

# Reconciling Work and Family

Good Practices

from Finland, Poland and Spain

University of Helsinki  
Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education 2007

Finnish Planning and Publication Committee of the Project  
“Using Learning Networks to Build Work-Family Balance”

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## PREFACE

The challenges in achieving a work-life balance form a part of everyday reality for the majority of working families all over the world and particularly among European countries. Although the situation in each country is different with respect to legislation, policies and measures, the situation in real life is still the same: people, mostly women, face the problem of time reconciliation at professional, family and personal level.

The main reasons behind the partnership with Finland, Poland and Spain were the common interests binding the three countries as well as historical and social backgrounds that would boost the progress of measures aimed at creating a balance between work and family duties shared by men and women.

Transnational cooperation refers to added value that enriches the activity of exchanging information and good practices as well as transferring results. It was on this basis that the three EQUAL projects from Finland, Poland and Spain jointly assumed the task of identifying solutions, models and practices to promote the reconciliation of work and family life, taking account of the characteristic features of the individual socio-cultural circumstances in these countries.

Our partnership was created around a transnational project called "Time for Partnership, Partnership for Time". From the beginning of our cooperation, the main aim was to improve and provide added value for our national projects through a transnational learning network in order to develop changes in work organisation and working culture, services and attitudes so that women and men can succeed in balancing their family, professional and personal lives.

Within this project, one of the activities involved producing a publication compiling good transferable practices found in each of the countries. These good practices, detected in three very different cultural, social and economic contexts, will provide patterns to follow for all organisations involved and for the whole of Europe. Although in gender issues we all have a long way to go, any step taken means some kind of advance, which is why learning and good practices need to be shared among countries. This publication will contribute to this objective and support the work of organisations and professionals enabling the mainstreaming of the Work and Family Balance issue into our policies and societies.

The current publication is the result of extensive and intensive co-operation. Finland has served as the responsible development partner, and the Finnish Planning and Publication Committee has been responsible for planning, guidance on the content, the writing process and editorial work. Each development partner, on the other hand, is responsible for the contents of its individual contribution and translation. Several people from each partnership country – both project staff and experts commissioned by national partners – have been involved in the diverse and complex writing

and rewriting process. In this context, it is not possible to acknowledge everyone who worked on this publication. Nevertheless, we want to express our gratitude to everyone involved for their excellent co-operation and expertise. We firmly believe that those involved in the preparation of this publication have also learned much themselves about practices and issues related to the reconciliation of work and family, and work on an international joint publication. The lack of a common first language made co-operation even more challenging.

This publication is intended for everyone interested in issues related to the reconciliation of work and family, and especially for those working for the promotion of issues related to the work-life balance both in national and international forums. We hope that the book will provide the reader new thoughts, plenty of ideas, and new tools and solutions to make the reconciliation of work and family life easier.

This publication is divided into four chapters. In chapter 1 there will be a presentation of each project alongside the defined concept of good practices. In chapter 2 you can read about the actual situation of the work-family balance in each country. The chapter provides interesting information on the diverse initial circumstances in the participating countries and challenges that are surprisingly similar in many cases. However, the book concentrates on the introduction of good practices. Good practice examples presented in Chapter 3 introduce new innovations, models and solutions to issues related to the reconciliation of work and family life, which are also available for dissemination in other environments. Finally, there are a few concluding words and a summary in chapter 4. Appendices include a glossary presenting key term definitions prepared in co-operation with the development partners, and a list of authors.

It is therefore with pleasure that we highlight the importance of the outcomes achieved by the three transnational DPs which enabled the production of a huge amount of learning, as has been duly acknowledged, representing a further contribution to our future work. Thanks to this effort, we are now more aware of the importance of working on a network basis, of acknowledging the measures being developed successfully in other countries and of making the most of work achieved at European level.

In Vantaa, Bialystok and Granada May 2007

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Aims and project introductions

This publication is the fruit of an international development partnership between the Finnish, Spanish and Polish participants. These countries combined within a network to formulate and implement common lines of problem solving to reconcile family and professional life. This international partnership is entitled, Time for Partnership, Partnership for Time.

A common aim of the partnership was to meet the challenges related to the work-family balance. Cooperation has improved and provided added value to national projects, while the transnational learning network has developed changes in work organisations and working culture, services and attitudes.

Three transnational projects have developed new concrete models and practices facilitating the work-family balance on various levels: legislation, municipal decision-making, labour organisation and the working community, voluntary work, the family and individuals. Projects have made proposals and attempted to attract the attention of decision makers, stakeholders and policy makers.

This publication collects good practices from three partner countries around work-life balance issues in various fields, work organisation, Trade-Union agreements, services and equal opportunities schemes, both from the private and public sectors. These examples are garnered from different areas (businesses, services, government administration etc.) and each country makes a contribution as it sees fit in order to offer examples of a variety of genuine practices that contribute to reducing inequality between women and men, while promoting conciliation.

This book proceeds as follows. The chapter following this introduction, entitled "Work-family balance in each country", provides interesting information on both the different initial circumstances in each participating country and the surprisingly similar challenges. However, the book concentrates on the introduction of good practices. Addressing various questions related to the reconciliation of work and family with new innovations, these good practices are also available for dissemination in other environments. The final part of the book summarises its main points and country-specific case results.

The following pages present a brief overview of the country-specific projects. Implemented in three countries, these projects have served as a tool for identifying and developing the good practices introduced in Chapter 3.

## FINLAND

### Using Learning Networks to Build Work-Family Balance

The research and development project is run by Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education and it is a part of the EQUAL-program. The purpose of the project is to promote gender equality, well-being and family friendliness in workplaces, families and societal policymaking. The concrete objectives of the project are to develop, experiment and improve conventions and models used at workplaces and to develop support networks and services for families to support work-family balance. Building father networks, supporting fatherhood and encouraging women's entrepreneurship are also focused on.

