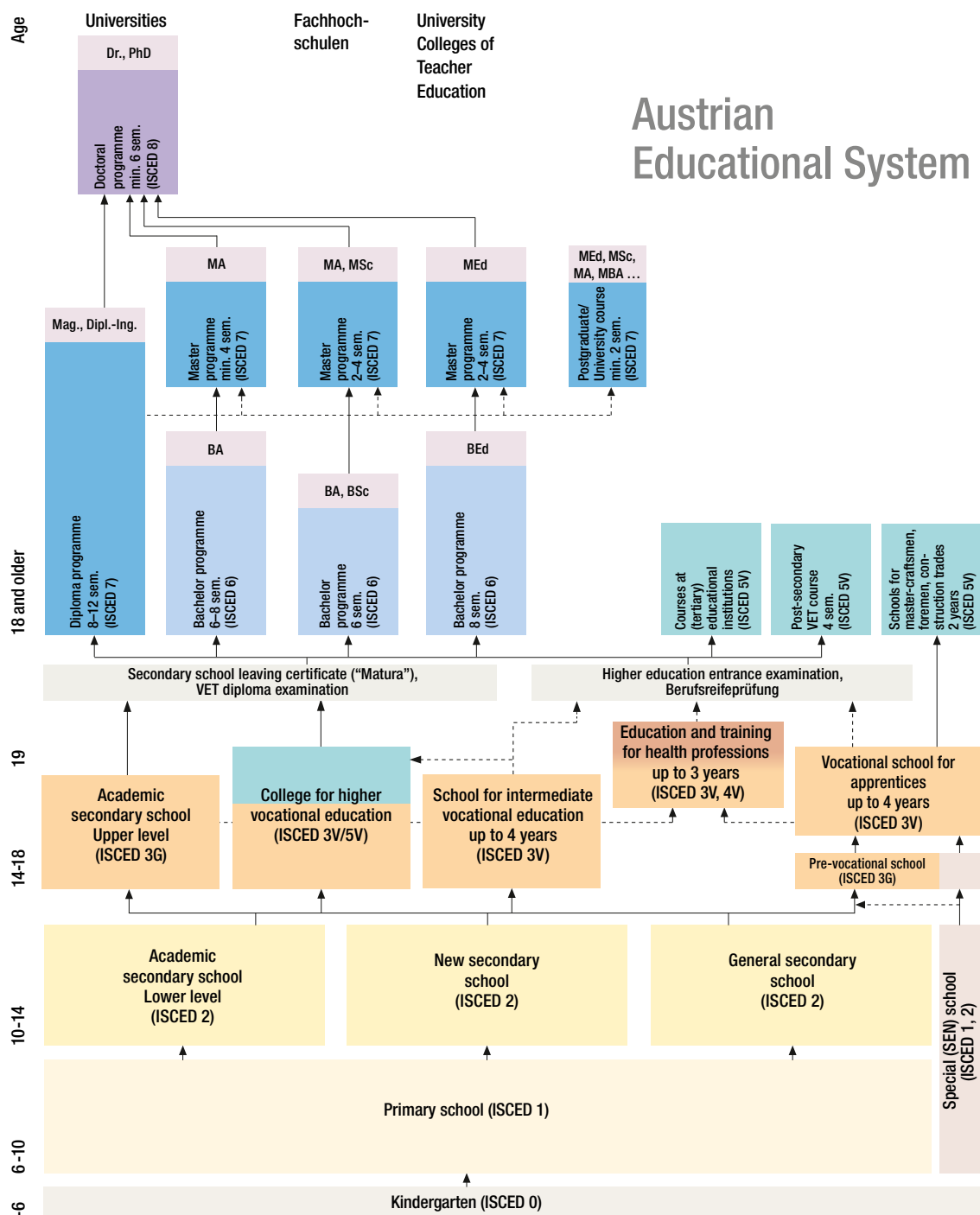
According to Statistik Austria, 36,777 people were employed as pedagogical staff in Austria’s 3,014 primary schools in the school year 2019/2020, of which only 7.4 percent were men*. In comparison, in the school year 2015/2016, 7.5 percent of the pedagogues were men*. The proportion of men* among primary school pedagogues was highest in the province of Tyrol (11 percent), while the province of Lower Austria recorded the lowest proportion of men* (4.3 percent) among primary school staff (Statistik Austria 2021b).

Table 2: Proportion of male pedagogues in Austrian primary schools in the school year 2019/2020

2019/2020 Province	Total pedagogues in primary schools (in absolute numbers)	Male pedagogues in primary schools (in percent)
Tyrol	3,359	11.0
Carinthia	2,358	10.3
Vorarlberg	2,161	9.5
Vienna	7,309	8.5
Styria	4,603	7.6
Salzburg	2,447	7.5
Burgenland	1,129	7.4
Upper Austria	6,761	5.6
Lower Austria	6,650	4.3
TOTAL	36,777	7.4

¹ „Neue Mittelschule“

² „Unterstufe der Allgemeinbildenden höheren Schule“



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ISCED: International Standard Classification
of Education (UNESCO), ISCED 2011
ISCED-level of programme
G – general
V – vocational

Source: Basic data on the Austrian school system by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/en/Topics/school/school_syst/bdasss.html)

Vocational training of staff

The training of staff who work with children prior to school enrolment is and has traditionally been located below university level. It is offered at around 30 vocational schools throughout Austria, and for those already employed in ECEC³ there are many advanced training courses. The majority of students (and consequently the staff at the facilities) are women*. Access to the vocational schools was made possible for men* in 1985 (Smidt 2018, p. 625).

Training to become elementary pedagogues takes place at educational institutions for elementary education (BAfEP) or educational institutions for social pedagogy (BASOP). These five-year school types are part of the higher vocational school (secondary level II) and conclude with matriculation and diploma examination. Since the school year 2019/2020, there has also been the possibility to complete a three-year vocational school for pedagogical assistant professions. In addition, from the academic year 2021/22 onwards it will be possible to complete the new university course “Elementary Pedagogy” at the University Colleges of Teacher Education as a lateral entry option into the professional field of elementary pedagogy for people with relevant prior training. This course of study comprises two semesters and entitles graduates to special areas of responsibility such as group management in elementary education (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung a).

In recent years, the training of primary school pedagogues has changed fundamentally. The biggest change is the introduction of a four-year Bachelor’s programme, followed by a compulsory one to two-year Master’s programme. In addition, students must undergo a one-year induction phase in which they teach regularly with the support of a mentor. The training is offered exclusively at private and public teacher training colleges. In order to be admitted to the teacher training programme, applicants must have completed the Matura and pass an entrance and aptitude test (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung b).

Gender and diversity legislation in practice

The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung) has overall legislative and implementation responsibility for primary and secondary education, while the nine provinces take on the main responsibility for early childhood education and care. The system is regulated at the level of the nine Austrian provinces, which means that there is no uniform legislation for pre-school education and care. One exception is the vocational education of staff, which is regulated at federal level. Municipalities, churches, and private providers are responsible for establishing and maintaining kindergartens and crèches.

Facilities for children of pre-school age in Austria have their own educational mandate, which is specified in an educational plan, which includes the right and possibility to add specifications or more detailed guidelines (Charlotte Bühler Institute 2009, p. 6). This *federal comprehensive education framework plan* (*Bundesländerübergreifender BildungsRahmenPlan*) has been implemented since 2010 and is a guideline relevant for pedagogues in facilities, vocational schools and those involved in the implementation at provincial level. According to the agency responsible

³ ECEC = Early childhood education and care refers to any regulated arrangement that provides education and care for children from birth to compulsory primary school age.

for its development, the *BildungsRahmenPlan* “increasingly influences policies and legislative decisions” (Charlotte Bühler Institute 2009, p. 6) and should help consolidate the shared legislative responsibilities, although its legal implementation is missing in most provinces. The *BildungsRahmenPlan* states that the planning and implementation of educational programmes must, among other things, follow the principle of gender equality. “*Gender sensitivity: Depending on their individual socialisation, children have different experiences and ideas about gender roles. The aim of gender-sensitive education is to support girls and boys, regardless of their gender, in developing different potentials of their personality.*” (BildungsRahmenPlan, 2009, p. 7)

Diversity, inclusion and gender sensitivity are mentioned in the section “Pedagogical Perspectives”. Diversity is described here as a resource for learning and gender sensitivity as a key pedagogical orientation. The text states that depending on their individual socialisation, children have different experiences and ideas about gender roles. The goal of gender-sensitive pedagogy is to help children, regardless of their gender, develop different potentials in their personalities. According to the *BildungsRahmenPlan*, encountering diversity is a prerequisite for openness to critically deal with prejudices. All people in a society are described as people with different needs, which are addressed individually with regard to “*inclusion*”. Gender is mentioned again regarding “Health Awareness” in the context of sexuality and gender identity. It promotes an unbiased attitude towards one’s own sexual orientation as well as the factually correct answering of children’s questions about sexuality and the body in order to promote a positive attitude towards sexuality and prevent sexualised violence. While this document calls for more cooperation with parents, it does not mention gender-specific parental work (e.g. engaging fathers).

For schools in Austria, the *Basic Decree for Gender Reflective Pedagogy and Equality* (*Grundsatzrlass Reflexive Geschlechterpädagogik und Gleichstellung*) circular No. 21/2018, by the Ministry of Education, Science and Research from 2018 applies. State institutions have the obligation to promote gender equality through appropriate and preventive measures in the field of education. The *Basic Decree* describes Austria as a diverse society. That being said, certain groups of people are mentioned and addressed in a special way (e.g. Muslims). The decree states that there is sexism in the autochthonous society of Austria, calls for taking a stand against homophobia and other forms of discrimination, encourages training of staff in violence prevention and recognises the importance of social workers and gender-specific counselling centres (girls’ and boys’ counselling centres). The *Basic Decree for Gender Reflective Pedagogy and Equality* is considered a guiding framework for the realisation of gender equality in schools by pedagogues. “*The teaching principle should contribute to the development of a professional and reflective approach to the dimension of gender in schools characterised by heterogeneous lifeworlds, based on the constitutionally enshrined equality and anti-discrimination mandate.*” In class, pedagogues and pupils should deal with “*socio-political questions and values*”. The goals behind this include dismantling gender-stereotypical allocations and fixations, reducing prejudices against boys* and men* who are interested in education in the education and health sectors, making reflective decisions regarding one’s own career and life plans, letting go of and critical reflecting on binary narrowed gender images and developing a high degree of self-determination regarding one’s own health in the sense of the WHO and UN Sustainable Development Goals (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung 2019).

Where gender is mentioned in the existing curricula of vocational schools for ECEC staff, it is largely based on a binary concept. The Styrian curriculum was adapted to include EU-requirements of gender mainstreaming in 2005 but it lacks an overarching perspective on gender and diversity issues.

In the curricula at university level, gender and diversity issues are present (concerning development of leadership and analytical competences, as well as with regards to supporting children in their development), with varying emphasis from institution to institution. In Vienna, for example, *“gender mainstreaming is embedded in the curriculum as a cross-sectional issue, module-specific and interdisciplinary. Gender knowledge, gender competence and gender sensitivity are promoted in teaching and research with the aim of promoting equal opportunities for women and men in professional, cultural, material and psychosocial terms.”*⁴

Recent debates and focus-areas

According to experts (see Smidt 2018 and OECD 2017), recent debates focus on:

- increasing the participation of children from diverse backgrounds in early childhood education and care (such as children with international family histories),
- facilitating a better transition between ECEC and primary education, improving the collaboration between ECEC facilities and primary schools,
- reducing the achievement gaps between students from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers,
- academizing staff training, and
- improving interaction quality in ECEC facilities.

General aims of crèches and kindergartens

The *federal comprehensive education framework plan (Bundesländerübergreifender BildungsRahmenPlan)* describes the goals of early childhood education and care in Austria. Crèches and kindergartens are intended to complement and support education in the family and, through appropriate measures, promote the care, nurturing, social rooting, individual development and educational support of children as well as social interaction with peers and prepare children for school life. In order to guarantee these goals, elementary educational institutions follow certain principles such as: Holism and learning with all senses, individualisation, differentiation, empowerment, lifeworld orientation, inclusion, diversity, gender sensitivity, participation, transparency, educational partnership (cooperative relationships with different educational institutions and family) (Charlotte Bühler Institute 2009, p. 4, 6ff.).

⁴ See for example the Viennese curriculum:

https://www.phwien.ac.at/files/VR_Lehre/Mitteilungsblatt/Ziff_5/Curriculum_Elementarbildung_Inklusion%20und%20Leadership_Entwicklungsverbund%20Nord-Ost_V1_03.pdf (last accessed 22.10.2020)

1.2. Review of existing national research on gender stereotypes and early childhood education

The following chapter contains a collection of good practice examples on dealing with gender stereotypes in kindergartens and primary schools. This chapter includes international and national research projects as well as already existing campaigns, events, materials for working with children and networks that already offer and disseminate gender-sensitive vocational training for children and gender-sensitive material.

DEE

As part of the EU project *DEE*⁵, a questionnaire targeted at experts in early childhood education asked respondents in Austria about their views on access to health care, education, the labour market and career development. Special attention was paid to gender equality policies and their implementation at national level. Another focus was on gender equality in the education system and the challenges the education system faces in applying a gender-sensitive approach. The questionnaire also asked for ways to overcome gender-typical constraints. Good practice examples were considered.

Perspectives on the presence of equal opportunities in Austria

In Austria, 30 experts participated in the survey, of which 26 were women* and 4 were men*. More than half of the respondents were between 30 and 45 years old. The most common degree held by the respondents was the Matura. The majority of respondents reported working in educational institutions or institutional childcare settings where they were either managers or educational staff. 45 percent of respondents in Austria felt that there was no equal access to education. A number of respondents stated that while access to education is theoretically available to all, in practice this access is a matter of social class. “Good education is,” as one interviewee put it, “inherited”. In this context, a difference in quality between privately funded and publicly funded educational institutions was also considered. Lack of access due to language and health barriers was mentioned (e.g. barriers for people with a mother tongue other than German). Personal initiative and ability were also brought up as factors in access to education (e.g. in terms of self-motivation in using services). The respondents also described obstacles to equal access to the labour market for migrants, asylum seekers, people with disabilities and people from families with a low level of education. In terms of gender, the unequal distribution of household and care responsibilities was mentioned as a key factor. It was also suggested that the labour market places many demands on employees (e.g. “experience, no children, self-funded education”) without offering an adequate salary in return. In addition, the gender pay gap, the gender-related salary gap in Austria, was pointed out. According to some of the experts interviewed, lower income of women* results in lower personal and professional well-being of women*.

The majority of Austrian respondents noted that there is no equal access to careers (80 percent). Barriers for people with disabilities and migrants are also mentioned here. In terms of gender, respondents indicated that women* continue to be underrepresented in leadership positions; especially in the educational field, opportunities for career advancement are limited. There was a common perception in the survey that balancing work and family life is more of a problem for women* than for men*. In terms of employment and career development, 77 percent of respondents referred to the gender pay gap in Austria. Respondents also noted that women* in Austria are often

⁵ Diversity, Equality and Inclusion in pre-primary Education and Care <https://deeplus.wixsite.com/deep/dee-output>

employed in low-wage sectors and that education and social work hardly receive any economic recognition (“The valuable jobs in education and social work are dramatically underpaid”).

