

TRAPEZ.ANALYSIS: EU EXPERT WORKSHOP

Folie 1:

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The GGP in Austria: State of knowledge, individual perception and women's opportunities for action (Draft)

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Overview

- Objectives of the qualitative study project
- Method and sample
- Selected findings presented:
 - Pension insurance system/pension regulations
 - Retirement age
 - Own pension benefits
 - Gender Gap in Pensions
 - Possibilities for action
 - Required support measures

Objectives

- Researching **women's knowledge of pension account credit regulations** and their **own pension entitlements**
- Understanding **different perceptions and interpretations** of the regulations and causes of the GGP by women
- Identifying **women's individual opportunities for action and their resources**
- Reviewing **the use of support measures** and working out **women's need for change**

Method and Sample

- Review of the **Austrian statutory pension insurance regulations** for the target group of women (focus on old-age pensions)
- Empirical research: **qualitative in-depth interviews** with **11 women** and three **focus groups** with a total of **26** participating **women**

Sample

- The **interviewed women selected** vary with regard to several characteristics:
 - **Age:** between 30 und 55 years
 - **Regions:** Vienna, Upper Austria, Lower Austria, Salzburg, Burgenland (urban areas and country side)
 - **Formal education:** compulsory school, vocational training, secondary school, university
 - **Marital/family status/children:** married/coupled, widowed, single, divorced, without or with children (from one up to four children)
 - **Current working status/time:** blue and white collar workers, unemployed women; employed from 10 up to 40 hours per week
 - Some women have a **migrant background**

Selected findings

- **Pension insurance system/pension regulations (1)**
 - **Women are very interested in the topic** – even if they have hardly/not dealt with it up to now
 - **Major lack of information /great need for information**
 - **Information leaflets/brochures are not known**
 - **Dependence of old-age pension on employment or employment biography largely known**
 - **Regulations (e.g. credits for periods of unemployment, care for relatives etc.) are hardly or not known at all – not even credits for childcare periods**

Selected findings

- **Pension insurance system/pension regulations (2)**
 - **Not knowing** leads to:
 - ✓ **No trust in the pension insurance system** – especially among younger women
 - ✓ Older women also think that **regulations are constantly changing**
 - **The necessary thinking ahead** to obtain a good pension benefit represents **an excessive demand**:
 - ✓ Retirement is too far away – **it is important to make ends meet now; to manage the reconciliation of paid and unpaid work now**
 - ✓ No trust – **private pension insurance as a theoretical alternative**

Selected findings

- **Retirement age/effective retirement age**
 - Gradually increase in the statutory retirement age of **women** as of 2024 is known; but only a few women know their own retirement age
 - **Women want to remain on the labour market for a long/er time** – depending on their state of health and available jobs – **part-time retirement** is an option
 - **(Older) women with health problems and unemployed women** want to retire sooner – actuarial deductions are a problem

Selected findings

➤ Own pension benefits (1)

- “Shocked” by the **initial account credit** (*Kontoerstgutschrift*) – no (further) view of the own **pension account**
- **Amount of own future pensions** is estimated to be **very low**
- **Economic dependence on the partner** versus **independence**:
 - ✓ Women who have (very) **long career breaks** due to bringing up children or caring for relatives
 - ✓ Women for whom **financial independence** is also very important at an old age

Selected findings

➤ Own pension benefit (2)

- Sufficient pension benefit: **replacement rate** would have to be **between 75% – 100%** of the previous income
- **To own an apartment/house** (financial situation of parents) can play a certain role – offers security in old age; enables reductions in working hours and career breaks

Selected findings

➤ Gender Gap in Pensions (1)

- Is seen by all women as **a great injustice**
- **Gender pay gap** and **gendered division of labour** are identified as main causes
- **Voluntary splitting of pension credits:**
 - ✓ Rather sceptical: "**Which man does this voluntarily?**"
 - ✓ **No social compensation** for unpaid care work
 - ✓ Women want **financial independence**
 - ✓ The care work of women with **high-income partners** has a greater value than that of women with low-income partners

Selected findings

- **Gender Gap in Pensions (2)**
 - **Obligatory splitting of pension credits** (proposed amendment):
 - ✓ **Partial approval/wanted**, but also rejection (see also arguments against voluntary splitting)
 - ✓ Possibly interesting for **women who separate from their partner** while children are still young

Selected findings

➤ Gender Gap in Pensions (3)

- **Private pension insurance** not affordable – this also applies to the possible purchase **of periods of school or higher education**
- **Possibility of supplementary insurance** (*Höherversicherung*) within the state pension insurance not known – **meets with great interest** – but women must also be able to afford it

Selected findings

- **Possibilities for action (1)**
 - **Women's opportunities** to increase their participation in the labour market – partly seen, but also **very limited:**
 - ✓ **Jobs for older women not available**, "too old for the labour market"
 - ✓ **Problem of reconciliation:** lack of childcare facilities, available fathers, qualified part-time jobs with higher number of working hours
 - ✓ Women **don't want/are able to work 40 hours in their old age** – they (have to) take care of their health
 - ✓ **In some sectors** (e.g.: long-term care, childcare sector) 40 hours – especially in old age – **are hardly or not feasible**

Selected findings

➤ Possibilities for action (2)

- **Continuous employment careers** (for young people) are increasingly difficult and also no longer desired (keywords: flexibility/mobility)
- Possibilities for action are also limited by the fact that (especially for young women) **own retirement is still (too) far away** - it is important to make ends meet now/to manage reconciliation now

Selected findings

- **Required support measure (1)**
 - **Compensation in pension insurance for gendered division of labour (by almost all interviewees) wanted:**
 - ✓ Higher contributory/assessment basis for **childcare** periods
 - ✓ More credits for periods of **long-term care**
 - ✓ Partial credits for (a certain number of) years of **part-time employment** due to childcare (e.g. part-time work for parents)

Selected findings

➤ Required support measure (2)

- Individual equalization supplement irrespective of marital status
- Improving the framework conditions for reconciliation – affordable, high-quality childcare facilities – more staff required (also in the long-term care sector)
- **30 hour week for both parents** – could be helpful
- **Partners/fathers** should (be able to) take over their share of unpaid care work

Selected findings

➤ **Required support measure (3)**

- **Reducing the gender pay gap** – Equal pay for work of equal value (demanded by all interviewees); Increasing wages in the low-wage sectors, which are often dominated by women
- **Qualified part-time jobs** with a higher number of working hours – also in the countryside (!) – should/must be offered
- **Companies must/should also employ older women** – age-appropriate jobs are necessary

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