The National DP partners of this project are Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education, Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Järvenpää, The Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters and The Central Association of Women Entrepreneurs. The project is financed by the European Social Fund and the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

#### Working in learning networks

The learning theoretical is premised on principles of a learning organization, and it is based especially on experiential, exploratory and reformative learning. The concept of empowerment is strongly connected to the project. When working in learning networks, experiences of all project actors and learning from others are taken advantage of. The network meetings also function as a scene for mediating and sharing information. Other environments and scenes for learning arranged by the project are different kinds of small groups, collective themed events for the networks, Open Forum events, communication campaigns and development meetings at the workplaces.

The actors of the national level are comprised of representatives of the development partners, representatives of the workplaces participating in the learning networks, representatives of organizations, entrepreneurs, municipal actors, researchers, teachers, students, and other experts. All actors have an important role in the network.

During the project we had collective themed events for all networks, where the lessons and experiences of each network can be shared. These collective events seek to find common interests through the main themes of the project – good practices and procedures – to be utilised and disseminated by the whole project.

### Three national learning networks

The project includes three national learning networks: Towards a family-friendly work culture, Building support networks for the family and Researching work and family. The fourth network, Time for partnership, partnership for time, is comprised of the international actors.

Towards a family-friendly work culture -network is comprised of 12 workplaces in the private and public sector developing pro family processes for their own work communities. The learning network innovates practical development measures while creating new co-operational networks between work communities in different lines of business. Everyone has their own development task. The topics in the development work done in the workplaces are e.g. telework and mobile work, rules for flexible organization of the working time, rules for personnel policy, the challenges of three-shift work from the perspective of endurance and well-being at work, as well as writing and standardizing conventions concerning family policy.

Building support networks for the family -network builds networks between entrepreneurs, the third sector, public servants and those familiar with the everyday phenomena of family life. It produces innovative service concepts and support networks for the benefit of individuals and organisations. The development work is done in small groups and at learning network events. Small groups have been started around issues such as the development of regional models and the development of family work as well as the support for small-scale entrepreneurs and the building of fatherhood networks.

Researching work and family creates and develops networks between researchers and educational institutes and brings the voice of the work-family research into the project. The network involves a diverse group of representatives from the various departments of the University of Helsinki, Universities of Applied Sciences and research institutes. The twenty or so members of the network represent different disciplines. The objective of this network is to build network co-operation between different disciplines and educational institutions. Further objectives include familiarising students with the thematics of balancing work and family, commissioned studies on the subject and the development of the research and tuition work of the members of the network.

### Results and outputs

Outputs include co-operation networks, research information created during network activities, final reports, and written results and publications.

Our project is also an educational one. Change agents for Work and Family -programmes were arranged to educate change agents specialising in the reconciliation of work and family, both within and outside organisations. Learning network meetings, common theme days and Open Forum events also included educational elements.

Concrete results include new contacts and the dissemination of project results to new audiences. Partly thanks to our project, the issue of the reconciliation of work and family has been discussed in the media. Project staff have participated in various related seminars, meetings and conferences, both nationally and internationally.

Researchers and teachers within the research network have contributed to a collection of articles devoted to examining the reconciliation of various areas of life from the viewpoints of social regulation, education and development. The development results of the two other national learning networks will be described in publications due in the autumn of 2007. Information provided through research publications will be widely disseminated.

## **POLAND**

### **The Flexible Worker - The Partnership Family**

The strategic goal of the project is the creation of a complex model of steps to be taken to balance family and work life for women under the conditions which are now present on the job market. The project is realized by the Partnership for Development. The Partnership for Development is directed towards the development of links between the worlds of academia, work, education, training, research and the media, and this is how the project is innovative. The structure of the Partnership for Development is innovative because it brings together institutions who have never worked together before and whose appropriate support of the steps to be taken will to the greatest degree lead to a balance between work and family life (employers, day-care facilities, training and research institutions, the media, trade unions, women's organizations and local government). Innovation is also reflected by the complex approach whose goal is to break through the traditional approach to social roles of women and men across all fields.

The project is oriented towards causal factors and not symptoms and carried out in four mutually-linked areas:

- Promotion of flexible forms of employment (creating more fields of flexible forms of employment as well as flexible organisation of work including tele-work as a fundamental tool in the policy of creating employment which will make it more possible to balance work and family life)
- Greater access to day-care facilities (more access to day-care facilities)
- Promotion of greater involvement from men in family life (more involvement on the part of men in obligations related to child-care)
- Prevention of the process which makes the qualifications of parents (mothers and fathers) (obsolete during parental-care leaves halting the process which makes the qualifications of women and men who take parental leave obsolete).

The project is aimed at parents with children up to 7 years old and pregnant women, and aims to improve the situation of women on the job

market (increased employment and higher vocational status), by creating possibilities to balance work and family life. With regard to the need for a comprehensive approach, it will also encompass employers, day-care facilities, training, educational and media institutions, trade unions, women's organizations and local government. The intended goals and actions are in full accordance with the key priorities of the National Strategy for Higher Employment and the Development of Human Resources for the years 2000-2006, which include equal opportunities for men and women on the job market (as one of the horizontal issues).

The group most particularly vulnerable to unemployment is undoubtedly women; they are much more threatened by long-term unemployment. Higher employment among women may be brought about only by easing their family obligations and making it easier for them to balance their family duties with the demands of a career. Flexible forms of employment will provide a way to adapt the time devoted to work (its dimensions and structure) to the situation dictated by family life.

DP realizes the empowerment rule from the moment of the creation, that is engages both groups of approach and partners. The empowerment rule is initiated according to the system accepted by DP management, wherein foresees the participation of representatives of each partner and assignee in the Council of the Partnership. The main Council of the Partnership's objective is about undertaking strategic decisions. The group of final assignees, specified in the motion for refinancing of the Activity 1, became enlarged in a result of the detailed analysis of the situation.