Recommendations from the DEE Survey to achieve gender equality

Individual respondents described best practices that they felt should be implemented to achieve gender equality in the education system:

- One gender equality officer for each department.
- *“True acceptance of people with disabilities (e.g. providing work support)”*.
- Make role models for equality visible (example: *“Leaders should live these values. Then they can also become part of the DNA of the organisation.”*).
- *“Separate groups in subjects where gender performance gaps are significant”* and *“strengthen individual capabilities”*.
- Campaigns to raise awareness of gender equality.
- Legislation needs to be changed and its implementation monitored (*“Establish laws so that different things need to be implemented and not just recommended”*).
- *“Higher income and higher appreciation for kindergarten teachers* / professions that are traditionally coded as female”*.
- More projects should be implemented that address gender and diversity.

In Austria, the most frequent response to the question about obstacles and risks to the implementation of gender equality measures in the education system was *“lack of well-trained professionals”*, followed by *“political decisions”* and *“lack of information”*. In addition, measures were suggested such as:

- Binding guidelines for the implementation of gender equality measures
- Mandatory training for educational staff
- Control/monitoring
- Campaigns and awareness raising
- Voluntary in-service training for pedagogical staff

Some respondents mentioned the introduction of gender-sensitive and diversity-oriented pedagogy in institutional childcare as a best practice example (referring to their own team, their own child’s kindergarten, or the practice of gender-conscious education and care in general). Other respondents cited best practices in higher education institutions. For example, awards and financial support for academic work in gender studies, gender equality officers, courses, working groups on equal opportunities and the advancement of women, and diversity were mentioned. The following best practices regarding work with children and young people were also brought up:

- Employees of municipal institutions have completed a 16-day multiplier training on the topic of *“Prejudice-conscious education and training”*. These employees now pass on this knowledge in their institutions and accompany their institutions in the process.
- Social workers (in mobile youth work in Vienna) reach out to young people outside institutions and help them exercise their rights and opportunities in all areas of life.

- Projects such as Boys in Care, Girls' Day and Boys' Day.

→ <https://deeplus.wixsite.com/deep/dee-output>

Gender constructions and family images in contemporary children's literature

As children's books are an important and much used tool in kindergartens, Frey and Hirtl (2020) comparatively analysed family forms and gender constructs in children's books that were published between in the 1960s and 2000s, in order to show possible changes. The central findings were, on the one hand, that the portrayal of families had undergone a change and that alternative family forms were increasingly portrayed in the children's books from the 2000s. On the other hand, it was discovered that the portrayal of gender continues to follow traditional values and norms (Frey & Hirtl 2020, p. III).

A total of eight children's books were analysed. The three books from the 1960s covered the topics nuclear family, patchwork family and stepfamily. The five books from the 2000s covered the topics nuclear family, patchwork family, rainbow family, single parents and divorce family. These eight books were each analysed with regard to the portrayal of families and the portrayal of gender. (a) It was discovered that the books from the 1960s did not depict different types of families. The authors note that the stories in children's books do not correspond with the reality of variety of family forms at the time. Books from this period are characterised by fantasy and less by the actual realities and lives of children. Children's books from the 2000s, on the other hand, focus on real life. They deal with current issues such as living together, possible problems and peculiarities in families and they provide solutions for them. A clear change can therefore be observed with regard to the portrayal of families in children's books. (b) The portrayal of gender in children's books is based on stereotypes in both the 1960s and 2000s books. This is visible in the regard that men*/fathers are shown in leadership roles while women* and mothers are shown as empathetic, patient, sensitive and caring. Men* have active roles in the stories, have adventures and are portrayed as courageous. Women*, on the other hand, usually have passive roles, react to actions and needs and are solely shown in caring roles. With this display of gender in children's books, children are taught a traditional role model based on hierarchy and stereotypes. In contrast to the display of family forms, no changes could be observed in the portrayal of gender in children's books (Frey & Hirtl 2020, p. V, 38–40, 46, 61–64).

The authors note that books are an important and regularly used tool in elementary education. Reading stories to children can lead to changes in their emotional and cognitive processes. With the help of children's books, not only is the imagination of children stimulated, but also their developmental processes, their knowledge and their attitudes are shaped and influenced accordingly. Even if the gender portrayal is not always explicit and consciously designed to stereotypical constructs in the children's books, these traditional role models of men* and women* are presented, taught and conveyed to the children (Frey & Hirtl 2020, p. 63–64).

This project was carried out in the course of Girls' Day⁶ on behalf of the JUFF Women's Department of the Tyrolean Government in 2010 and a revision in 2015. The project is called "Dani and Alex", two common nicknames for boys* and girls* in Austria – other genders were not addressed. The project wants to make it clear at first glance that the individual needs of each child should be the focus of elementary education and that gender-typical factors should be pushed into the background. At this point it should be noted that the project mainly worked with a gender binary concept. Thus, work was done with and on gender stereotypes of boys* and girls*, with no space created in the project for discussing and engaging with a broader notion of gender (LGBTIQA*). The project focussed on the research in a kindergarten and the creation of documentation in the form of a manual for gender-sensitive kindergarten pedagogy.

The project consisted of two parts. Part one included the study in a kindergarten. The kindergarten had two groups with a total of 29 children and offered afternoon care for children of primary school age. At the time of the research, this offer was taken up by 19 primary school children. The research part of the project consisted of: (a) Supervision of the kindergarten pedagogues, who were supported in reflecting on their own patterns of thinking and acting. Together with the research team, their interaction with children was reflected on and analysed for conscious and unconscious gender stereotypes. (b) Coaching for kindergarten pedagogues: The pedagogues were offered recommendations and support for a gender-sensitive approach on their everyday work. This included games, materials, and suggestions for the organisation of special occasions such as children's birthdays. The implementation of the offers was then jointly reflected upon and expanded. (c) Observation and feedback by the project facilitator: The project leader visited the kindergarten for a few days and took part in the daily life of the kindergarten. Based on the observations, feedback and recommendations for action were developed for the pedagogues.

The findings of the observations include the following themes and the associated recommendations for action. (1) Stories and books often conveyed a stereotypical distribution of gender roles. Women* are pushed into the background and mainly men* are perceived as active main characters. The Dani and Alex project sees a solution in increased presentations of "outstanding women" as well as the presentation of different possibilities for shaping women's lives. In the acquisition of books and games, a focus should and can be set in this regard. (2) It was noted that some boys* played in the "doll corner". However, they took over tasks such as cooking in this area, while tasks such as tidying up were taken over exclusively by girls*. The researchers therefore recommended renaming the play area from "doll corner" to "living area". This should make access to this particular play area easier for boys* and should also encourage them to be part of all the activities in this play area. (3) Two times a week, two children are selected for lunch tasks. These tasks include the distribution of dishes, tidying up and cleaning tables and chairs after lunch. Until the time of the observation, no attention was paid to which children and how often a child took over these tasks. One suggestion of the researchers was to assign one boy* and one girl* at the same time to these tasks. This would show that household activities are a matter for both sexes. It is important to make sure that the tasks are done equally among the selected couples. (4) The researchers were able to recognise that especially boys* strive for more physical contact and make use of more attention and

⁶ <https://www.girlsday.info>

help from the pedagogues. Girls*, on the other hand, are often more reserved and independent. For example, they fold their clothes independently before and after gym class and help each other, while boys* spontaneously and more often receive help from the pedagogues. As a result, girls* can and often do not get enough help in this respect. One approach to solving this problem is that pedagogues should first observe and reflect on their own behaviour. Which children do they pay more or less attention to? What level of expectations, demands and patience do the pedagogues have for different children? In the next step, they should avoid any unequal treatment and ensure balance in the demands on and expectations of the children.

The second part of the project was the development of a manual based on the research done in the kindergarten. The manual consists of (1) an introduction to gender-sensitive education and national legal and educational frameworks, (2) a manual with instructions for self-reflection and group reflection for pedagogues, (3) examples of situations in the kindergarten in which gender-sensitive education can and should be applied and (4) further material and literature. The guiding principles and their implementation in the form of guiding questions are particularly practical. The checklist in the form of guiding questions is intended to make it easier for pedagogues to reflect on (non-) gender-sensitive actions and, if necessary, to intervene at different levels. The guiding questions refer to different areas: Personal aspects of the pedagogues, teamwork of the pedagogues, work with the children, design of the rooms and services, work with the parents, public relations, work in the system of childcare.

→ https://www.tirol.gv.at/fileadmin/themen/bildung/elementarbildung/allgemeines/Broeschuere_Geschlechtersensible_Paedagogik.pdf

Gender-sensitive pedagogy. Manual for Teachers and Adult Educators in Elementary Pedagogy

This manual was developed in 2009 by Claudia Schneider and the EFEU association (association focusing on gender, diversity and education in Vienna) on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture. The target group of the manual are kindergarten pedagogues in training. With the help of modifications, it is also possible to implement the exercises in the work with children. The manual is closely connected to the legal framework for education and provides the pedagogues with a variety of material. Among other things, it includes a theoretical discussion on the topic of gender-sensitive education (including further literature), methods, games and exercises to be used in the classroom with children, and questions and checklists for pedagogues and teams of pedagogues. The different materials deal with different topics, such as: gendered bodies, gender-sensitive language, socialisation, gender sensitivity, perception of gendered interactions among children and how to deal with them using guided methods and basics for gender-sensitive education in the different classes (English, music, sports, etc.). The checklist aims to be a helpful tool for raising awareness of overlooked gendered areas like: (a) personal socialisation, (b) educative praxis and gender stereotypes (domestic tasks, attitudes towards boys* and girls*, offering help, attitudes towards working mothers and caring fathers, attitudes towards diverse lifestyles), (c) language use (includes avoiding derogative terms for women, infantilising terms for girls*, avoiding male-only terms for occupations), (d) materials, texts and books, (e) observing children's play, (f) observing group interactions, (g) creating, using spaces and managing

children's access to them (building area, dressing up area, etc.). In addition to the various topics, the checklist also offers practical support in these areas.

The methods, exercises and materials summarised in the manual are based on a theoretical examination of current research findings and scientific theories. The topic of equal opportunities and gender equality was examined. For this purpose, research was carried out on changes in the time period from 1975 (legal introduction of mixed-gender school classes in Austria), the meaning, implementation, supporting regulations and the target definition of gender equality. Conceptual definitions and the theoretical understanding of "gender", "sex" and "gender roles" were discussed. The current topic and problem with the binary gender system and the norms and stereotypes associated with it were also covered. Theories such as "Doing gender" by West and Zimmermann were referred to. With the help of the theoretical discussion on gender issues in schools and in classrooms, theoretical concepts for creating equal learning opportunities, for gender-sensitive pedagogy, for achieving gender sensitivity, gender justice and gender awareness among pedagogues were developed on the one hand, whereas on the other hand, the practical materials, aids and exercises were developed and collected in a manual.

→(https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKewjErpGhw830AhXIDuwKHWJ4ArsQFnoECAMQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fpubshop.bmbwf.gv.at%2Findex.php%3Frex_media_type%3Dpubshop_download%26rex_media_file%3D184_leitfaden_bakip_09_15545.pdf&usq=A0vVaw3BZo4utUEvyxSnDiY86ahb)

1.3. Projects and good practices

Boys' Day

The aim of Boys' Day is to broaden the spectrum of career choices for boys*. In particular, they are introduced to care professions in nursing, education and social work. The boys* are made aware of the professions and the associated activities and tasks, they are welcomed, made aware that they are competent for the professions and that they can and should perform care work.

The programme has been commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection for the last 15 years and is planned and implemented by organisations in the provinces. The target group are boys* from 7th grade onwards (12 to 18 years old, with the majority being between 13 and 15 years old). In principle, participation in Boys' Day is voluntary, although in 30 to 40 percent of cases, whole school classes are registered by pedagogues. Group excursions or open days at workplaces in care professions where men* already work are organised for boys*. About 50 percent of the boys* visit hospitals, 25-30 percent are interested in institutions for disabled people and social work and about 20 percent visit kindergartens. The boys* can choose the areas according to their interests. In addition, workshops are offered in schools, external institutions or online (online workshops are for all genders). Once a year, there is an action day with a big event that takes place in Vienna. However, the remaining offers are organised and carried out on demand throughout the year. In addition, there is teaching material and information for children and pedagogues on the Boys' Day website (<http://www.boysday.at>).

Despite the circumstances due to Corona, 1,716 boys* participated in Boys' Day in 2020. In addition, free educational material and information on the website reached even more girls* and

boys*. Thus, 1,500 online packages and packages of teaching materials were downloaded, 1,400 YouTube clicks on short videos about Boys' Day occupations (boys' interviews) and 900 hits on the Boys' Day Quiz were recorded. In the previous year (2019; no Corona-related restrictions), 5,439 boys* participated in Boys' Day. In 2020, 308,862 boys* aged between 12 and 18 lived in Austria. This means that 2 percent of all boys* living in Austria participated in Boys' Day in 2019 (Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz 2021).

Gender Loops. Methods, Instruments and Strategies for Gender Mainstreaming in Early Childhood Education.

This was a project funded by the EU vocational training programme 'Leonardo da Vinci', which was carried out in six countries (Germany, Norway, Spain, Turkey, Lithuania, Austria) from 2006 to 2008. The aim of the project was to develop and sustain gender mainstreaming strategies for education and training for professional childcare pedagogues and day-care centres. The topics "culture of binary genders", "doing gender", "gender mainstreaming" and "hegemonic masculinity" were explained, worked on and discussed in a curriculum and a handbook, which were developed for this purpose. The curriculum contains an introduction to the topic of gender mainstreaming in professional education settings, support for good cooperation between different professional education facilities (university, institutions for further education, colleges), theoretical and practical support for the gender-sensitive teaching of pedagogues (diversity in picture books, working with biography and memory, language, etc.) and tools and instructions for self-reflection, observation methods and their documentation. Furthermore, the handbook⁷ has a very strong practical orientation and contains a collection of methods, instructions and examples for the implementation of gender-sensitive pedagogy in day-care centres. In addition, a checklist for picture books was created⁸. This checklist can be used by pedagogues to check whether books are in line with gender-sensitive pedagogy or not.⁹

Practical materials and offers for further education and teaching from the BMBWF

The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research provides a collection of offers, actions, materials, websites and manuals on the following four gender-focused topics on its website¹⁰: (1) Gender-reflective vocational orientation, (2) Gender-reflective pedagogy: violence prevention and health promotion, (3) Gender issues / gender relations / political education, (4) Self-evaluation / reflection tools for schools.

The following offers can be found on the BMBWF website and were discussed in an interview with an expert* from the public education sector (see chapter 2.2. Results, interpretation and discussion).

⁷ https://www.chance-quereinstieg.de/uploads/media/Gender_Loops_Praxisbuch_01.pdf

⁸ <http://genustest.no/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/eng-attachm.4-The-Gender-Loops-checklist.pdf>

⁹ <https://genderloops.dissens.de/ger/materialien>

¹⁰ https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/gd/gss/pm_fu.html

Media Suitcase "Family and diverse ways of living" for day-care facilities

In 2012, the educational initiative QUERFORMAT (Berlin) developed a media toolbox containing materials that help with prejudice-sensitive education, inclusive education and gender education. The box includes 30 picture books, a game, 6 textbooks for kindergarten pedagogues on various topics such as gender-responsive education, trans identity and rainbow families. At the time of writing, this media kit can no longer be purchased, as the QUERFORMAT educational initiative has developed new materials. These include the *Digital queer initial counselling case for help with upbringing (Queerer Erst-Beratungs-Koffer)* from 2021¹¹ and the teaching material *Let's talk about gender*, which is used in secondary levels I and II in English classes¹². In addition to other offers for secondary schools, there is also the teaching material *Teaching modules on the topic of intersex for primary school (Unterrichtsbausteine zum Thema Intergeschlechtlichkeit für die Grundschule)* from 2018 (2nd edition was revised in 2020). This material provides incentives for children in the first and second levels of primary education to deal not only with intersexuality but also with their own pigeonholing. In addition to an introduction to the topic of intersexuality, there are also elaborate sequences for classrooms, which include the following titles: "There are more than boys and girls", "Only either - or?", "Correct and incorrect attributions". The free downloadable material includes inclusive methods and worksheets for teaching at primary level¹³.

