

## **TRAPEZ. ANALYSIS: EU EXPERT WORKSHOP**

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

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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
  - **Martial/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 exact 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 in decision making – offers security in old age; enables reductions in working hours and (longer) 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)
- **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

# TRAPEZ

## Transparente Pensionszukunft

Sicherung der ökonomischen  
Unabhängigkeit von Frauen im Alter

 Bundeskanzleramt  
Bundesministerin für Frauen,  
Familien und Jugend

 Bundesministerium  
Arbeit, Soziales, Gesundheit  
und Konsumentenschutz