The project will become to be a basis for the modern forms of supporting its own members and for the better cooperation with the employers. There is an assumption that the unionists, as a result of propagation of the project with the idea of how to reconcile the professional work with the family work, will transfer the activities from the scope of this project into their own union work. Dissemination of extreme attitudes toward family by media is a result of insufficient understanding of the problems concerning the balance in professional and family lives. Research, analyses, propagation of good practices, all this will deliver not only the reliable knowledge in this realm, but also interesting journalistic material to be widely used by media. The rules of the recruitment are different for different groups. The Company of Professional Perfecting Partner, who has a many-year's experience in this case, asserts the contact with the institutions of labour market, especially with District Job Centre, training institutions and trade unions. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as an employer's union, will assert the recruitment of workers for trainings, researching, and testing of adaptable forms of work. During the Activity 1, the contacts with parents – workers, infant's nurseries and nursery schools / kindergartens were established and this will assure the good realization of planned assignments designated in Activity 2.

## SPAIN

### Equal Time Jugglers (Equal Malabaristas del Tiempo)

Equal Time Jugglers is a project designed to improve the quality of life. Its aims are to achieve a balanced distribution between professional and domestic activity by harmonizing home life and work life of both employed and unemployed people in the city of Granada, its metropolitan area and the region of Montes Orientales.

Although we have seen an increased presence of women in the labour market, this has not been accompanied by a significant change in the labour market's main features, neither in its structures and operative processes, nor in its working culture and values. Indeed, they seem to have remained as immobile as the providing institutions. Since the solutions to date are both fragmented and unfocused, it has become a major priority for labour policies to tackle the issue of inequality. We cannot approach the inclusion of women into professional activities without the inclusion of men into domestic activities. By the same token, the responsibility of conciliatory measures should be focused around society and the state.

Time Jugglers will focus on the creation and development of a new labour culture and establish services that favour equality between women and men. In order to achieve this, four actions, that we have called "Circus Rings", will be carried out.

*The Mentality Circus Ring* intends to contribute to the change in male-orientated and sexist attitudes and values, which still exist in our society and perpetuate gender inequality. As a matter of fact there is still a gender division in jobs, a double or even triple working day for women, both horizontal and vertical segregation, an absence of men in domestic activities, etc.

*The Services Circus Ring* intends to establish a harmonization prototype designed to meet the real needs of the population and act as a reference for the improvement of existing services to sustain principles which are both humane and professional.

*The Labour Circus Ring* intends to establish new labour conditions and organization processes, which favour real and effective harmonization between professional and domestic activity, through the improvement of professional skills and the active participation of social and political actors.

*The Knowledge Circus Ring* focuses on the necessity to learn from our own experience and to analyse the context, generating knowledge geared towards change and improving the quality of development actions.

To provide global and integral solutions, it is important to involve diverse local actors such as political institutions, employers' organizations, trade unions, educational institutions, etc. This collective compromise will enable the use of new strategies, methodologies and successful practices set within the field of the participating entities and define specific commitments in accordance with the various responsibilities.

## 1.2. Defining the concept of Good Practice

As a common and general definition for the concept of good practice the official terminology in the IC EQUAL and ESF frameworks is used in this publication. The definition of good practice in the Equal initiative programme 2000 is as follows:

*The purpose of community initiative projects is to produce sound operational models that can be duplicated i.e. mainstreamed for wider use than the current project. Attempts are being made to link community initiatives both to other ESF activities and to national policies in order to disseminate the results. The aim is to transfer developed good practices to national and even European employment strategies, where applicable.*

There is no unequivocal definition of good practice. The concept is flexible and depends on the situation. Good practices can exist at many different levels. The problem with such a definition lies in the lack of concrete substance and practical tools. Whether a practice is 'good', 'better' or 'best', it always includes the inherent notion of being compared to other, similar practices. A good practice is fundamentally linked with comparisons and with depicting change; it does not have to be new. At project level, good practices may, for example, be processes related to the substance of the project or the results of the related product development. Examples of good practices are true examples, i.e. not imaginary ones.

The characteristics of good practices in ESF projects are, for example:

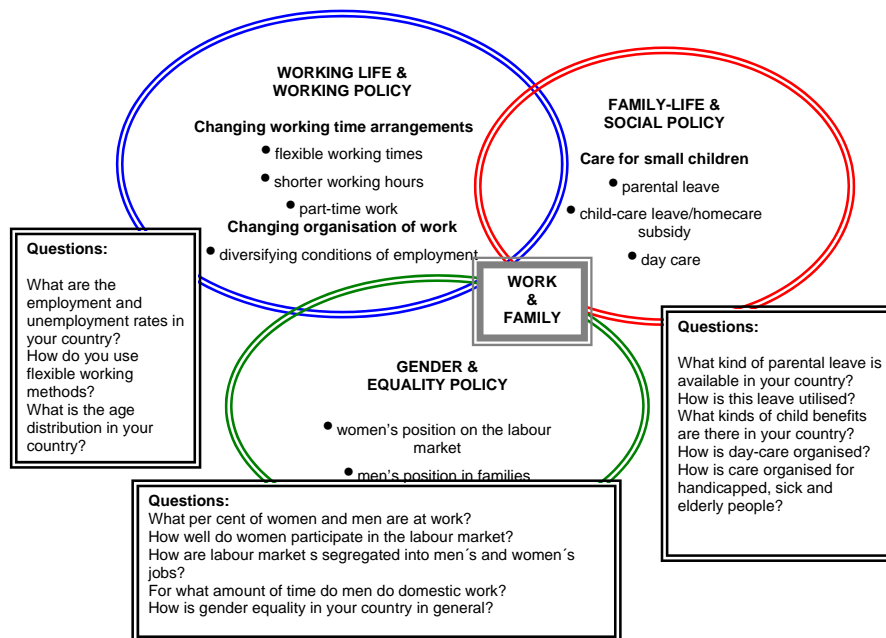
- Need and demand oriented: as a starting point, there must be social demand for the good practice in question
- Functional and successful: a good practice is successful and proven in practice
- Characterised by modelling and productisation: the existence of a good practice necessitates that it can be verified i.e. thoroughly documented
- Usable and exploitable: a good practice can be exploited widely and adapted as part of so-called normal operations
- Characterised by transferability and dissemination: good practices may contain elements that can be transferred and disseminated
- Bound by situation: sometimes, good practices cannot be disseminated
- Characterised by shared responsibility for development: good practices are often created in interactive processes.