The educational initiative QUERFORMAT offers even more materials for working with children on diversity and anti-discrimination with a focus on sexual and gender diversity.

Source¹⁴: Unterrichtsbausteine zum Thema Intergeschlechtlichkeit für die Grundschule, 2020, p. 11



Ibobb

The web portal *ibobb (information, counselling and orientation for career and education)* is a platform for pedagogues teaching the topic of career orientation and for pupils. There is material and information for lessons, references to offers for practical vocational days, educational and vocational information fairs, references to Boys' Day and Girls' Day, information on legal principles, current facts and figures as well as references to coordination offices and studies relevant to the topic. On the one hand, there is a focus on gender-sensitive career guidance with various references to teaching materials, offers, events and brochures. On the other hand, there are focal points for different school levels, such as primary school.¹⁵

¹¹ <https://www.queerer-beratungskoffer.de>

¹² https://www.querformat.de/wp-content/uploads/QF-UE-Lets-talk-about-gender_2-Auflage_28-11-2020.pdf

¹³ https://www.querformat.de/wp-content/uploads/Queerformat_GS_LieblingsEis_druckdatei.pdf

¹⁴ https://www.querformat.de/wp-content/uploads/Queerformat_GS_LieblingsEis_druckdatei.pdf

¹⁵ <https://portal.ibobb.at>

When I grow up

Mafalda (an association for the promotion and support of girls* and young women*) has produced a handbook based on the project “When I grow up” (2011 and 2013) on behalf of the province of Styria - Society and Generations. This handbook is aimed at primary school lessons on the topic of education about professions. The focus is on the topics of personality development, gender roles and the world of education and work. In the handbook, the emergence of educational and occupational pathways is elaborated in a child-friendly way. There are 24 worksheets, 3 learning modules (Showing strengths to oneself and others; Experiencing girls* and boys* in many ways; Exploring the world of education and work), initiatives around ibobb at primary level and an overview of existing and further teaching material, books and websites. This teaching material was developed in cooperation with 11 schools, 28 teachers and 300 pupils.



Source¹⁶: Didaktische und methodische Impulse für IBOBB in der Volksschule 2014 p. 62

Professions Memo Game

In 2017, the Department of Women and Gender Equality of the province of Tyrol created a memory game for children to discover professions and to raise awareness of the broad spectrum of career choices. The game vividly conveys to children that, in principle, both men* and women* can pursue all professions. On a total of 36 cards, 18 professions are presented in a gender binary concept.¹⁷

Source: BOTH!! Professions Memo Game 2018 p. 2



BIV-Website

The biv-website (the academy for inclusive education) provides a collection of different teaching materials for primary school lessons. Among them is (1) the card set “ACTIVITIES” for educational counselling and career orientation consisting of 88 cards with activities on the topic of career, (2) the card set “COMPETENCIES” for educational counselling and career guidance consisting of 26 cards on which different competences are illustrated and explained in simple language on the back, (3) a guide and material entitled “So that I know what I can do” (*Damit ich weiß, was ich kann*) to record the competences of children in primary school.¹⁸

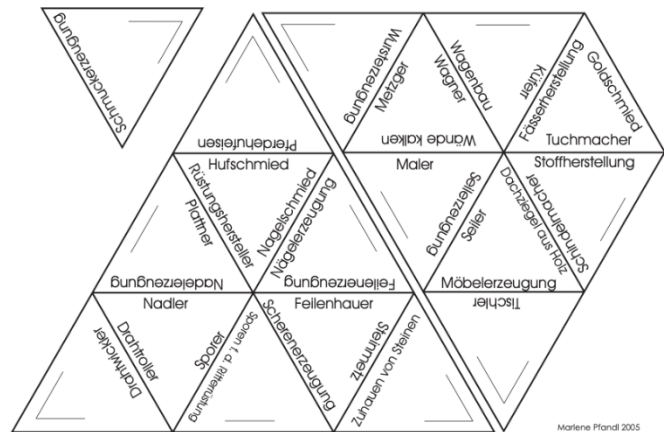
¹⁶ https://www.mafalda.at/dafje746ne/wp-content/uploads/handreichungen_impulse.pdf

¹⁷ https://www.tirol.gv.at/fileadmin/themen/gesellschaft-soziales/frauen/downloads/Anleitung_beide_Spiel_neu_2018_gesamt.pdf

¹⁸ <https://www.biv-integrativ.at/material/>

Learning material by and for teachers

The private website “Learning material by and for teachers” (Lernmaterial von und für LehrerInnen) offers teaching material on various topics. Among other things, there is an overview of different materials on the topic “professions”. The collection includes worksheets, online learning games, LÜK templates, teaching materials and many other different materials.¹⁹

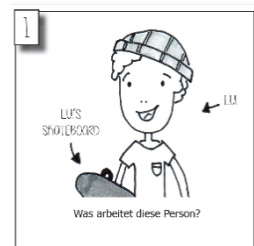


Source: Trimino - Legematerial: z.B. Maler - Wände kalken, Metzger - Wursterzeugung

Boys in Care

The Boys in Care project (2017–2019)²⁰ aimed to encourage boys* to choose a social, educational or nursing profession. Among other things, a collection of methods for gender-responsive career guidance and a handbook have emerged from this project and are now being disseminated via the BMBWF website.

Source: Kartenset mit 12 Fakten zu Fürsorgeberufen



Digital education for all!

This is a folder with impulses and suggestions for schools on the topic of opportunities and gender equality in the teaching of digital and IT skills.²¹

Gender Matters! Strong girls, strong boys!

These are two theme boxes (one for children between 4 and 8 years, and one for children between 8 and 12 years). The box for younger children includes picture, read-aloud and non-fiction books that address questions such as: what is the importance of different genders and information on topics such as body image, professions or homosexuality, etc.²²

School-based work with boys - polis aktuell magazine.

This is a theoretical basis and teaching example for the dismantling of gender stereotypes from 2019. However, the target group for this is secondary level I pupils.²³

¹⁹ https://vs-material.wegerer.at/sachkunde/su_berufe.htm

²⁰ <https://www.boys-in-care.eu>

²¹ https://pubshop.bmbwf.gv.at/index.php?article_id=9&type=neuerscheinungen&pub=812

²² <https://wien.edupool.de/home?pid=30cucc60hoo57kamiqb8s3j8g7>

²³ https://www.politik-lernen.at/pa_bubenarbeit

Strong! But how?

This collection of methods and working documents for youth work with a focus on violence prevention was published by the Federal Ministry of Education in 2016. Topics such as “Boys and masculinity”, “Activating resources”, “Recognising and naming violence” are prepared for teaching. The material is not specifically aimed at an age group, but many exercises require skills such as writing, reading and/or complex reflection, which is why implementation in kindergartens and primary schools cannot take place without adaptation.²⁴

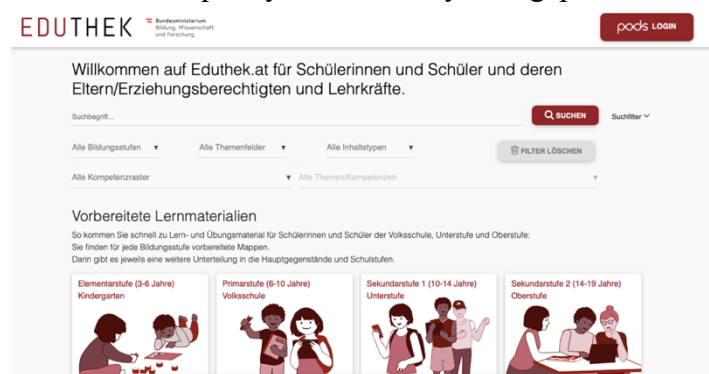
GeseBO - Booklet for gender-sensitive vocational orientation

Following on from the GeseBO (Gender & Now) project, a brochure for gender-sensitive career orientation was produced by Dr. Silke Luttenberger. It includes informative material on the topic for pedagogues and interested parties as well as working material on the following four topics: (1) Strengths, skills and interests, (2) Gender-sensitive language, (3) Clichés & stereotypes, (4) Role stereotypes. For all four areas, examples for reflection from pedagogues for pedagogues and children were compiled by the pedagogues themselves. Furthermore, examples for primary, lower secondary and upper secondary students follow for each area.²⁵

Eduthek. The new platform for pedagogues

The Eduthek is a new internet platform for education. The increasing demand for teaching material that can be implemented online and/or is accessible online due to the Corona pandemic prompted the BMBWF to fill this website with material. On the online platform, pedagogues can find teaching material that has either been reviewed and approved by editors or has been commissioned by the BMBWF. For example, the Democracy Centre²⁶ develops teaching material on behalf of the Ministry, which is then made freely accessible to pedagogues on the platform. On the one hand, the material is differentiated for different school levels – each level from elementary to upper school (for children from 3 to 19 years of age). On the other hand, the material is sorted according to different subjects and topics. For example, there is a folder/filter called “Gender and Diversity”, and another filter called “Reflective Gender Education and Equality” is currently being planned. In addition to this, different materials such as audio, video, documents, graphics, interactive material, collections and folders (subject area folders) are differentiated so that pedagogues can search specifically for their desired teaching material.²⁷

Source: Eduthek (<https://eduthek.at>)



²⁴ https://pubshop.bmbwf.gv.at/index.php?rex_media_type=pubshop_download&rex_media_file=190_starkaberwie_2016.pdf

²⁵ https://portal.ibobb.at/fileadmin/Berufsorientierung_und_Bildung/GESEBO_Koffer.pdf

²⁶ The Democracy Center Vienna is an independent scientific institution with tasks in democracy research and democracy education. Its empirical and theoretical research serves scientific knowledge, democratic political discourse and transfer into educational offers.

²⁷ <https://eduthek.at>

*Gender-inclusive career guidance is mostly aimed at girls**

Both the research on existing offers and materials, and the focus group discussions and interviews showed that career guidance offers and materials advertised as gender-inclusive or gender-reflective are often aimed at girls*. Especially when it comes to the age group of elementary and primary school, a large part of the projects are exclusively aimed at girls* and their promotion in STEM fields, while the offers for boys* are inferior.

- *Girls' Day*. For example, there is an equivalent to Boys' Day – Girls' Day. Girls* spend a day looking behind the scenes of technical, manual, industrial, scientific and IT professions and discover new occupational profiles this way. Girls' Day is also offered to girls* of primary school age in the provinces of Upper Austria and Lower Austria. In addition, there is the Girls' Day MINI throughout Austria. This is aimed at girls* of kindergarten age (4 years and older). During excursions to selected places (for example museums, companies, ministries), the children experience how exciting technical and scientific phenomena are.²⁸
- *HTL4GIRLS*. In the province of Lower Austria, this project supports girls* on their way into technology. HTL pupils receive training as role models (Girl Scouts) and then visit primary schools and are available at technology workshops or at the open day of their HTL – they tell younger girls* about life and learning at an HTL.²⁹
- *Bo+Bi individual*. This is a career orientation programme founded in 2011 by the Lower Austrian Regional School Board. Among other things, real encounters between pupils are organised and promoted, e.g. by expanding cooperation between vocational secondary schools and primary schools.³⁰
- *My Technology - Girls Women Technology Platform*. This platform is managed by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and addresses girls* of different school levels (including kindergarten and primary school) with different offers. Among other things, the "RuboCupJunior" is offered; an event where girls* are supported in building robots.³¹
- *Science Centre Network Association*. This is a collection of museums, new technologies and hands-on activities that bring science and technology closer to all children, young people and adults, especially girls* and women*.³²
- *Re-ment - Mentoring turned upside down*. This project also focuses on promoting girls* in the field of information technology. However, the approach is very innovative, because the mentor-mentee relationship is turned upside down. Mentors (young girls*) teach information technology to mentees (pedagogues, experts and parents). By reversing the mentoring relationship, the focus is not on the pupils' deficits, but on their competences, resources and interests in this area. In order to increase diversity, from the school year 2019/2020 onwards, additional boys* and younger groups (secondary school: ages 10 to 14) were included in the project.³³
- *E-MINT - best practice for parental work*. E-MINT is aimed specifically at parents with children aged 0 to 14. Parents' questions such as: How can I get my child excited about STEM? How can common gender stereotypes be broken down? How can I build up STEM

²⁸ <https://www.girlsday.info>

²⁹ <https://htl4girls.at>

³⁰ <http://bobi.lsr-noe.gv.at/>

³¹ <http://www.meine-technik.at>

³² <https://www.science-center-net.at>

³³ <http://www.re-ment.at>

skills at an early age? Parents can find answers and help on how to encourage their children's digital curiosity in the E-MINT app and in the E-MINT Makerspace. There, instructions for projects related to technology and science are provided for implementation at home. All the materials and tools needed for this are made available for free download.³⁴

³⁴ <https://www.e-mint.at>

2. ECaRoM Qualitative Data Analysis

2.1. Methods

The aim of the Austrian ECaRoM survey was to get an insight into the status quo of gender-sensitive measures and topics in Austrian kindergartens and primary schools.

- How are the topics of gender, caring masculinity and boys* in care activities dealt with in schools and kindergartens?
- What is already being implemented?
- What offers (workshops, teaching material, lectures, etc.) exist in this regard and to what extent are they used in everyday pedagogical practice?
- What kind of needs and demands do pedagogues have to promote the topics of gender sensitivity and, especially, caring masculinities?

In order to answer the broad spectrum of questions, a method triangulation (focus group discussions, interviews and checklist) was chosen. Therefore, focus group discussions with pedagogues and interviews with experts and stakeholders were conducted in 2021. After the focus group discussions, a checklist/questionnaire was sent to the focus group participants.

The *focus group discussion* method was chosen because the participation of several pedagogues with different backgrounds in one discussion group makes it possible to quickly collect a variety of perceptions. The discussion aspect makes it easier to delve into the depth of different topics, while at the same time the topic/the question is explored from different angles due to the participants. In the focus group discussions, the emphasis was on the opinions, observations and experiences of the pedagogues from their everyday professional lives. The method of *interviews* was chosen in order to speak in depth with a few selected people about their fields of expertise. The focus in the interviews was on the expertise of the respective interviewee (education system, current offers, everyday school life). The method of the *checklist/questionnaire* completes the method triangulation. While in the focus group discussions and the interviews the answers have to be given relatively ad hoc, the respondents have as much time as they want when filling in the checklist. The checklists can be completed alone or in cooperation with colleagues. The fact that respondents have several weeks to complete the checklist means that more complex contexts or detailed questions can be asked. Respondents have time to observe and assess their behaviour and/or environment before answering and completing the checklist. In the checklist, the focus was on questions concerning daily pedagogical routine, actions and reactions of the pedagogues and children as well as spatial and material conditions of the respective facilities in relation to gender stereotypes and care activities.

In the following chapter, the framework conditions of these three survey methods are described. Who and how many people were surveyed? Then the results are presented in three chapters. The first chapter presents the results of the focus group discussions and interviews. The second chapter presents the results of the kindergarten checklist, whilst the third chapter presents the results of the primary school checklist.