With respect to what is considered a good practice, for the purpose of this publication the related definition is established within the context of conciliation and equal opportunities. The broad framework for good practices is defined by the various fields of work and family life: working life and working policy (working hours and the organisation of work), gender and equality (the position of women in the labour market and the role of men in the family) and family-life and social policy (childcare and societal support for other kinds of care).

## 2. WORK – FAMILY BALANCE IN EACH COUNTRY

### 2.1. Instructions and outline

The reconciliation of work and family life is one of the key questions of our time. A comprehensive understanding of this issue requires extensive knowledge of the socio-cultural environment in each country. Therefore, with regard to the reconciliation of work and family life, the good practices developed in international development partnership projects and described in this document have been identified using data collected on the basis of a model that takes account of local circumstances in Spain, Poland and Finland alike.



**Figure 1.** The fields of work and family life (Salmi 2004, 3)  
The questions are added by the Finnish Planning and Publication Committee.

The model above (Salmi 2004) includes three fields that are interconnected both in terms of everyday life and social policy. These fields include working life and working policy, family life and social policy, as well as gender-related differences, gender equality and gender roles in work and the family. With regard to these fields, a number of changes are currently taking place in each participating development partnership country.

In order to make data collection easier and clarify the model, we also included a few questions to ensure the relevance of the information provided by our development partners.

## FINLAND

The reconciliation of work and family life involves choices and decisions at individual and family level, but is also an important socio-political question in Finland. In order to obtain a full view of the issue, it must be addressed from a variety of angles, as illustrated by the model above (Figure 1). At workplace level, key factors include workplace personnel policies, the culture in the workplace, the nature of work, and the gender and position of the employee. In family life, which served as another level of observation, the labour force status of both spouses (unemployment, employment, family or other leave), working hours and the nature of work, as well as the opening hours of schools and day care centres affect the range of choices available to families. Thirdly, decisions related to the reconciliation of work and family life are affected by the opportunities and constraints created by society, such as family benefits or the provision of day care for children. (Kivimäki & Otonkorpi-Lehtoranta 2004, 15-16.)

In Finland, the reconciliation of work and family life has become a challenge to parenthood, child care and gender equality. This issue touches upon equality in working life, employees' working ability, the well-being of children, choices made by individuals as well as certain central socio-political questions. Indeed, in the last few years there has been an increasingly urgent need in Finland to discuss questions related both to the increasing ill-being of children and adolescents, and employees' working ability. Individual situations related to this reconciliation vary according to individual life cycles. Families with children are not the only ones facing such challenges: we are also increasingly subject to those related to the ageing of our own parents. The ageing of the population, dramatic changes in working life and globalisation are setting new challenges for the Finnish welfare state and working life (The Government Programme 2007, 53).

A central challenge related to this reconciliation is to make the involved gender viewpoint explicit. Typical aspects of Finnish working life are the considerable participation of women in the labour force and the prevalence of full time work. In total, three quarters of all wage-earners have a full-time and permanent contract of employment, and unemployment is as common for women as for men. (ML 2006a.) Compared to other countries, the participation of Finnish women in working life is very common. The proportion of women in the labour force has been approximately 80 percent for some time, whereas the corresponding proportion in some central and southern European countries is less than 50 percent (Wallenius 2003, 21).

In Finland, fathers and mothers of families with children tend to participate in working life more often than on average in other parts of the world. Parents of families with children also tend to have long working weeks

in Finland. In particular, men work long days even when their children are small. (MSAH 2003a, 7.)

## **POLAND**

Family responsibilities become a burden in women's professional careers and intensive professional development is in evident conflict with private life and family duties. A woman is perceived as a less valuable employee because the employer cannot count on the continuity of her work and high commitment to the company, which leads to women receiving lower remuneration and being offered lower ranking jobs. In the current circumstances, insufficient attention is paid to aid measures that could enable women to balance their family and professional life, primarily due to the common belief that such initiatives will not be successful regardless of the time and effort spent.

The traditional perception of the social and family functions of women and men results in three subjective (i.e. unrelated to legal standards or organisational limitations) factors that make it harder to balance one's private and professional life:

- low activity of men in fulfilment of family responsibilities
- low utilisation of flexible forms and organisation of work
- the system of care for children and dependent persons is not adjusted to the needs of working parents.

These factors put women in one of two social situations: a woman tries to balance her family and professional life or withdraws from her professional career for a longer period and devotes herself to family responsibilities. In both cases, in the existing environment, such situations result in numerous obstacles to balancing professional and family life. These are objective since they are a product of actual costs/losses incurred by women, employers and families.

Any attempts made by women to balance their professional and family responsibilities are connected with certain costs incurred by their families and the women themselves, as well as with low productivity. On the other hand, long term exclusion causes a loss of professional competences by women and serious problems for their employers in ensuring the replacement of absent personnel. These objective outcomes reinforce social and cultural stereotypes, which provide fuel for the above-mentioned subjective factors that hamper the family-career balance. Thus, we have a self-perpetuating system, which intensifies the discrimination of women in the labour market.

In order to break this vicious spiral, attempts focused on its particular elements are not enough, since other factors will duplicate negative practices. A comprehensive model of actions is required, which will affect all the key causes, and not the outcomes, at the same time. This entails the need to adopt an all-inclusive approach with the primary goal of breaking the traditional attitude towards the social and family roles of women and men by way of removing the subjective factors that make family-career balancing so

difficult and by providing assistance in breaking the objective barrier (lack of competences) faced by women who are already excluded from work.

## **SPAIN**

During the last decades of the 21th century, women have led an unprecedented social revolution, both in terms of the kinds of changes taking place and the fact that it has been a non-violent revolution. This social change, which in the case of Spain began in the mid-70s and beginning of the 80s consists of women's mass access to education, the participation of women in the labour market and changes in concepts within the social sciences thanks to the reemerging feminist movements and gender studies.

These changes are far from favouring an equal society. Women's participation in the labour market is incomplete, and characterised by inequality. There is a crisis in the labour market under a global economy which is producing tensions and divisions within society which need urgent solutions, such as new forms of social organisation, new and more equal relations between the sexes and the urgent need to find solutions that reconcile two traditionally separated spheres, professional life and personal or family life.

## **2.2. Working life and policy**

### **FINLAND**

In the 1990s, working life has been in a rapid state of flux in Finland. In addition to rapid structural change stemming from the economic recession of the 1990s, the labour market of the 2000s is still characterised by high unemployment, early retirement, women's active participation in working life and the segmentation of the labour market into men's and women's jobs. On the other hand, the Finnish labour market is also characterised by a labour force shortage in certain sectors and wide regional divergences in employment. At workplace level, a number of change processes are taking place, changing workplaces structurally and physically. Multinational companies are merging to form even bigger giant companies. (Rantanen 2002, 10.) Globalisation has proceeded, extending its effects almost everywhere.

Working life is also affected by lack of time. In Finland, this is less of a problem today than it used to be, whereas in other parts of Europe, after rapidly increasing in the 1990s, lack of time is becoming an even more acute problem today. Lack of time leads to an unnecessary waste of resources, and affects non-working life as well. (Ibid. 12–13.) According, to the Working Life

Barometer, as many as 50-60 percent of Finns say that stress at work has increased. Entrepreneurs and management staff work overtime most often, men slightly more than women. As regards commitment to work, it is significant that even those committed to their work do not necessarily regard such a dominance of working life as acceptable. (Jallinoja 2000, 119-120, 131.)

## **POLAND**

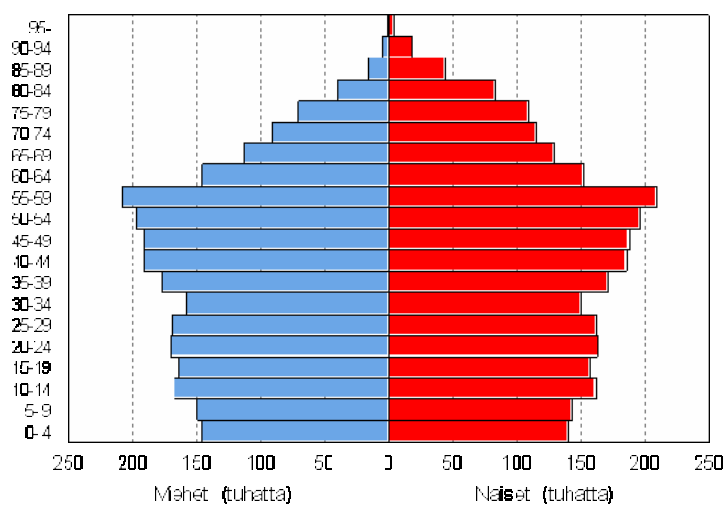
In Poland, the situation existing in the labour market, i.e. very high unemployment has not been conducive from the point of view of putting in place arrangements for balancing working and family life. In addition, awareness and knowledge are rather limited as regards the needs and benefits of applying flexible forms of employment and the flexible organisation of working time. So far, Polish companies have barely used any flexible forms of work and even less those which are the most conducive to balancing working life and family life (e.g. telework, flexible organisation of working time, part-time work). The main obstacle hindering their more extensive application is the traditional approach to employment, both on the part of employers and employees.

For these reasons, the main challenge in Polish circumstances would be to promote flexible forms of employment by emphasising their advantages as forms that are highly family-friendly. Then, their use on a wider scale could stimulate the flexibility of employment and, as a result, as proven by numerous world-wide experiences, including within the EU, could positively affect the labour market in Poland and, primarily, the opportunity for implementing work-life-family programmes in businesses.

## 2.2.1. The age distribution

### FINLAND

Due to the ageing of the baby boomers born between 1945 and 1950, the work force in Finland will reduce after the year 2010. In the near future, the number of persons leaving the work force will be approximately 10 000 more than the number of youths entering it. (ML 2003.) Compared to other EU countries, the situation is estimated to be the most difficult in Finland, because by 2030 there will be 73 dependant persons to be taken care of for every 100 employees (ML 2005). At the moment, the population of Finland totals around 5.2 million.



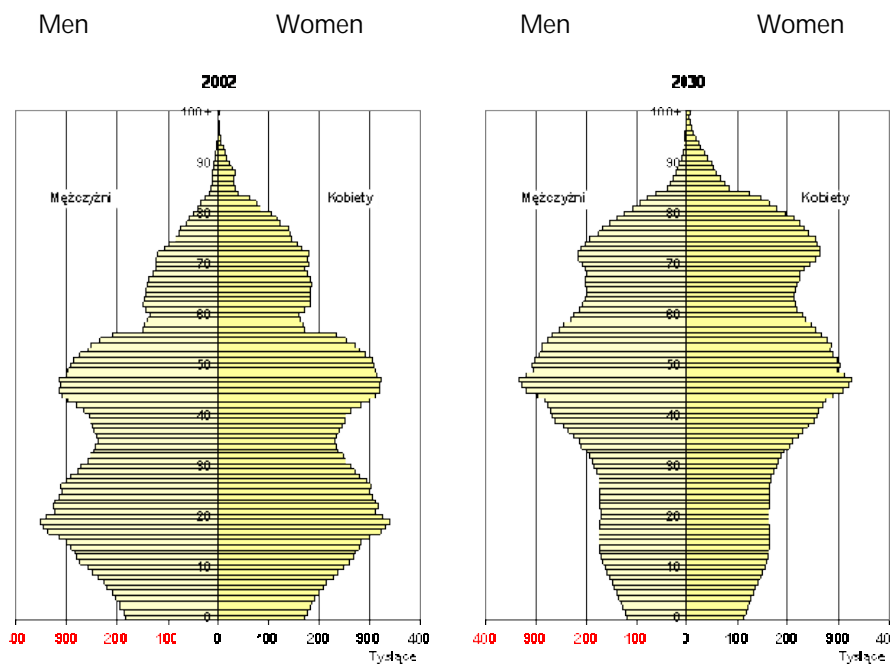
**Figure 2.** The Population Pyramid in Finland by age and gender on 31.12.2005 (Statistics Finland 2005b.)