Focus group discussions

Five focus group discussions with pedagogues were conducted between May and July 2021. One focus group was carried out with prospective primary school teachers/students who participated in the ECaRoM project as part of their major in “Inclusive primary school pedagogy”. Three focus group discussions were held with primary school teachers who either teach in Austrian schools or in training institutions (PH³⁵ or KPH³⁶) for primary school teachers. One focus group was conducted with kindergarten pedagogues. A total number of 32 teachers (13 of them prospective primary school teachers, 15 primary school teachers and 4 kindergarten pedagogues) from four provinces (Burgenland, Lower Austria, Styria and Vienna) took part in the five focus group discussions.

The primary school teachers were made aware of the ECaRoM project through an announcement by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF). Interested teachers could send an email to the Institute for Masculinity Research and Gender Studies (VMG, AT) expressing their interest in participating in the project. Subsequently, groups were formed with pedagogues with similar vocational training, similar geographical workplaces and/or the same places of work. For example, people from the same province or from the same institution took part in the same group discussion.

The kindergarten pedagogues were reached through cooperation with the organisation “Save the Child Styria”³⁷. This organisation covers the psychosocial field for children and families, the field of child protection, child and youth welfare as well as the field of childcare in the province of Styria. “Save the Child Styria” comprises eight kindergartens, four of which include a crèche. The head of the department sent an email to all pedagogues in the organisation, whereupon interested pedagogues could contact the Institute for Masculinity Research and Gender Studies (VMG, AT) and thus participate in a suitable focus group discussion. Due to the different summer holiday periods and the associated availability of the pedagogues, only one focus group discussion with kindergarten pedagogues could be organised.

Table 3: Participants in the five focus group discussions

Focus group	Interviewees
1.	13 Students of primary education - KPH Graz
2.	7 Pedagogues at PHs in Burgenland, Lower Austria and Styria
3.	4 Pedagogues at KPHs in Lower Austria and Styria
4.	4 Pedagogues at “Praxisvolksschulen” ³⁸ in Lower Austria, Styria and Vienna
5.	4 Kindergarten pedagogues

All focus group discussions were conducted online via Zoom and lasted between 60 and 105 minutes. The following topics were addressed: (1) Opinion on and observation of the status quo of gender-sensitive teaching in primary schools / kindergartens, (2) Current implementations: caring

³⁵ PH = Pädagogische Hochschule – University of Teacher Education

³⁶ KPH= Katholische Pädagogische Hochschule – Catholic University of Teacher Education

³⁷ Save the Child Styria = Rettet das Kind Steiermark

³⁸ “Praxisvolksschulen” are primary schools that are linked to an educational establishment for primary school teachers. For the teacher training program at primary level, they represent the centre for practical pedagogical studies and serve as a research field for projects of practical school relevance.

masculinities, professions, promoting boys* in care activities, theoretical and practical implementation of the topics mentioned, (3) Training and further education on gender issues, (4) Role of pedagogues in the reconstruction or prevention of gender stereotypes, (5) Needs and wishes for gender-sensitive teaching.

Interviews

In the months from July to November 2021, four in-depth interviews were conducted with experts in the field of gender-sensitive measures in elementary and (primary) schools. Based on their expert status, the four people were explicitly selected and contacted with the request for an interview. All interviews had to be held online via Zoom. Since all interview partners were experts, a special focus was placed on their respective fields of expertise.

Table 4: Participants in interviews

Interview	Interviewee
1.	BMBWF
2.	Expert on gender-sensitive vocational guidance (Boys' Day)
3.	Kindergarten pedagogue
4.	Primary school pedagogue

Two interviews were conducted with stakeholders. One interviewee was an expert in the public education sector, with a focus on the field of gender and diversity management. Their expertise lies in the implementation of gender equality on a structural level (Austria-wide), supporting current projects, developing and implementing guidelines on gender sensitivity. The second interviewee was responsible for the coordination of a gender-sensitive career guidance campaign. Their expertise lies mainly in the implementation of the Boys' Day measure, its dissemination, execution and coordination.

In addition to the focus group discussions, two in-depth interviews were conducted with pedagogues. Both teachers had focused on gender in their training and had written theses on this topic. For the elementary level, an interview was conducted with an elementary level teacher from Vienna. For the primary level, an interview was conducted with a primary level teacher from Styria.

Checklist

After the focus group discussions, a checklist/questionnaire was sent to the focus group participants. As this questionnaire mainly referred to practice reflections, it was only sent to pedagogues who already work with children. 19 questionnaires were sent out to focus group participants, whereby in the case of the kindergartens, the questionnaire was additionally sent to kindergarten teachers who did not participate in a focus group discussion. The total of people who filled out checklists from kindergartens (13 people) and primary schools (9 people) amounted to 22 people. Most of the respondents were employed as pedagogical staff and a small percentage of the respondents were employed as head teachers at kindergartens or primary schools. All respondents who filled out a kindergarten checklist worked at an institution of the organisation "Save the Child" ("Rettet das Kind") in Styria. The respondents of the primary school checklist worked in different primary

schools in the provinces of Upper Austria, Lower Austria, Styria and Vienna. The institutions where the respondents worked varied both in the number of staff and the number of children.

Table 3: Overview of the size of institutions where the respondents worked

	Smallest facility	Largest facility
Pedagogical staff		
Kindergarten	2 People	15 People
Primary school	17 People	38 People
Children		
Kindergarten	12 Children	50 Children (without crèche)
Primary school	170 Children	265 Children

Most of the facilities in which the respondents worked (68 percent) are located in urban areas. 14 percent of the facilities are located in small towns and 18 percent are located in the countryside.

2.2. Results, interpretation and discussion

2.2.1 Focus groups and interviews

Men* in the educational sector

In Austrian kindergartens only 2 percent of the childcare pedagogues and in primary schools only 7 percent of the teachers are men* (Statistik Austria 2021a, Statistik Austria 2021b). Building on these findings, possible reasons for the lack of men* in this profession were discussed in the ECaRoM focus groups. One of the most frequently mentioned reasons for the absence of male pedagogues in elementary and primary education is the comparatively *low salary*. In Austria, the male breadwinner-female co-earner model is still common, in which men* pursue paid gainful employment and support the family as the main breadwinner, while women* reconcile part-time paid work and unpaid care work. Numerically feminised professions (especially those related to the care and education of young children) are less paid than so-called men's professions. The social pressure to be the main breadwinner of a family in combination with the low salary of teachers in elementary and primary education is a deterrent for men* in Austria.

In addition, a comparatively *low social status of caring professions* was addressed as one of the reasons for low rates of men*. The work and the requirements of pedagogues, especially for children up to the age of 10, are seen as feminine, soft and leisure-like activities ('playing with kids'). In the focus group, it was discussed that these characteristics would not be compatible with the image of the hard-working male breadwinner in Austria. Based on such traditional concepts of masculinities, many boys* do not even consider professions such as kindergarten pedagogue or primary school teacher as suitable for them in the process of vocational orientation.

Other reasons were also mentioned, such as a *lack of knowledge* about care professions. Many boys* do not know much about the tasks in care jobs or pedagogical professions. Preconceptions such as "*in kindergarten you only have to play with the children all day long*" or "*in kindergarten the children still have nappies and/or learn how to use the toilet and as a man I can't help with that*" lead to distorted perceptions of the professions. In addition, many men* don't understand

themselves as capable of being a pedagogue and especially be able to perform care activities within pedagogical work.

Focus group participants also mentioned another important reason why boys* may not choose to work in the educational sector: the fear of accusations of *paedophilia*. Questions from their social environments such as “*Why do you like working with children so much?*” or “*Do you think this is a normal career choice for a man?*” deter many men* from choosing the profession of pedagogy.

One reason for the lack of male teachers lies in the *education system*. It was discussed in the focus groups that the admission exam to the training schools for elementary and primary pedagogues were tailored to “female qualities”. According to the participants in the focus group discussions, the musical part of the admission exam is especially difficult for young boys*. Training to become a kindergarten teacher can begin as early as after graduating from secondary level I (frequent age: 14 years). At this time, boys’* voices are often still breaking, which is why singing as part of the admission exam often discourages young boys*. However, the musical part of the admission exam for elementary education, which can be started after graduating secondary level II (frequent age: 18 years), is also a hurdle. According to scattered comments, some training institutions are now changing the musical part of the admission exam to facilitate access for young men*. Also the pedagogues in the institutions (KPH and PH) play a central role. There are teachers for whom a gender heterogeneous group of trainees is a challenge. Many teachers are used to educating only women*. They feel overwhelmed by the situation of a gender heterogeneous class, have prejudices against men* that these would disrupt their teaching and do not know how to adapt their teaching to the new situation of mixed-gender classes. This attitude of the educators towards the potential male pedagogues could be another reason why some do not start the training.

This critical and partly also *negative attitude of colleagues, educators and parents* towards male pedagogues was justified in the focus groups with two arguments. (a) On the one hand, male teachers rise to higher positions much faster than women*. In the report by the BMBWF from 2005 “Men as primary school teachers” it was found that 39 percent of all head teacher positions were men*. Of the 4,009 male pedagogues at that time, 1,293 (12 percent of all pedagogues) were headmasters of primary schools. Thus, 32 percent of male pedagogues and 7 percent of female pedagogues were heads of primary schools in the school year 2002/03. Compared to women*, more male pedagogues work in leading positions.³⁹ (b) On the other hand, male pedagogues were often accused of taking over the play and fun parts of education. Thus, most male pedagogues would either work in schools with a sports focus, in forest and adventure kindergartens and/or in private institutions that can offer more salary.

Gender as an avoided topic

The topic of gender, and even more so the topic of caring masculinity, is rarely considered and/or only barely introduced in Austrian kindergartens as well as in Austrian primary schools. Among other things this is due to it being a broad and comprehensive topic, which many teachers feel

³⁹ The underrepresentation of men* in care professions in Austria was also presented in the Boys in Care Manual. With the help of absolute numbers and the percentage of men* in three fields of care work in 2016/17, the status quo of Austria was described. There were 1,441 male employees (2.33%) in childcare facilities. A total of 2,642 men* (8%) worked in primary schools in 2016/17. 6,406 men* (13.5%) worked in health care/home care/nursing (full-time equivalent) (Boys in Care Handbook, 2019, p. 32 quoted from Boys’ Day-Fact Sheet (Pflügl 2019).

overwhelmed with. In schooling, the topic is often only touched upon or only the sub-topic of gender-appropriate language/gendering is extracted. The actual topic and the question of why the topic of gender is important are left out. This is one of the reasons why many pedagogues get the feeling that the topic is unmanageably big and thus develop a fear and aversion towards the topic. As a result, teachers do not even want to deal with or implement the topic into the lessons, because they have the feeling that they would have to spend a lot of resources such as time and energy or do not even trust themselves to implement it at all.

In the focus group discussions, it was often pointed out that there is no time in everyday pedagogical life for gender issues and even less time for the specific topic of caring masculinity. Preference was often given to topics such as migration, physical and mental health, inclusion, the environment and/or language deficits. The gender issue seems to have a *low priority* in the eyes of pedagogues and in some cases there is also a lack of knowledge about the effects of non-treatment. This conclusion can be confirmed by the observation that offered workshops and further training for pedagogues are not well received. The long-term consequences of the exclusion of boys*, men* and masculinity in care areas and gender-sensitive topics is often not visible to them.

The topic of gender and caring masculinity is avoided, among other reasons, because pedagogues *lack material and methods*. In the focus group discussions, pedagogues expressed the problem that there are no resources for researching suitable material. This work would have to be done outside of working hours. However, since they are not aware of any platforms or access to gender-sensitive material, this research task is very difficult and time-consuming for pedagogues. In addition, they find little high-quality material, methods that are adapted to the needs and qualifications of the children and/or material that they do not have to create, modify or develop themselves. These hurdles and challenges make it difficult for pedagogues to deal with and implement gender issues in kindergartens and primary schools.

The role of parents / working with parents

Especially in the focus group discussions with the kindergarten pedagogues, the feedback was that fathers are becoming more active in their children's lives. They increasingly bring and pick up their children from kindergarten and they are more actively involved in events and activities. Nevertheless, an urban-rural difference can be observed. Fathers in rural areas are far less active than fathers in cities. In addition, kindergarten teachers perceive a difference between private and public kindergartens. In private kindergartens, fathers are more interested in kindergarten activities and are more actively involved. However, in case of emergencies (such as accidents), in most cases the mothers are informed and contacted, even if the father is the contact person at the kindergarten in everyday life (picks up and brings the child).

In general, it could be observed in the focus group discussions that at elementary as well as at primary school level, both children and parents have become more aware and open to the topic of gender equality in the course of the last few years. One kindergarten pedagogue explained this with her observation that the gender spectrum is becoming wider and wider. Men* and women* are considered the more "comprehensible genders". There are fewer and fewer differences between the binary genders and their role expectations. It becomes more difficult, however, when additional differentiation is made to the "other/diverse gender" and as a pedagogue you are met with a lack of understanding in working with parents.

In contrast to the kindergarten pedagogues, the topic of working with parents found little resonance in the focus group discussions with the primary school teachers. For the majority, the combination of working with parents and gender issues is limited to the fact that they write gender-conscious announcements to parents. Active engagement with parents on the topic of gender is out of the question for many and is clearly outside their field of duty as pedagogues.

The role and influence of pedagogues

In all focus group discussions, the influence of pedagogues on the children was confirmed. They see that their behaviour has an influence on whether gender stereotypes are reproduced by children or not. At the same time, they note that this influence depends very much on the personal attitudes and beliefs of the pedagogues. In elementary education, for example, there are still pedagogues who cling to old concepts (especially pedagogues whose training dates back a long time). In the focus group discussions, it was also found that the participants were aware of gender-reflective methods for themselves as pedagogues and that most of them actively used them.

On the one hand, the pedagogues are aware of their influence and on the other hand, they distance themselves from it on the grounds that this is an area for the family, the parents, the private environment.

All children have the same areas of responsibility

According to the pedagogues in the focus groups discussions, there are no differences between boys* and girls* in terms of care activities in kindergartens and primary schools. Tasks such as tidying up, comforting a friend and helping wherever help is needed are demanded of and done equally by all children. In this respect, there is no need for additional help or instruction for boys*. If boys* do not want to participate in care activities, the pedagogues notice this through the hesitation or reluctance of the boys*. Justifications based on gender, “*but this is girls’ work*”, were not observed by the pedagogues.

The pedagogues see their role in the positive reinforcement of the children when they carry out care activities. One pedagogue mentioned that it is important that children are shown appreciation for care activities. This appreciation should also be shown to adults as well, so that children can observe and experience the care activities and their appreciation among adults. Demonstrating and showing that every child has the same tasks is a central task for pedagogues in both elementary and primary education in their everyday pedagogical work with children.

How children deal with gender stereotypes

One piece of feedback in all focus group discussions was that children in both elementary and primary education are able to understand and work with the concept of gender. In contrast to the fear of some that children up to the age of 10 would either be too young to deal with gender issues or that gender and corresponding role models would not play a role at this age, all pedagogues were able to report observations in which children actively dealt with gender issues. Examples of this are: (a) The topic of professions was discussed in primary school. The teacher asked a girl* if she would like to become a policeman. The girl* answered: “No, I want to be a policewoman”. (b) A boy* came to a new kindergarten. He had clips in his long hair and wore dresses. At the beginning, the other children asked questions, but they quickly got used to the situation. The children did not see an obstacle in the boy’s non-gender stereotypical clothing and behaviour while playing and interacting. On the other hand, the adults/pedagogues needed more time to get used to this new

dynamic. For example, they realised that they often divided the children into groups of girls* and boys* and then got confused when counting the children in each group, because sometimes the boy* was in the boys'* group and sometimes he* was in the girls'* group. The pedagogues seemed to have difficulties in adapting their routines to this new dynamic and became aware of their restrictive and limited systems in such situations.

Offers, activities and teaching material from the perspective of pedagogues

Picture books are an important and useful tool for talking to children about gender equality and caring masculinity, both in kindergartens and primary schools. On the one hand, they can be read aloud and then used for different reflective methods. On the other hand, the visual representations in picture books help the children expand their imagination, since at this young age they are almost exclusively familiar with their own family concepts and the role models associated with them.

Reflection is a popular tool. In both kindergartens and primary schools, reflection is used as an important and helpful tool for working with children, but also for working with pedagogues. In the focus group discussions, the pedagogues report their observations that children of primary school age and especially children of kindergarten age only know the gender forms and the associated role distributions from their own social environments. However, the children are able to reflect on these experiences and expand on them with the help of questions and inspirations from the pedagogues. Especially questions that invite reflection, such as “Why do you think...?”, “Couldn’t it be different?”, “Why is person XY allowed to have a special role?”, “Why is person XY not allowed to do a particular (care) activity?” very often lead to a very open and comprehensive understanding of gender among children.

Reflections on one’s own behaviour, one’s own attitude and knowledge about gender-sensitive pedagogy and caring masculinity also represent theoretical support in the everyday pedagogical life of pedagogues. Often, pedagogues only deal with gender-related questions and reflections when in training and/or further education. In everyday professional life, there is often no space or time for reflection on one’s own behaviour in relation to gender-sensitive pedagogy. Nevertheless, pedagogues see reflection as a great help and possibility to integrate the topics of gender and caring masculinity in kindergartens and primary schools. Possible reflection questions, support and topics to be considered are partially known among the pedagogues in the focus groups, but all pedagogues would be happy to receive appropriate material and would also want to use it.

Gender-sensitive language is integrated into children’s education and educational settings, according to the pedagogues who participated in the focus group discussions. All pedagogues used gender-inclusive language in their profession. For this purpose, they mainly use the version of double nouns (policewoman and policeman). In primary schools, children are asked to use double nouns in writing tasks in higher grades. Gender variations with asterisks or other placeholders are avoided in age groups up to the end of primary school, as they go beyond the children’s language skills. In the interviews and focus group discussions, it was often reported back that for some pedagogues the topic of gender diversity and gender sensitivity solely meant gender-sensitive language. A deeper analysis and/or discussion of the topic rarely takes place, especially at primary level. Most of the time, this discussion stops at the level of gender-sensitive language.

Games play a major role, especially in kindergartens, whereas there is often not enough time for them in primary schools. Kindergarten pedagogues reported developments such as the “doll corner”

now being called the “living area” and that this is used by both girls* and boys*. Often the topic of gender sensitivity tilts in the direction of equal rights for girls* and pedagogues talk about wild, technically gifted and active girls*. One pedagogue noted that quiet and caring boys* are more likely to be punished with subtle sanctions for their “non-masculine behaviour” compared to non-gender stereotypical behaviour of girls*. Comments during games like “Don’t act like a girl” or “Boys don’t cry” often come from other boys*. To counteract this, pedagogues introduce new games to all children at the same time, all children are given equal access to games and children are supported in expressing their interests and abilities. Nevertheless, kindergarten pedagogues repeatedly noticed that children bring gender-stereotyped games from home and that toys are increasingly advertised either for boys* or for girls* (glitter bricks for girls*). This discrepancy between the statements “all children are allowed to do the same things and all have the same tasks” and “boys* prefer to play certain games or are not interested in the following activities” is particularly evident in the area of games.

The pedagogues were not aware of any *offers and/or activities* for children at elementary or primary level on the topic of boys*/men* and care. On the one hand, the feedback from the participants was that there are basically (regardless of the age of the children) more offers that promote equality for girls* in technical areas than for boys* in care areas. On the other hand, the participants noted that there are no offers on the topic of vocational choices at elementary and primary level. However, they were all aware of Boys’ Day.

Summary of findings from the focus group discussions and interviews

Part of the focus group discussions and interviews was aimed at answering the question about the reasons for the lack of male pedagogical staff in Austrian kindergartens⁴⁰ and primary schools⁴¹. The respondents mentioned the following reasons:

- *Income and gender:* The comparatively low income of kindergarten and primary school teachers is not compatible with the male breadwinner / main earner model prevalent in Austria.
- *Low social status:* In Austria, traditional gender perceptions still dominate (e.g. the image of hard-working men*). The profession of elementary and primary school educators is associated with light care and play, and fun activities. Due to this discrepancy, professions such as elementary and primary school pedagogues are often not an option for boys* and men* when choosing a career.
- *Lack of knowledge about the profession:* Often there is no concrete and/or accurate idea about the tasks and requirements of elementary and primary school teachers.
- *General suspicion:* The fear of being confronted with accusations of (sexual) abuse of children deters many young men* from considering a care profession working with children. Especially comments from their social environments, parents of the children to be cared for and/or colleagues are to be expected.
- *Education system:* The training institutions for elementary and primary school pedagogues are in part strongly oriented towards female trainees (cultural feminisation). Some

⁴⁰ The proportion of male teachers in Austrian kindergartens is 2 percent. (Statistik Austria 2021a)

⁴¹ The proportion of male teachers in Austrian primary schools is 7.4 percent. (Statistik Austria 2021b)

interviewees criticised that admission exams are tailored to “female qualities” and that educators would face new challenges with gender-heterogeneous groups.

- *Prejudices/problems*: Male educators are sometimes confronted with critical and also negative attitudes from colleagues, educators and parents. Often male pedagogues are accused of only taking on play and the fun activities of schooling and education. These attitudes are reinforced by “glass lifts” (Ohlendieck, 2008) that magically lift male educators into higher positions as soon as they enter the system. These positions are additionally linked to higher incomes.

Another part of the focus group discussions and interviews was aimed at answering the question why there are *gaps in dealing with gender issues* in kindergartens and primary schools. A large part of the interviewees felt overwhelmed with the topic. According to the interviewees, this is because the topic is often only dealt with superficially or not at all in their training, only the sub-area of speaking and talking gender-consciously is singled out, or the topic of gender justice and care-oriented masculinity is not considered important enough or is not addressed at all in terms of content. The consequences of this are that educators do not feel up to the topic and avoid it. Dealing with the topic would require research, which in turn would require resources.

The interviewed pedagogues were aware of their *role and the effect of gender-reflective and gender-stereotypical behaviour on the children*. They acknowledged that the discussion and teaching of gender equality currently depends very much on the personal attitudes and convictions of the educators and that there are no quality standards in this respect. At the same time, some distanced themselves from this responsibility, arguing that this was an area for the family, the parents or the private environment.

In contrast to the kindergarten pedagogues, the topic of *working with parents* found little resonance in the focus group discussions with primary school teachers. For many, active engagement with parents on the topic of gender is clearly outside their remit as primary school teachers.

Feedback from all focus group discussions was that children in both elementary and primary education *are able to understand and work with the influence of gender*. Contrary to the fear of some that children up to the age of 10 are either too young to deal with gender issues or that gender and corresponding role models do not play a role at this age, all educators were able to report observations in which children actively dealt with gender issues. At the same time, pedagogues also reported many actions and comments that were unconsciously or without reflection influenced by gender stereotypes. Especially “non-masculine behaviour” of boys* is punished with subtle sanctions. Comments during play such as “Don’t act like a girl” or “Boys don’t cry” often come from other boys*.

According to the interviewed pedagogues, in kindergartens as well as in primary schools, no differences are made between boys* and girls* with regard to *care work*. Tasks such as tidying up, comforting and helping others are demanded of and carried out equally by all children. However, the discussion of care jobs does not play a central role. The pedagogues were hardly aware of any offers and/or activities for children at elementary or primary school level on the topic of boys* and/or men* and care activities/care professions. The exception was Boys’ Day⁴². Pedagogues knew

⁴² <https://www.boysday.at>

about this offer, even though it is not aimed at the age group of children they teach. When pedagogues in kindergartens or primary schools deal with the topic of professions and/or gender stereotypes, they mainly use *teaching materials* such as picture books or self-made card sets (e.g. representations of professions and different people who work in these professions). Often, gender-traditional norms and roles are modified by pedagogues using gender-sensitive language and approaches, for example using double nouns for occupations (policewoman and policeman). Reflection is used in kindergartens as well as in primary schools as a popular tool for working with pedagogues but also with children. Reflecting on one's own behaviour, attitude and knowledge about gender-sensitive pedagogy and caring masculinity is a theoretical support for pedagogues. However, in everyday professional life there is often no time for reflecting on one's own behaviour in relation to gender-sensitive pedagogy. Reflection with children, especially on current situations or situations in which problems or certain topics such as gender equality are dealt with in kindergarten and primary school, represents a great potential for educators and is therefore used in everyday pedagogical work with children.

2.2.2 Checklists of the kindergartens

Characteristics of the respondents and their institutions

A total of 13 people from different kindergartens completed the ECaRoM kindergarten checklist. The respondents worked in *different facilities of the organisation "Save the Child" ("Rettet das Kind") in Styria*. Eight respondents worked in facilities in urban areas, one respondent worked in a facility in a small town and four respondents worked in facilities in rural areas. The respondents worked in different sized facilities, with the largest facility looking after 50 children (excluding the children in the crèche) and the smallest facility looking after 12 children. The number of pedagogues in the different facilities also varied. The largest facility employed 15 pedagogues, while the smallest facility employed two pedagogues. The respondents held different positions in these facilities. Nine respondents were employed as kindergarten pedagogues, two people were employed as kindergarten managers and another two people were employed as nursery teachers. Of the respondents, 12 were female and one was male.

In addition, we asked for estimates of *diversity characteristics* of the pedagogical staff in the respective institutions. The estimated proportion of men* among the pedagogical staff in the different kindergartens was between 0 and 10 percent. Other genders were not indicated. According to the respondents' estimates, the majority of the pedagogical staff (80 to 100 percent) were Austrians. The proportion of EU citizens (excluding Austrians) was estimated at between 0 and 15 percent. Two respondents estimated the proportion of non-EU citizens in the pedagogical staff at 5 percent, while the remaining respondents estimated the same proportion at 0 percent.

Almost half of the respondents (6 out of 13) answered in the affirmative that their own *professional training* had provided sufficient and appropriate tools for dealing with gender stereotypes. Nine out of the 13 of respondents had additionally participated in training on the topic of gender stereotypes and how to deal with them in kindergartens. Among others, the respondents mentioned projects such as "DEE Diversity, Equality and Inclusion in pre-primary Education and Care: a gender

perspective” (2017-2020)⁴³, the training “Gendersalon”⁴⁴ of the PH Styria⁴⁵ and a training by “vivid”⁴⁶ on the topic of “Sexuality of children”.

Diversity in children’s books

Respondents were asked about specific content in children’s books. Books with non-stereotypical representations of gender make up an average of 26 percent of the books in the surveyed institutions. Women*/girls* are more often portrayed as strong and adventurous (25.4 percent) than men*/boys* are portrayed as caring and helpful (23 percent). Non-binary representations of gender are hardly found in the children’s books of the surveyed institutions. At most, animals are depicted as neither female nor male, whereas humans are exclusively depicted as gender binary. Books that deal with the topics of violence prevention and/or resilience make up an average of 20.7 percent of the children’s books. Depictions of gender-atypical occupations (men* in care professions, women* in technology) can be found in an average of 11.6 percent of the available children’s books. The diversity of different family forms (e.g. two-parent families, single-parent families, same-sex parent families, patchwork families) is reflected in an average of 9.8 percent of the children’s books, with traditional family representations (father, mother and child) and the family form of single-parent families occurring most frequently.

Equal distribution of everyday care tasks

Everyday care tasks in the different kindergartens/day nurseries include tidying up, lunch/snack activities (setting the table, preparing food, cleaning up, washing dishes, wiping down the table and chairs), preparing for quiet time, comforting friends, playing (with all the children in different play areas) and tending the garden. Many respondents emphasised that *“boys and girls [...] are equally involved in all areas and distribution of tasks”* and *“that no differences are made between boys and girls”*. Most respondents stated that all children from the age of 4 participate in everyday tasks. Occasionally (depending on the age of the children in the facilities), it was mentioned that children as young as 20 months or 3 years take on such tasks. Individual respondents acknowledged that children with siblings, children who already know the activities from home and older children and occasionally also girls* take over everyday tasks more naturally. When asked whether boys* are explicitly encouraged to take on care tasks, some respondents made a point of emphasising that no distinction is made between girls* and boys* in this respect. Other respondents reflected, that occasionally, boys* are encouraged to take on gender-stereotypical tasks such as solving technical problems, carrying heavy things, cleaning up the gym or the Bobby Car track.

According to the respondents, boys* voluntarily take on care activities in kindergarten out of self-motivation and curiosity. Through the example of the pedagogical staff and the children, boys* can observe other people in care activities and learn from them. Conversations, explanations, illustrations in picture books, positive language, playful motivation and trying out care activities also play an important role in motivating boys* to take on care tasks.

Gender-sensitive teaching material in kindergartens

Different gender-sensitive learning and play materials are used in kindergartens/crèches to talk to children about the topic of professions. Books, stories and pictures are most frequently used to work

⁴³ <https://deeplus.wixsite.com/deep>

⁴⁴ <https://www.ph-online.ac.at/phst/wbLv.wbShowLVDetail?pStpSpNr=311120>

⁴⁵ University of Teacher Education

⁴⁶ <https://www.vivid.at>

on the topic of occupations with children. Books from the “Was ist Was” and the “Wieso, Weshalb, Warum?” series were mentioned as examples. The books, picture cards and songs are also used in discussions and talks with children. In addition to gender-sensitive language, it is important for the pedagogical staff to deal with topics such as the distribution of tasks in the household and kindergarten, different professions and gender stereotypes. The children should be given the opportunity to form their own opinions and open-minded views. Games such as “Pantomime: Guessing professions” or themed role plays such as “Gender swap: What if you were a boy/girl” as well as dressing up are often used to talk to children about the connection between gender and professions.

Men* in care professions are addressed mainly with the help of pictorial representations. Among other things, hidden pictures games (“Wimmelbild”) and picture cards (mostly created by the pedagogues themselves) with representations of men* and women* in the same professions are used. The extent to which these materials are used depends on *“what the offers and needs of the children demand”*.

No connection between gender and social disadvantage and violent situations

When asked how *gender issues related to poverty, migration and social exclusion* are addressed in the work with children, the respondents’ answers fell into two categories. One half took the position that children were not interested and/or that the topic was not dealt with in the institution because it was too early for that. The other half was of the opinion that the topic can already be worked on with children in kindergarten through exchange with the children and parents, educational or factual discussions, books and role plays. Only a few respondents reported experiences in which a connection between poverty, migration or social disadvantage and gender took place in their pedagogical work. Some respondents were able to make a connection between habitual ways of seeing and living and their experiences of bias and exclusion in their pedagogical work with children.