### POLAND

Since 1999, Poland has registered a systematic population decline caused by the low birth rate and the negative balance of foreign migration. The number of children and adolescents (0-17 years) in the population structure has dropped rapidly; their share of the total population had declined to barely 21% in 2005 (from almost 30% in 1990); children below 15 years of age presently constitute slightly above 16% of the total population, compared to almost 25% in 1990. Particularly sweeping changes are observable in the working age group (women aged 18-59, men aged 18-65); since 1990, the percentage of people of employable age has grown by over 6 percentage points, i.e. from 57.5% to 64%. The share of persons

aged 65 and over exceeded 13% as compared to barely over 10% in 1990. In 2005, there were 56 non-working age persons per 100 working-age persons.

The declining trend in the birth rate should continue in the coming years, from 1.24 children per woman in 2006 to ca. 1.1 in 2010, with a small rise in the fertility rate in 2011-2020 up to ca. 1.2. The mortality rate will continue to drop and the average life expectancy to rise to the level of ca. 77.6 for men and 80 for women in 2030; however, setbacks in that area in relation to the most developed countries will be made up at a slower pace than during the last decade.



**Figure 3.** Population by sex and age 2002 and 2030 in Poland (Central Statistical Office in Poland.)

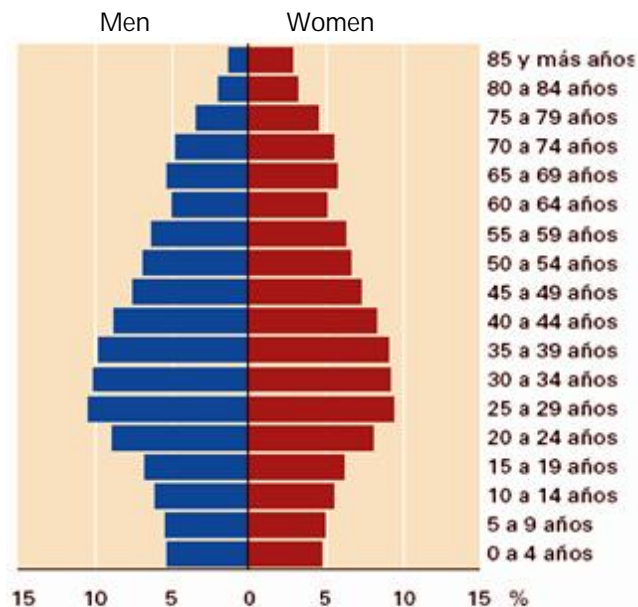
The scale of foreign migration will grow in the coming years and hence the negative balance of migration will rise, from over ten thousand persons a year to 24,000 persons around 2010. By 2020, the population will be reduced by one million and by another 1.5 million over the next decade (years 2020-2030); in 2030, the population of Poland may amount to 35,693,000.

The young population aged 16-24 will systematically decline, from almost six million at present to four million in 2015 and three million in 2030. There will be a significant shift in the proportion of the number of persons of employable age and those in post-employable age groups. In the period up to 2010, the number of persons of employable age will increase by almost one million from the current 24 million and those of post-employable age will

grow from 5.8 million to 6.4 million. Over the next twenty years, the number of persons of employable age will systematically fall to a level of 20.8 million in 2030 and those of post-employable age will grow to 9.6 million. The economic burden rate, i.e. the number of persons of post-employable age per 100 persons of employable age will grow from 60 now to 72; at the same time, the proportions will be reversed: to 26 persons of pre-employable age (presently, 36) and 46 persons of post-employable age (presently, 24).

The period after 2020 will be notable for the rapid ageing of the population. Older age groups will significantly grow. The number of persons aged 85 and more will grow by 50% by 2010 to half a million and almost 800,000 in 2030 (at present, the number of persons of that age is almost 320,000). Poland's declining birth rate and growing life expectancy will lead to the ageing of its society. By 2030, the average age of a Polish resident (now 37) will be over 45 years with a tendency to age further.

## SPAIN



Nota: Población calculada a 31 de diciembre.  
Fuente: INE. Área de Análisis y Previsiones Demográficas.

**Figure 4.** The Population Pyramid 2003. Note: Population calculated the 31st December. (INE. Demographic forecast and analysis.)

In a similar way to other European countries, the Spanish population is experiencing a significant aging process. The causes of this are twofold, the drop in the birth rate and mortality. Concerning mortality, the population of people under 20 years of age has decreased from around 30% in 1970 to barely 20% in 2003. In the case of mortality, the percentage of people over 65 years of age has risen from 10% in 1970 to 17.22% in 2003. These trends will continue over the coming decades, making Spain the country with the largest percentage of people over 65 (31%) in the year 2050, according to predictions.

## 2.2.2. The employment and unemployment rates of women and men

### FINLAND

In 2005, the employment rate for women (15-74 years of age) was 64.1 % and for men it was 68.6 %. The average unemployment level was 8.4 % and unemployment was as common for women as for men. Nevertheless, the majority of the long-term unemployed are men. Of the working population, 87% were wage-earners, which means, that the proportion of entrepreneurs was relatively small (MSAH 2006a, 10).

**Table 1.** Activity rate, employment and unemployment rate by gender (Statistics Finland 2006a)

		15-74 years old by activity	Activity rate	Unemployment rate	Employment rate
Year	Sex	Age	%		
2005	Both sexes	15-74	66,4	8,4	60,8
	Males	15-74	68,6	8,2	63
	Females	15-74	64,1	8,6	58,6

### POLAND

The analysis of statistical data shows that the activity rate of women in the Polish economy over recent years has been much lower than the activity rates of men, by ca. 15 percentage points and, furthermore, it has had a downwards tendency like activity rates overall (Table 2). Also, the employment rates of women in Poland are much lower than the rates for

men. In 2006, the employment rate of women was barely 40.3% and more than one quarter below that of men.

**Table 2.** Economic activity of the population aged 15 and over, by sex in Poland in 1992-2006. (%)

	Activity rate		Employment rate		Unemployment rate			Males	Females
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total		
1992	61.7	70.0	54.2	53.3	61.4	46.0	13.7	12.4	15.2
1995	58.4	66.5	51.1	50.7	58.5	43.7	13.1	12.1	14.4
1998	57.1	64.9	50.0	51.0	58.9	43.9	10.6	9.3	12.2
1999	56.6	64.3	49.7	48.0	55.9	40.7	15.3	13.0	18.1
2000	56.4	64.3	49.2	47.4	55.2	40.3	16.0	14.2	18.1
2001	55.8	63.4	48.8	45.5	52.5	39.0	18.5	17.3	20.0
2002	55.0	62.6	48.0	44.1	50.7	38.1	19.7	19.0	20.6
2003	54.8	62.4	47.9	44.2	50.9	38.2	19.3	18.4	20.3
2004	54.9	62.7	47.9	45.1	52.2	38.5	18.0	16.7	19.5
2005	55.2	62.9	48.1	45.9	53.2	39.2	16.7	15.4	18.3
2006	54.1	62.3	46.7	47.5	55.5	40.3	12.2	11.0	13.7

(Labour Force Survey in Poland in the Years 1992-2004; Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2005; Labour Force Survey in Poland in 2005; Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2006, 49-54; Quarterly information on the labour market, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2007.)

Discrimination against women in the labour market in Poland can also be seen in the fact that there is a greater share of women who are unemployed, although unemployed women are better educated than unemployed men. Between 1992 and 2006, the unemployment rate for women was higher by 3-4 percentage points.

## SPAIN

As shown in the table below, the activity and employment rate for men is over 20 points higher than that of women, while women's unemployment rates are almost twice as high as for men.

The aim set by the European Commission at the Lisbon Summit was to achieve a labour activity rate for women of 60% in 2010. We can clearly see how far Spain is from achieving that (46.41%).

**Table 3.** Male and female working force, unemployment and employment rates 2005

Labour activity rate			Unemployment Rate			Employment Rate		
Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female
57,35	68,78	46,41	9,16	7,05	12,17	52,10	63,93	40,77

(INE. Encuesta de Población Activa 2005. Survey for labour active population.)

According to information from the National Statistics Office INE, the labour activity rate for women is higher for women between 35 and 39, dropping from 40 years on, which is about the time they give to birth to their second child. Meanwhile, the labour activity rate for men remains unvaried for men between 35 and 49 years of age, dropping gently from 50 years on.

It is also interesting to note differences according to marital status. While the labour activity rate among married men is 67.8%, hardly two points below that of single men, the rate for married women is 43.1%, almost 20 points below the rate of single women.

Some data taken from EPA (enquiry on active population) also shows how levels of education have an influence on the labour activity rate. The higher the educational level of women is, the less the difference in labour activity between them and men.

### 2.2.3. The use of flexible working methods

#### FINLAND

To assist in family and professional life reconciliation, various forms of flexible working methods are available. Using flexible working methods is an advantage both to the employer and the employee. Positive consequences of using flexible working methods include better reconciliation of work and family-life, increased motivation and work efficiency, and greater organisational flexibility. (Uhmavaara et al. 2005,1.)

Flexible working methods used in Finland are as follows: flexitime, compressed working hours, time banks, distance work, sabbaticals, shift work, period work and part-time work. Flexitime in particular is commonly used in Finland, but for instance part-time work is not so commonly used in aiding family and work reconciliation. (Uhmavaara et al. 2003; MSAH 2006a, 10.)

Using flexitime, an employee can decide within certain limits when to enter and leave the workplace. In the beginning of 2000, 39% of men and 28% of women had the possibility to regulate their working hours using flexitime or some other kind of individual agreement similar to flexitime (Kandolin 2002). Compressed working hours means working longer for a certain time, which is then followed by a longer period of leisure time. In 1996, compressed working hours were used in more than half of big enterprises. (Uhmavaara et al. 2003, 29.) Time banks are used for various ways of individually gathering and saving working hours. The idea of the time bank is to work longer during a certain period, and then take the extra time off. Agreements that could be understood as time banks were used in approximately 10–12 % of vacancies in 1997 (Kandolin et al. 2000).

Telework means part or full-time work outside the actual workplace, for example at home. Typical characteristics of telework are the organisation of

work independent of time and place, and the use of information technology. In comparison with other European countries, telework is most commonly used in Finland. The proportion of persons performing telework regularly for at least one day in 1999 was 11%. (Uhmavaara et al. 2003, 31.)

A sabbatical is an arrangement whereby a person who has working experience of at least 10 years, and who has been employed for at least for one year by the same employer, can take a sabbatical of 3-12 months. During the sabbatical, the employer receives 70% of the unemployment allowance that s/he would be entitled to and must employ an unemployed person, who has registered with an employment office and who is searching for a job. (Uhmavaara et al. 2003, 32.) In the beginning of 2003, 5,263 persons were employed through the sabbatical scheme. Sabbaticals have been most commonly used in the fields of teaching and healthcare. Two thirds of persons using them were working in the public sector. (ML 1999.)

The next three working methods are not very positive ones from the point of view of working life and family balance, but were quite commonly used. Shift work and period work are common. Approximately one quarter of wage-earners work in some kind of shift work. Period work is understood as work that is done around the clock on all weekdays, for example in the fields of healthcare, police work, transportation and accommodation. (Uhmavaara et al. 2003, 27.) Around 10 % of all wage-earners work in periods (Laukkanen 2003). In 2005, 13.1 % of the working population had part-time work, and part-time employment was twice as common for women as for men (Statistics Finland 2005a). In Finland, many women are in part-time work because they have been unable to find full-time positions. The involuntary nature of part-time work tends to be emphasised in families with children and amongst single parents (Nätti & Väisänen 2000).

A fixed-term contract is not a flexible working method, but it is very commonly used in the Finnish labour market nowadays. Over 17% of wage-earners in Finland work on a fixed-term contract, and out of new contracts of employment, more than half are fixed-term. Fixed-term contracts are more common among young women, especially those with higher education. They are most typically used in the fields of healthcare, social work and educational work. The use of fixed-term contracts increases the risk of unemployment, reduces income levels, and causes uncertainty which makes planning for the future, building a family and using parental leave more difficult. The aim of the government is to establish recurrent fixed-term contracts, especially in the public sector. (Uhmavaara et al. 2005, 11.)