“Conflicts arise equally regardless of gender. Likewise, the tendency towards violent attempts at solving a conflict almost balances out.” Beside the most frequently mentioned observation that gender does not play a role in conflictual or violent situations, some respondents explained that girls* mostly act verbally violent or withdraw, while boys* more often act physically violent (hitting, kicking, pushing) compared to girls*. The respondents see the greatest challenge in conflict situations in *“settling conflicts in such a way, that no one is treated unfairly and children also learn to solve certain conflicts on their own”*. Furthermore, it is difficult to show the children alternative, age-appropriate ways of solving conflicts (in addition to the conflict-solving strategies they learned at home) and to give them tools for an equal basis for discussion. Because *“for the children, the difficulty often lies in finding words for their emotions.”*

Gender stereotypes in clothing style and in situations where help is asked for

On the topic of children’s clothing, the interviewees noted that children are very particular about their clothing and that their views on clothing are strongly influenced by gender stereotypes. Some respondents explained that children distinguish between “boy colours” (blue) and “girl colours” (pink), that girls* only wear girl clothes (which are not blue) and boys* only wear boy clothes (which are not pink). Other respondents had the experience that clothes are not bound to gender norms. A pedagogue working in a larger kindergarten in a rural area stated: *“Since some boys come*

to our kindergarten with skirts or dresses, it has become the norm. The children know that the clothes one wears don't affect one's gender." The majority of respondents mentioned that in role play, gender does not matter and for example boys* often also play princess, even if they otherwise wear gender-typical clothes.

Some respondents recognised gender-typical reinforcement patterns in their own behaviour when greeting children: for girls* they use words like "pretty", while with boys* they use words like "cool" to describe a new haircut, special clothes or accessories. Some respondents mentioned that they consciously refrain from using evaluations ("pretty") or compliments. Occasionally, respondents answered that all children are greeted with the same ritual ("*Good morning, nice to see you again today*", "*Nice to see you, how are you today?*").

The majority of respondents could not identify any gender differences in the way children ask for help in different situations. Occasionally, respondents thought that younger children and girls* ask for help more often, although all children are ultimately motivated to try things themselves. According to one respondent, boys* need help more often than girls*. However, the latter ask for help more quickly, while the former wait until they are offered help. One respondent added: "*Unfortunately, girls are more often comforted for longer. Boys are sometimes sent away with the thought in their head 'An Indian ('Indianer') knows no pain'.*" The use of the outdated and problematic term "Indian" and the insinuation that certain groups of people are insensitive to pain calls for further reflection in ECaRoM materials and training.

The respondents see the reason for differences in asking for help more in the family system than in gender. According to one respondent, whether children accept the help offered by pedagogues is not due to gender, but mostly due to the age of the children. Younger children accept help more easily, while older children want to try things out themselves.

The role of family and male caregivers in kindergartens

According to the respondents, both *male caregivers* and female caregivers of the children are equally involved in kindergartens. Events such as the parents' café, grandmother/grandfather mornings, Easter celebrations with dads, cleaning up at parties, Father's Day breakfasts⁴⁷, the possibility of being a reading mentor as well as picking up and dropping off and the settling-in phase are taken over by both female and male caregivers of the children. If a child is injured, the person previously agreed upon with the parents is contacted. Which, in most cases, is the mother.

The *diversity of families* (rainbow families/LGBTIQA* couples, single parents, multigenerational families, transnational families) is rarely or never discussed in kindergartens. In some institutions, the topic is discussed when questions arise or on the occasion of Father's Day or Mother's Day. In some institutions, family (including various family forms) is a much discussed and current topic. The topic of the division of family work (childcare, household activities) between the parents only seems to be dealt with in kindergarten when the children talk about home. Otherwise, the division of labour is acted out in role-plays by the children (e.g. playing family), but otherwise not addressed much.

⁴⁷ Compared to Mother's Day events (forest walk, Mother's Day festival), which sometimes last several hours or the whole morning/afternoon, Father's Day events (breakfast) are adapted to the lifestyle of a full-time employment.

2.2.3 Checklists of the primary schools

Characteristics of the respondents and their institutions

A total of *nine respondents from different primary schools* in Upper Austria, Lower Austria, Styria and Vienna completed the checklist. Seven respondents were working in primary schools in an urban area and two respondents were working in institutions in small towns. The respondents worked in institutions of different sizes, with the largest institution looking after 265 children and the smallest institution looking after 170 children. The number of teachers in the different primary schools also varied. The largest facility employed 38 teachers while the smallest facility employed 17 teachers. The respondents held different positions in these institutions. The majority of the respondents (8 people) were teachers, with two teachers having a special position: One teacher was a teacher for religious education and social learning and one teacher was a team teacher in a multi-grade class. The other six pedagogues were class teachers in primary school classes. One respondent was a head teacher's substitute. Of the nine respondents, eight were female and one was male.

In addition, estimates of *diversity characteristics* of the pedagogical staff in the different primary schools were requested. The estimated proportion of men* among the pedagogical staff in the different primary schools was from 0 to 20 percent, with the average estimated proportion of men* being around 12 percent. Other genders were not indicated. Almost all respondents estimated the proportion of non-EU nationals in the pedagogical staff to be below 2.5 percent. The proportion of EU citizens in the pedagogical staff was estimated by the respondents to be between 80 and 100 percent, with the majority (90 percent on average) being Austrian. Only one respondent estimated the proportion of Austrians and the proportion of EU citizens in their institution at 30 percent each and the proportion of non-EU citizens at 40 percent. The same person estimated the proportion of people with special needs among their colleagues at 25 percent, while all other respondents estimated the proportion of people with special needs among their colleagues at 0 percent.

The question whether one's own *vocational training* had provided sufficient and appropriate tools for dealing with gender stereotypes was answered in the negative by all respondents. However, four of the nine respondents stated that they attended additional training on the topic of gender stereotypes and their confrontation in primary education. Among others, the respondents mentioned the university course "Education in Early Childhood, Studies in Elementary Education - Courses on Difference, Diversity, etc.", the training on "Social Learning" as well as the MA course "Interdisciplinary Gender Studies". Five of the nine respondents stated that they had not attended any additional training.

The use of gender-sensitive books in primary schools

Respondents were asked how often they use books that reinforce or counteract gender stereotypes in their work. Books with non-stereotypical gender representations are frequently used by about half of the respondents. The other half of the respondents rarely or never use them in class. It is worth mentioning that books in which women*/girls* are portrayed as strong and adventurous are used more often than books in which men*/boys* are portrayed as caring and helpful. Books with non-binary representations of gender are hardly used in primary schools. A large part of the respondents never use such books. Books dealing with the topics of violence prevention and/or resilience are used relatively often by all respondents. Books depicting atypical professions (men* in care professions, women* in technology) are used by half of the respondents, whereas books depicting

the diversity of different family forms (e.g. two-parent families, single-parent families, same-sex parents, patchwork families) are used regularly by six out of the nine respondents. Books with other contents such as stories on social interactions are used regularly, while books on the topic of age-appropriate sexual education are rarely or never used in primary schools.

Equal distribution of care tasks in primary schools

The daily care tasks in the different primary schools include a wide range of activities. Above all, activities around lunch/snacks (setting the table, clearing the table, wiping the table and putting away dishes) and tidying up were mentioned by many respondents. Also class duties such as blackboard duty, porter duty (fetching or taking things somewhere), rubbish duty, folder duty (handing out exercise sheets, helping with cutting and gluing), carrying chairs and tables (for new seating arrangements) are taken on by children. Occasionally, respondents also classed accompanying younger children to the bus (*“Older children go to the bus with younger children and take [...] responsibility”*), looking after other children, observing social rules, helping with gardening, taking on a function in the class council, comforting children and/or participating in games (role-playing, dress-up box) as care activities that are taken on by children in primary school.

According to the respondents, all children take on tasks and activities equally. One respondent added that the activities are transparently distributed among the children through class rules and rituals, which makes the distribution comprehensible for everybody. Another respondent distributes the tasks in the classroom to those children who finish the required work the fastest. *“Willingness depends less on gender, more on the situation and habits at home. (Who also has to help at home? Who has siblings? Are they children of single mothers or fathers?)”* Three interviewees noted that girls* tend to take on more care tasks in their classes, younger children enjoy more activities such as cleaning, caring and tidying up, and Austrian children in some cases take on class duties more naturally than children with a migration background.⁴⁸

According to the pedagogues, boys* are not encouraged to take on care tasks any differently than girls*. *“We have a rule that all children take on all tasks, because that is the only way to create a good community.”* Two interviewees stated that boys* are encouraged to do activities such as putting things away, sweeping up, distributing milk, and *“the not so fun tasks”* and activities such as helping and/or comforting others.

A large proportion of respondents stated that helping is natural for all children. Three respondents stated that in the subject “social learning” (included in the timetable from the first grade on), topics such as community, cohesion and non-violent communication are worked on. If it happens that children do not get involved in the lessons or refuse to take on care tasks, this problem is addressed in the subject “social learning” or in the class council. One interviewee added that in such situations they work with children’s books that question gender stereotypes or do not show them at all. Some pedagogues stated that for the children it depends on what care tasks are offered and what the children’s attitude towards the respective activity is. Primary school teachers try to influence this attitude positively by seeing care tasks as quite a natural thing and/or raising awareness of fair

⁴⁸ This differentiation between Austrian children and children with a migration background is understood as institutional racism. Institutional racism is racism that is based on interactions, structures and processes of public and private institutions. These structures consciously and unconsciously influence the behaviour, the way of seeing and thinking of the people in these institutions. Strongly connected to this is “othering”. Here, the “us” (Austrian children) is made the norm, while the “others” (children with a migration background) deviate from the norm.

distribution among the children. In doing so, the children learn that taking on care tasks is not assigned to one gender, but is “*part of being human*”.

Gender-sensitive learning and playing material on the topic of professions and/or care work

“If you ask the children what profession they want to have one day, the boys often want to be a soccer player, a YouTuber, an actor, a scientist or a doctor. For the girls it is often professions like: Animal keeper, doctor, nurse. Often the younger children in primary school don't yet know what they want to be and what professions there are.” Therefore, different gender-sensitive learning and playing materials are used in primary schools when working with children on the topic of professions. Sometimes the topic is addressed with the help of textbooks and sometimes pedagogues create gender-sensitive learning material themselves, as existing material tends to reinforce gender-stereotypical portrayals of professions. Books, stories and/or pictures are very often used to talk to children about professions. The respondents mentioned books that implicitly deal with the topic of care work such as “The best singer in the world” by Ulf Nilsson⁴⁹, “Pippi Longstocking” by Astrid Lindgren, “Seahorses are sold out” by Constanze Spengler or “A great day when almost nothing happened” (“Ein großer Tag, an dem fast nichts passierte”) by Beatrice Alemagna⁵⁰. In addition to children’s books, books that are aimed at educators and people who work with children were also mentioned: “So am I, so are you: Everything is normal” (“Ich so du so: Alles super normal”) by Labor Atelieregemeinschaft, “Why am I me? A Question for Children and Adults” (“Warum bin ich Ich? Eine Frage für Kinder und Erwachsene”) by Manfred Frank or “Ask me!: 118 questions for children, to get into a conversation with each other” (“Frag mich!: 118 Fragen an Kinder, um miteinander ins Gespräch zu kommen”) by Antje Damm. The respondents did not mention any books that explicitly deal with the topic of professions and that are used in class. One respondent who could not name any specific material on the topic of professions pointed out gender-sensitive strategies in working with traditional books, e.g. by “*using both gender forms in telling the story, or when the book talks about the doctor or nurse, adding the female doctor or male nurse*”. Some respondents mentioned that they work on the topic of professions with the children through role play and dressing up. However, one respondent observed that boys* tend to dress up as police officers and girls* prefer being a nurse or doctor. One respondent mentioned the “Land of Feelings Game” (“Land-der-Gefühle-Spiel”) by Franziska Vogt-Sitzler and Manfred Vogt in this context.

None of the respondents could name materials that explicitly deal with *men* in care professions*. One respondent mentioned that they had created their own material to work with the children on this topic. One pedagogue explained the fact that men* in care professions are not directly referred to, because children in primary school would lack the critical reflection ability required for this. “*Children in primary school do not yet critically reflect that they have predominantly women as teachers or educators.*” According to some respondents, the topic of men* in care professions is more likely to be dealt with in German or science classes, or if parents of the children work in gender-atypical professions. The majority of the respondents shared the attitude that pedagogues

⁴⁹ In this book, non-gender stereotypical activities are de-dramatised, e.g. when the father bakes the strawberry cake, without this activity being particularly emphasised and thematised.

⁵⁰ Other children’s books that implicitly deal with the topic of care activities: “Das brauch ich alles noch!” by Petra Postert, “Pink Penguin” by Lynne Rickards, “Keiner gruselt sich vor Gustav” by Guido van Genechten, “Irgendwie anders” by Kathryn Cave and Chris Riddell, “Zusammen!” by Daniela Kulot or “Die große Frage” by Wolf Erlbruch.

can teach the children that anyone can pursue any profession, without having to explicitly address the topic of men* in care professions.

No connection between gender and social disadvantage and violent situations

Some respondents indicated that *gender issues related to poverty, migration or social exclusion* are addressed when they come up in the classroom due to current events and/or related incidents or when the topic appears in teaching materials. Some respondents had the impression that it is sufficient to “*treat all children equally*” and that an explicit treatment of gender issues related to poverty, migration or social exclusion is not necessary in primary education. “*Social exclusion is certainly a topic that is often dealt with. But it was not yet necessary to talk about it in the context of gender issues.*” Other respondents dealt with gender issues in the context of poverty, migration or social exclusion in general studies (Sachunterricht), e.g. in a reflexive discussion of the 17 goals⁵¹ (5th goal: gender equality) or in the discussion of the topic “How do children live in ...”⁵². “*In different classes and different situations, especially in science or ethics classes, topics such as child labour, racial segregation [sic!], oppression and also the topic of different rights of women or girls compared to men or boys in earlier times or in other countries or religions came up. Most of the time, such topics are received with great interest and open-mindedness by the children and there were lively discussions.*”

A large number of the respondents described children with experiences of discrimination and social disadvantage as “*less sensitive to gender justice or seeming to have hardly any awareness of it*”. Children are strongly influenced by their environment and the expectations and attitudes of their parents. A religious education teacher added: “*We don’t try to differentiate exclusion, etc. through social learning. Attention is paid to religious togetherness - joint celebrations and joint actions, where everyone finds their place.*”

According to the respondents, *gender stereotypes play an important role in conflictual and/or violent situations* in the classroom. “*In my current classes, the boys have more frequent conflicts where violence is used. The girls verbally argue with each other more often.*” Many respondents share this observation and see behavioural patterns shaped by gender stereotypes in play situations (which in part are characterised by competitive and performance driven thoughts): boys* react in verbal violent and non-verbal violent actions. Girls*, on the other hand, behave more quietly and withdrawn or verbally violent in conflict situations.

The respondents saw the greatest challenges in conflict situations on the one hand in their own roles as educators, but also in working with children affected by violence. Challenges lie in recognising the conflict situation and in choosing adequate pedagogical actions. Questions arise in everyday pedagogical work: When can we appeal to the children’s empathy? What preceded the

⁵¹ In 2015, the United Nations (193 UN member states) adopted the 2030 Agenda, which pursues the goal of sustainable development with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These 17 goals include: No poverty; No hunger; Health and well-being; Quality education; Gender equality; Clean water and sanitation; Affordable and clean energy; Decent work and economic growth; Industry, Innovation and infrastructure; Less inequality; Sustainable cities and communities; Sustainable consumption and production; Climate action; Life below water; Life on land; Peace, Justice and strong institutions; Partnerships to achieve the goals. (<https://unric.org/de/17ziele/>)

⁵² This is a sub-area of the general educational goals of the primary school curriculum – “Primary school as a social living and experience space”. Children should get to know and reflect on the habits of life of their own and other cultures, countries and milieus, as well as understand, experience and help shape values and norms together. (see Primary School Curriculum 2012, p.11)

verbal/physical injuries? How can aggression directed at oneself be recognised? What conditions are attached to conflict resolution (time, space and resources for social learning)? Further challenges in the pedagogical development and handling of conflict situations with children relate to changes of perspective (consciously breaking through and exchanging roles in conflicts) and persuasion (rules and laws can differ from personal attitudes of children/families).

Gender stereotypes are visible in the choice of clothing, greeting rituals and in asking for help

According to the interviewees, children's clothing in primary schools seems to be strongly influenced by gender. First and foremost, brands and trends play an important role for the position in the class community, whereby the influence of the parents also has a decisive effect. One respondent pointed out that *"at family parties [...] there are often strict, unspoken rules, e.g. the girls have to wear a dress or dirndl"*. In addition, the children's clothing and their attitudes towards fashion is strongly gender stereotyped. This is especially visible at festivals and rituals (e.g. First Communion).

For girls*, appearance plays an important role both on special occasions and in everyday life. If girls* dress boyishly/non-gender stereotypically, this hardly has any effect on the social behaviour of their classmates. For boys*, on the other hand, the topic of clothing choice seems to follow functionality, at least superficially (e.g. suit for festive occasions). However, if boys* do not adhere to gender-stereotypical dress codes (e.g. pink T-shirt), they often have to reckon with being ridiculed, teased or ostracised. These sanctions are not observed with girls*. One interviewee added that there are now also *"the glitter/wipe shirts"* for boys*, and *"sequins are no longer just for girls, but boys can wear them too"*. One interviewee observed that gender-stereotypical costumes are mainly chosen for carnival. Girls* dress up as princesses and boys* as warriors/ninjas.

When asked about greeting rituals and a possible connection with the gender and age of the children, a majority of the interviewees emphasised that they greet all children with equal appreciation and admire their clothes, hairstyles or accessories equally. Some of the respondents reflected critically on gender-related reinforcement effects in their own behaviour towards children: *"With girls, it slips out more often, be it a reference to a dress or a hairstyle. I try to be attentive with boys too and notice special clothes or a gel hairstyle."* But the different choice of words for girls* (pretty) and for boys* (cool) was also mentioned.

Five of the nine interviewees could not identify any gender differences when it comes to which children *ask for help* in different situations. Three of the respondents made the observation that girls* tend to be more independent than boys* and need less help. *"Often compared to girls, especially at school starting age, boys seem younger both emotionally and in terms of fine motor skills, often intellectually as well. They are usually more dependent, need more help with [changing], have less orientation regarding their tasks and materials. They lose their things more often, are slower to get an independent overview of the school routine."* There is also evidence that some girls* ask for help because they need affection or attention.

Girls* are more likely than boys* to accept help when teachers offer it to them. It was observed that girls* are sometimes approached more "gently". Boys*, on the other hand, want to try things themselves or are more likely to accept help from peers than from adults. It is possible that traditional masculinity requirements (coolness, *"not wanting to show one's face"*) play a certain role here.

The role of family and male caregivers in primary schools

In response to the question about how the children's *male caregivers* are involved in the school, respondents mainly referred to family celebrations, school festivals and/or parents' evenings and gender-stereotyped activities (carrying tables, barbecues, clearing up, transport services, sports activities). If fathers take part in events such as parents' evenings or parents' consultation days, it is because they want to. In addition, it was mentioned that offers for parents are partly gender-stereotypically oriented towards women*, which means that men* are not given the space to participate (e.g. at the parents' evening, gender-typical situations are created that are aimed at mothers). Male caregivers of the children are actively involved in activities such as excursions or the presentation of professions.

If a child is injured, the person indicated by the guardians as the emergency contact is contacted. In most cases, according to the respondents, this is the mother. In some cases, the caregiver who is "*most likely to speak German*" is contacted.

The topic of family diversity (rainbow families/LGBTIQA* couples, single parents, patchwork families, multigenerational families, transnational families) is dealt with in primary schools mainly in special cases (e.g. due to changes in a child's family constellation): "*The topic 'family' comes up again and again. First of all, it is about making the children aware of the different types of families within the class, so that they can reflect on the fact that there is no 'normal' type of family, but only their own and those of their classmates.*" Some interviewees worked on the topic of "family" in science lessons and in sexual education. Some set thematic focal points in class (e.g. "Family Week" on diversity in the family; weekly topic "My Family" and "Activities in the Household").

The topic of sharing care work between parents is partly developed by the respondents around Father's Day or Mother's Day. In some cases, teachers work on the topic with the children in science lessons, e.g. in the "Family Week" or in the course of dealing with the 17 goals (United Nations Agenda 2030).

Summary of the findings from the checklist survey

The *diversity of the educational staff* in the institutions as well as the diversity of the checklist respondents was low. Ten percent of the respondents were male, while 90 percent of the respondents were female. This result reflects the estimated proportion of men* in the institutions where the respondents worked. In kindergartens the proportion of men* was estimated to be between 0 and 10 percent and in primary schools it was estimated a little higher (between 0 and 20 percent).⁵³

Seven out of the 13 interviewed kindergarten pedagogues and all primary school teachers were of the opinion that they were not taught adequate tools for dealing with gender stereotypes in their professional training. Nine out of the 13 interviewed kindergarten pedagogues, but only four out of the nine interviewed primary school teachers had participated in further education and training on the topic of dealing with gender stereotypes.

⁵³ The estimated proportion of men* among the pedagogical staff in the respondents' institutions was higher than the average proportion of men* in Austrian kindergartens (2 percent) and Austrian primary schools (7.4 percent).

Both kindergartens and primary schools use *children's books/picture books* that do not contain stereotypical representations of gender. Books in which women*/girls* are portrayed as strong and adventurous are used more often than books in which men*/boys* are portrayed as caring and helpful. Representations of other genders beyond the binary female-male spectrum are hardly found in the children's books used. Compared to kindergarten pedagogues, primary school teachers reported that books, in which different family forms are portrayed, are used more frequently. In kindergartens, more books tend to be used that depict traditional family forms (father, mother and child) and the family form of single parents. Books on violence prevention and/or resilience are used in kindergartens as well as in primary schools.

Daily *care activities* cover a wide range of activities in both kindergartens and primary schools. The children take on tasks around lunch/snacks (setting up, cleaning up, wiping the table and putting dishes away), tidying up, gardening and social activities such as comforting, caring and helping. In primary schools, there are other class duties such as blackboard duty, porter duty (running errands) or tidying duties (handing out exercise books, helping with cutting and gluing). For the majority of the respondents, it was important to emphasise that all children (have to) participate equally in these care tasks and are equally encouraged to take them on independently. Many pedagogues were of the opinion that they can build awareness among children by valuing care activities, demonstrating and practising care tasks and transparently assigning care activities and social rules. In primary schools, there is a class called "social learning" explicitly for working on this topic from the first grade onwards.

In kindergartens and primary schools, a variety of *gender-sensitive learning and play materials on the topic of professions* are used. Men* in care professions are mainly addressed with the help of pictorial representations, although respondents complained about the lack of material in this regard. They criticised the exclusively binary representation of gender or had to adapt the material to their requirements or create it themselves. Often, existing material (such as stories in children's books) is adapted ad hoc by using gender-sensitive language (double mentioning: female and male nurse), or material on other topics is used in which the topics of professions, men* in care professions or care activities are mentioned along the way.

The *gender topic in connection with poverty, migration or social exclusion* is rarely or never dealt with in kindergartens. In primary schools, on the other hand, it is addressed if there is a current reason for it or if the topic comes up in lessons or in conversations. A large part of the respondents had the experience that children with a migration background or children who have experienced social disadvantages themselves are less open to the topic of gender justice.⁵⁴ Although pedagogues recognise a connection, they often do not see the need to work on the topic with children. "*Social exclusion is certainly a topic that is often dealt with. But it has not yet been necessary to talk about it in the context of gender issues.*"

In kindergartens, gender plays less of a role in *conflictual or violent situations* than in primary schools. Primary school teachers stated that boys* hit, kick or shove more often in conflict situations, while girls* tend to have more verbal arguments and/or direct their aggression inwards.

⁵⁴ The phenomenon of "othering" becomes visible here. Children with a migration background are made into "others", while Austrian children and their behaviour become the norm/standard. The behaviour of children with a migration background is portrayed as deviating from the supposed norm.

Clothing and attitudes towards clothing play a major role for children in kindergarten as well as in primary school. In kindergarten, children mainly distinguish between girl* and boy* colours, whereas in primary school, brands and fashion trends also play a central role for one's "status" in the class community. In addition, primary school pedagogues observed more often than kindergarten pedagogues that there are sanctions for boys* (teasing, not letting them join a game) if they do not adhere to gender-stereotypical clothing styles (e.g. pink T-shirt). This phenomenon can be observed less or not at all with girls*. Moreover, gender stereotypes hardly play a role in dressing up in kindergartens. In primary schools, on the other hand, pedagogues observed more often that boys* dress up as warriors, while princess costumes are mainly chosen by girls*. Some of the respondents recognised gender differences in their own actions by choosing words like "pretty" for girls* and words like "cool" for boys* when complimenting clothes, hairstyles or accessories. When asked about *greeting rituals* and a possible connection with gender and age of the children, a majority of respondents emphasised that they greet all children equally.

The majority of respondents initially stated that they did not notice any gender differences when it comes to which children *ask for help* and who *accepts help*. Nevertheless, it became apparent that in both kindergartens and primary schools, girls* are approached "more gently" and get comforted for longer when they ask for help, while boys* are sent away more often. In addition, pedagogues stated that girls* ask for help more often, while boys* need help more often and/but wait until they are offered help.

In kindergartens, *male caregivers* are perceived as involved. This is partly because fathers take over the drop-off and pick-up duties (especially in workplace kindergartens). In primary schools, on the other hand, many respondents reported that fathers are mainly approached for gender-stereotypical activities such as carrying tables, barbecuing, putting things away, transport services and sports activities at festivals. In kindergartens as well as in primary schools, mothers are mostly indicated as the emergency contact and are contacted in case of need.

The *diversity of families* is addressed less in kindergartens than in primary schools. In kindergartens, mainly certain family forms (family constellations with heterosexual parents, single parents) are dealt with. In primary schools, on the other hand, different family forms are dealt with in the class "general studies" (Sachunterricht) and/or in the subject "social learning" (Soziales Lernen). Especially around Father's Day or Mother's Day, the topic of family and diversity of families is discussed.

Finally, it should be noted that the analysis of the checklists is based on a small sample. Therefore, no conclusions can be drawn about all kindergartens, primary schools and their pedagogical staff in Austria. However, the results offer a first insight into the experiences and observations of the pedagogical staff on the status quo on the topic of caring masculinities and men* in care professions in Austrian primary schools and kindergartens.

3. Summary of findings and recommendations

The final chapter summarises the framework conditions of gender equality and gender-sensitive pedagogy in Austrian kindergartens and primary schools. The analysis results of the focus group discussions, interviews and checklists are interpreted and provided with concrete suggestions and recommendations to close gaps in gender-sensitive pedagogy and to create more awareness for the topic of caring masculinities and gender-equitable practice of care activities.

In Austria, the discussion of gender equality and gender-sensitive pedagogy is ensured by framework conditions/recommendations of the BMBWF. Since 2010, the *BildungsRahmenPlan* (*Educational Framework Plan*) from 2009 has been in place for kindergartens, which states that the planning and implementation of educational programmes must, among other things, follow the principle of gender equality. This guidance and orientation has to be promoted as best as possible by all pedagogues in all provinces. For the primary level, as for all schools, the basic decree *Reflexive Gender Education and Gender Equality* from 2018 applies. It contains suggestions for a pluralistic society characterised by religious, cultural and social diversity and its thematic discussion throughout school. Pedagogues are encouraged but not obliged to guarantee the implementation of the policy. Both guidelines are therefore possible guidelines that can be implemented by pedagogues.

In the focus group discussions with pedagogues from Austria, two current problems with these frameworks were raised. Firstly, the implementation of these guidelines depends almost exclusively on the *commitment of the pedagogues*. Secondly, the lack of implementation is due to the framework conditions themselves: These are formulated in a very general way and this leaves a large space for interpretation in which different pedagogues understand the goal of gender-sensitive pedagogy as achieved at innocuous points. The framework does not include any guidance and/or support for the practical implementation of this. In addition, implementation is neither monitored nor obligatory for pedagogues.

The commitment of the pedagogues depends strongly on their *knowledge and resources*. Both in the focus group discussions and in the checklists, it was found that the topic of gender-sensitive pedagogy is not given enough attention in the training of elementary as well as primary pedagogues or that it has not been part of the training for long. A comparison of the completed checklists showed that more emphasis is placed on teaching tools for dealing with gender stereotypes in elementary education than in primary education. In the vocational training of primary school pedagogues, the topic is only dealt with in individual study foci (training with a focus on inclusion), which means that the majority of students do not come into contact with the topic of gender. Some pedagogues, especially those who were trained a long time ago and have been active pedagogues for a long time, have not dealt with the topic of gender at all in their training. They lack awareness of why addressing the issues of gender-sensitive pedagogy and caring masculinity is important. Often, they do not know about the consequences of not addressing, unconsciously passing on and recreating gender stereotypes.

Recommendation

- Gender-sensitive pedagogy must be a compulsory part of the training of kindergarten and primary school pedagogues. Concepts such as caring masculinity, gender-equitable and gender-sensitive pedagogy should become part of the training for all and not only be handled as a cross-sectional topic or a topic only for people with a special focus in their training.
- Appealing further training offers on the topic. On the one hand for pedagogues who have not yet worked with the topic and on the other hand for pedagogues who have already invested interest and time in the topic and want to deepen their knowledge.
- Awareness needs to be created among pedagogues on the topic of gender-sensitive pedagogy and caring masculinity. Questions like: What does it mean when boys* and men* take on caring and nurturing work? How does this concept of masculinity affect the career orientation of boys* or the lives of girls* and women*? should be addressed with the pedagogues so that the larger concept can be understood and awareness of the importance of the issues is created.

The *lack of resources* seems to affect the majority of pedagogues. In the focus group discussions, it was often mentioned that the pedagogues do not have the time to deal with an “additional” issue, to research knowledge and information about it and then create teaching material for it. Moreover, other issues (such as migration, physical and mental limitations and language barriers) seem more important to pedagogues. Gender inequality does not seem to be current enough compared to the problems just mentioned. At the same time, there is a lack of awareness of a possible connection between gender issues and issues of poverty, migration or social exclusion. *“Social exclusion is certainly a topic that is often dealt with. But it has not yet been necessary to talk about it in the context of gender issues.”*

Recommendation

- Accessible, easy-to-find and well-prepared teaching material for pedagogues is recommended. On the one hand, it should be visually appealing and on the other hand, it should be easy to access and implement. This means that the required material (such as pictures, books and songs) must already be included in the teaching material.
- There is a need for cross-curricular material and material that can be used in different situations (in class or during breaks) and/or in combination with other topics.

In the focus group discussions, *different perceptions* of gender-sensitive teaching could be identified. For some pedagogues, the current situation in kindergartens and primary schools is characterised by the fact that no distinction is made between girls* and boys*. “*All children have the same tasks and opportunities*”. For some pedagogues, the discussion of gender is far too binary and far too superficial. “*We only ever talk about binary genders and the policeman and the policewoman.*” Some saw the cause of the problem not in institutions like kindergartens and primary schools, but in the private and family environments of the children. Others, on the other hand, could see from their own children and experiences that children increasingly use gender-stereotypical behaviour from the time they attend institutions such as kindergartens and schools. These contradictions indicate that there is a lack of knowledge and reflection among pedagogues.

Recommendation

- Creating knowledge about gender diversity. Overcoming prejudices and gender-based discrimination is of central importance, as gender biases result in barriers for the implementation of equality policies. Gender stereotypes stuck in a gender binary approach create barriers on different levels: individual, interpersonal, staff level and structural level in the education system (including childcare institutions). Therefore, very specific and strong cultural investments are necessary, and social awareness as well as building up competences, skills and knowledge are highly recommended in order to achieve the awareness that people are equal, regardless of gender, class, origin and other social markers.
- It is recommended to promote the dissemination of existing good practices and also to support networks focusing on gender sensitivity in early education. There is a lack of good examples in the education system as well in society, especially in relation to the role of boys* and men*; they are not brought to the attention of the specialists and community. In most cases, the best practice examples are known to limited, highly interested and already highly skilled professionals that have access to broader sources of information and experiences.

In the focus group discussions and the checklists, respondents were particularly concerned to communicate that they treat girls* and boys* equally and that girls* and boys* have the same tasks, demands and duties. The pedagogues pointed out that care activities around lunch, tidying up, class duties and social activities (e.g. helping others) are equally distributed and children are equally encouraged to take on these activities. Pedagogues support the practice of care activities by distributing them transparently and systemically among the children, actively modelling them and showing appreciation for them. Primary school teachers explicitly referred to the class “social learning” for engaging in this topic. Nevertheless, pedagogues increasingly reported unconscious and thus unreflected situations, in which traditional gender stereotypes are reproduced. Among others, the three areas of dealing with clothing, compliments and conflicts were mentioned in this regard. Primary school teachers mentioned that boys* experience sanctions (teasing, not being allowed to join a game) if they do not adhere to gender-stereotypical clothing styles (e.g. wearing a pink T-shirt). Compliments from pedagogues about the children’s clothes, hairstyle or accessories also reveal behaviour shaped by gender stereotypes (for girls* they are more likely to choose the word “pretty”; for boys* they are more likely to choose the word “cool”). In comparison to

kindergarten pedagogues, primary school teachers found that boys* hit, kick or shove more often in conflict situations, while girls* tend to be more verbally violent in arguments. Some kindergarten pedagogues reported that girls* are comforted more empathetically and for longer periods of time than boys*. Based on the checklist analysis, it became apparent that after reflecting on concrete situations some of the pedagogues' assessments no longer corresponded to their original assessments. This became visible, for example, in the fact that educators who initially stated they did not recognise any gender differences in the children's choice of games, found after deeper reflection and observation that boys* basically do not like to play in the "living area" as much as girls*, or take on other roles and activities in the game. Thus, there is a lack of awareness and the associated ability to recognise gender-stereotypical behaviour in situations and the associated restrictions and problems in everyday pedagogical life.

Recommendation

- It must be understood and known that the equal treatment of all children in educational institutions does not automatically mean gender equality. In order to break down gender stereotypes towards care activities, one has to work on these together with children and especially with boys*. Already in the 2009 guideline "Gender-sensitive pedagogy" for teachers and educators in the field of kindergarten pedagogy, the following can be read: *"The goal of gender-equality oriented pedagogy is not to treat all children equally. For in a hasty equal treatment of unequal things lies the danger of reinforcing inequality."* (BMUKK, 2009, p. 8) This knowledge, which is anchored in guidelines, must be actively communicated to pedagogues so that it is also applied in practice and does not end at the theoretical level.
- The transfer of knowledge on gender-sensitive pedagogy goes hand in hand with putting theoretical knowledge into practice in everyday situations. Educators have to learn how to put theoretical requirements of guidelines such as the BMBWF's "Reflexive Gender Education and Gender Equality" into practice. Assistance in recognising gender stereotypes and the problems associated with them, gender-influenced situations and one's own reproductions of gender stereotypes must be taught. In addition, tools for change must be made available (reflection and teaching materials).

In the focus group discussions, it was often mentioned that the pedagogues do not have and do not know of any material with which they can work on the topic of gender sensitivity in elementary and primary education. In addition, it was noted in the checklists that pictorial representations of men* performing paid and/or unpaid care work are either non-existent, or only available in gender binary representations. Pedagogues complained that they have to adapt existing material (e.g. modify stories in children's books by using gender-appropriate language - double mentioning: male and female nurse) or create it themselves. The ECaRoM material research has confirmed this statement to a certain extent. There is a multitude of materials, offers and texts on the internet. The difficulty lies in separating the unsuitable from the usable material. Often, gender-sensitive teaching material is advertised and either the topic is not dealt with, or it is dealt with in a binary gender-stereotypical way. In addition, a large part is aimed at school levels from secondary school onwards. Especially

teaching material for the primary level is hard to find. Often gender-sensitive material is advertised, mostly focusing on the promotion of girls* with a focus on STEM professions. Boys* and their promotion in education and/or care fields as well as the concept of caring masculinity is very rarely addressed. In addition, most materials are limited to addressing the gender binary. Usually, lists of gender-sensitive picture books are provided for kindergartens. The checklist analysis revealed that picture books in which women*/girls* are portrayed as strong and adventurous are often used. Picture books in which men*/boys* are portrayed as caring and helpful are rarely or not at all found in kindergartens. Representations of genders beyond the binary are hardly ever addressed in the children's books. Compared to kindergarten pedagogues, primary school teachers reported more frequently that books with a focus on the plurality of family forms are used. In kindergartens, there is a tendency to use more books that depict traditional family forms (father, mother and child) and the family form of the female single parent. If pedagogues look for specific teaching material on gender diversity or caring masculinity, or games for kindergartens that deal with gender diversity and care activities, they hardly find anything. They would have to broaden their search and modify the material according to their wishes and needs.

Recommendation

- A strong educational approach is a basic prerequisite in order to achieve equality between all genders. Education is a tool for achieving equality, but specialists, mostly educators/teachers, are still not well enough prepared to introduce and bring up values such as equality. Developing new, up-to-date curricula, providing mandatory and regular training for educators/teachers, revising and/or developing school textbooks and instruments are of great importance.
- In order to broaden the perspectives of boys* in terms of social, educational or caring professions, it is necessary that pedagogues in early education can already assist boys* (and other genders) in a gender-sensitive manner. Tools, methods and educational material should offer pedagogues and children a space for reflection and should be used in various educational settings (e.g. also in working with the parents).
- More (gender) diversity and less masculinity stereotypes should become illuminated in educational materials for early education. Also, a transfer of good practice example material (Boys' Day) into schoolbooks and other educational material should be made.
- Diversity and intersectionality should be reflected in the material; instead of distinguishing between "migrants" and "autochthonous Austrians", a multi-ethnic reality in the Austrian society should also be represented in educational material.
- The image of care work should be enhanced in gender-sensitive educational material; its benefit for individuals, interpersonal relations and for the society as a whole should become evident.

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Annex 1: Interview Guide for Focus Groups and Interviews

The appendices include the English guideline and checklist, prepared jointly by the project team. For the focus group discussions and interviews, these guidelines were translated and adapted depending on the interviewee. The checklist was also translated and a version for kindergarten pedagogues and a slightly modified version for primary school pedagogues was created.

CONTEXT

ECaRoM project strengthens the connection between boys*, masculinities and care in order to support egalitarian socialisation environment in kindergartens and primary schools, which could inspire boys* to caring practices and attitudes in private life and in society in general, potentially also in their further educational choices. As we all know, it is very common that we all reproduce gender stereotypes in our daily interactions, also in working with children. Gender stereotypes about boys* and care are reproduced through images/practices/narratives in which caring activities are mostly related to women and in which attributes such as empathy, emotionality, dependence, affectivity, sensitivity, intimacy are presented as feminine/girlish. On the other hand, men*/boys* are stereotypically attributed opposite qualities of rationality, instrumentality, violence, autonomy, independence, public sphere etc. Besides families/parents and peers, kindergarten/primary school teachers have an important role in reproducing or in unfolding and diminishing gender stereotypes.

QUESTIONS

1. What's your name? Where do you work?
2. In your opinion, what is the state of the art in kindergartens/primary schools in relation to gender equality? (curricula? targeting girls*, boys*, gender diversity?) Is there a special focus on boys*, masculinities and care? What are the topics (fatherhood, men* in care occupation, etc.)? What is the target (violence prevention, widening perspectives and competences of boys*, gender equality, ...)?
3. What are your experiences with this topic? Please describe actions which you or your organisation have/has conducted related to boys* and care. What were the reactions from teachers/parents/children? What were the experiences: what was good, what went wrong? Please also describe actions related to gender equality in your institution.
4. How (by which practices, discourses, habits, educational mechanisms/tools, organisational atmosphere) do you think teachers (curriculum?) contribute to the reproduction of gender stereotypes about boys*, masculinities and care?
5. How can the reproduction of gender stereotypes about boys*, masculinities and care be avoided? Ask first for general principles, and then for concrete examples of practices.
6. Which training related to gender sensitivity and diversity do professional pedagogues receive in their education (basic education, further education, obligatory or free of choice, ...)? Have there been significant changes in relation to this topic during the last years?

7. What is needed in order to properly address the topic of boys*/men* and care kindergarten/school (training, knowledge, material, methods, support, consciousness-raising, ...)?

Annex 2: Checklist on gender stereotypes, masculinities and care in education

CONTEXT

The “Early care and the role of men” (EcaRoM) project is a European funded project that focuses on gender, masculinities and the role of men* in early education. It involves 6 European countries and partners: Dissens Institut für Bildung und Forschung e.V.–Germany (coordinator), Verein für Männer-und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark –Austria, The Peace Institute –Slovenia, Istituto degli Innocenti –Italy, Center of Women's Studies and Policies – Bulgaria, Center for Equality Advancement –Lithuania.

AIMS AND SCOPE OF CHECKLIST

We encourage you to use this checklist in order to observe issues related to gender stereotypes, masculinities and care in your school/kindergarten. We invite you to observe, monitor and document your work and the work carried out in your facility to answer to the following questions.

TOOLS: USE OF BOOKS

Books are a fundamental tool in education and are one of the most important instruments to either reproduce and reinforce gender stereotype or propose more gender equal representations of reality.

Checklist for books (both kindergarten books that illustrate stories/fairy tales and learning books for primary schools) (DEE)

Please estimate the percentage of books which focus on ...	Percentage of books (estimate)
... non-stereotypical representations of gender ...	
... women/girls as strong and adventurous ...	
... men/boys as caring and helpful to others ...	
... other genders than female and male ...	
... diversity of families (e.g. parents, female, single parent, male single-parent, same-sex-parents, patchwork, ...) ...	
... un-typical occupations (boys in care, girls in technic) ...	

CARE

EcaRom project focuses on the centrality of care in education and aims at promoting the concept of caring masculinities so that boys are taught about the importance of care for themselves, the others, the environment from an early age. In the next section we ask you to analyse how you and your colleagues develop care activities with children and especially with boys.

Which care activities do you practice with children on an everyday basis? For which activities do you ask the help of children? How? To whom? How is making up a room after playing time, for meals preparation and for rest organised?

Please estimate the percentage of boys participating the following activities ...	Percentage of boys participating
... tidying up toys	
... preparing for lunch/meals	
... tidying up after meals	
... consolation of a friend	
... gardening	
... taking care of pets	

Are there any specific caring activities in which you engage boys? Which?

How do you engage boys? Reflect on you day to day actions.

OCCUPATIONS AND PROFESSIONS

Occupations and professions are still a gendered area of human activity in a number of cases as some professions continue to be predominantly performed by men* (e.g. scientific and technic) and others by women* (education and care). Given the focus of the EcaRom project we are particularly interested in how you address care professions.

- Which of the learning materials /playing materials (pictures, videos, games, toys, books, cartoons) portray a distribution of work, family roles and occupation in a gender equal way? Name the resources:
- Are these resources sufficient and proper to provide gender equal examples? What do you miss?
Reflect:
- Which professions are most often discussed and how?
Please describe examples in which men* in caring occupations are addressed in the work with children

- Do you involve supporting school/kindergarten personnel like cooks, cleaning ladies/men, janitor in work with children? How, can you describe examples?

SOCIAL ATTENTION

Do you sometimes address issues like poverty, migration, social exclusion, minorities in conversations with children? At which occasion? How (do you invite guests in the kindergarten/school, organise thematic days etc.)?

What are your experiences with inclusion of minority (for instance Roma children), migrant, asylum seekers, children coming from disadvantaged socio-economic situation?

CARE FOR ENVIRONMENT

How do you engage children in ecological activities (do you organise a cleaning day, collecting trash, competition in collecting paper/plastic?) Reflect on gender.

SOCIAL HIERARCHIES, POWER RELATIONS AND VIOLENCE

Do you have issues with violence in your classroom? How do you deal with it?

Do you practice any specific gender equality game/event/routine/trigger in your group of children? How do you include children, who are shy or silent or tend to be isolated within the group?

CLOTHING

Clothing is another instrument of gender socialization and children are confronted since an early age with norms and values about outfit. Social norms generally lead to limited choices for girls and even more for boys in relation to their physical appearance and clothing. Please pay attention to the following items:

- How often do you welcome children with sentences like ‘you are very pretty today’ or ‘what a nice dress you wear today’? Who are these children? How do welcome rituals and sentences differ with different children?

ATTENTION AND PERSONNEL HELP

Please think about typical situations when children ask for support. In which ways are different children (gender, age) involved in these situations? In which way does the gender of the child matter when pedagogues provide support?

FAMILIES AND THE ROLE OF FATHERS AND MALE RELATIVES

Families are the first agent of gender socialization as mothers/fathers and other relatives represent the first models for children. In this section we are particularly interested in how you and your colleagues relate to fathers and male relatives as generally information about children is provided mostly mothers. This is related to norms and values around care (mainly linked to women) and also to work models (male breadwinner and female co-earner).

- How do you relate with parents? Do you relate primarily with mothers? Do you provide different information to mothers and fathers?
- Are male relatives (grandfathers, siblings, etc.) of the children involved in the school/kindergarten and how?
- In case, the child hurts himself/herself, whom of the parents or near relatives of the child do you usually call? Think about all children in your facility and estimate the percentage of near relative (e.g. mother, father) you call in case of emergency. Please describe the results.

TRAINING

Training about gender stereotypes in education is essential for educators and teachers to develop a gender sensitivity but in many countries is not part of the official curriculum.

- Do you think that during your occupational education you were provided with sufficient and adequate knowledge and tools how to deal with gender stereotypes? Y/N and explain
- Have you been involved in any additional trainings about gender stereotypes and how to address them in kindergartens? Y/N
If yes, recall:

SELF REFLECTION ON GENDER STEREOTYPES

Gender stereotypes are deeply entrenched in our existence and often they influence our behaviour unintentionally, please answer the following:

- Have you ever reflected on how your own gender socialization has influenced your attitudes with children in your work? For instance do you react differently to boys and girls behaviours? Do you interpret differently feelings of boys and girls (sadness, anger, joy, fear)? Do you have different communication styles (e.g. tone and volume of voice, body language, words used) ?
- Have you ever video-recorded your interactions with children or kept a gender diary in order to reflect on your attitudes in relation to gender stereotypes?

DIVERSITY IN YOUR INSTITUTION

Reflect about the diversity of the staff in your institution: Are there different ... in your facility?

Genders _____

Ethnic backgrounds _____

Age _____

Education _____

Other _____