In comparison with the EU 25 countries, fixed-term contracts are commonly used in Finland. Finland's situation of 17% is outnumbered only by Spain with 32%, Poland with 23%, Portugal with 20 % and Slovenia with 18 %. (Lehto et al.2005.)

## POLAND

Flexible employment solutions make the adaptation of working time (its length and structure) to family life situations easier. They often enable women to enter or re-enter the labour market. Flexible employment solutions are pointed out in the Lisbon Strategy as a key way of increasing employment rates in EU states. Persons not interested in standard employment for various reasons, including family obligations, are concerned. (Sadowska-Snarska 2005.)

Research shows, however, that employers are reluctant to apply flexible employment solutions and the organisation of work although the Labour Code currently in force allows a more flexible approach to working time and flexible employment. This is why the great majority of employees in Poland (89.5%) are employed in the traditional, full-time system: a 5-day working week – usually Monday to Friday – and 40 hours per week (Typowe i nietypowe...2005, 15 onwards). However, the following flexible employment solutions are possible and used to some extent.

Part-time employment is quite popular in European Union countries where around 18% of employees, including more than 1/3 of women, are part-time employees. First of all, it enables employees to adapt the length of their working time to their personal preferences and needs and, therefore, to reconcile work with family obligations. It also increases their chances of starting work, getting back into it or maintaining their jobs. Part-time employment is also a way of reducing unemployment (Hajn 2003, 81). Research shows that part-time employees form only 10.5% of all employees in Poland. Most of these are women – 57.8% of all part-time employees and 13.4% of employed women compared to 8.1% of men (Typowe i nietypowe 2005, 17). Any employee entitled to parental leave may choose part-time employment instead of parental leave. The new working time must not be lower than half of FTE.

Job sharing is a particular kind of part-time employment. It consists of sharing a full-time job between two or more part-time employees. In most cases, each employee only works on certain week days. The remuneration and other benefits due to the employees are shared proportionally. This kind of non-typical employment may represent an opportunity for women bringing children u Research shows that job sharing is seldom used by Polish companies. The percentage of businesses using this form of flexible employment varied from 9.8% in 1997 to 17% in 2001 and 2003 (Sobocka-Szczapa 2003, 137). Women form the majority of persons employed in this system.

Research carried out by the School of Economics in Białystok in June 2006 on a sample of 383 employees showed that only 1% of employees were working from home. Only 1% of employees are teleworkers compared to the EU average of 11% and 30% in the USA (Rakowska-Boroń 2006).

Other flexible employment solutions are more often used in Poland. They contribute to the balance between work and life to a lower degree and in an indirect manner, but bring material profits to companies, namely: work

contracting consists of abandoning traditional, long-term employment contracts and replacing them with employment contracts covering the execution of a specific task; casual employment is a kind of temporary work, but employers are not tied to the employee under an employment contract and have no rights vested in employees; work on demand (work on call) consists of employees being at the employer's disposal and working on demand. Work on demand is frequently used in many sectors of industry, trade, services, air transport, hotels and tourism. Work for a defined period of time involves an employment contract for a defined period; employers use this more frequently than other flexible employment solutions due to the minimum expenses involved in dismissal. Employment under civil law contracts are contracts under a mandate or a specific work contract covering the execution of tangible or intangible work.

Research carried out by the Institute of Labour and Social Studies in Warsaw (Kryńska 2003, 241) showed that 85.0% of the analysed companies used work contracting; 78.4% of the analysed companies used employment under fixed-term contracts (contracts concluded for a defined period of time); 68.6% of the companies used contracts of mandate and specific work contracts; work on demand was used by 11.4% of the companies and casual employment by 8.0%.

Task working time consists of assigning tasks to be executed within a specified time limit, e.g. a day, a week or a month, to the employee. The employer defines the time required to execute the tasks assigned to the employee under his/her agreement. Equivalent working time means that the employer may extend the employee's working time to e.g. 12 hours within the settlement period adopted by the company, but not exceeding one month. Extended daily working time is compensated for with shorter working hours on certain days or days off.

Intermittent working time consists of splitting working time on a given day into two periods separated by a break not included in the working time. There may be one such break not exceeding five hours a day. The employee is entitled to remuneration for the break amounting to a half of that due for the downtime. Individual working time schedules have been allowed since 1 January 2004. An individual working time schedule may consist of e.g. establishing a different day as the day free from work resulting from an average 5-day working week or different times for beginning and ending work.

Although flexible working time solutions are regulated by the law, they are not widely used in Poland. Research shows that more than 90% of employees were working for a fixed number of hours per day, most of them beginning and ending work at fixed times in 2004 (Typowe i nietypowe 2005, 35). The inflexibility of employment solutions in Poland is caused by organisational obstacles and employees' and employers' bias against non-typical solutions rather than the rigidity of labour laws. Moreover, flexible employment solutions usually involve lower remuneration which discourages employees from using them, given the generally low salaries in Poland (part-time employment is of particular concern here).

To sum up, traditional working time and organisational solutions, i.e. full-time employment and work for a fixed number of hours with the start and finishing times specified are the most widely used solutions in the Polish labour market, although the law allows various others.

## SPAIN

The adoption of work-life balance friendly strategies within Spanish enterprises is rather poor. According to the information collected through a survey on enterprises, there are no high-level measures regarding flexibility and favouring a work-life balance, other than those stated under law. (GPI Consultores 2005.)

The length of the working day in Spain is agreed upon in the collective labour agreements as well as through single contracts, with a maximum working week of 40 hours. In the public sector it is 35 hours.

Within Spanish enterprises, and according to the studies realised by Nuria Chinchilla and others, Work-life balance policies in 150 Spanish enterprises, in 60% of enterprises employees are able to reduce their working day to half-time but in only 9.4% of enterprises can all employees benefit from this measure. In 51% of enterprises, only a few employees can benefit from it. Within the Spanish labour market, part-time work has been increasing strongly since the labour reform in 1994. It is mainly used by women. Between 75% and 80% of part-time contracts are represented by them. (Benavente 2004.) Two or more people working part-time share one full-time job, and can decide who works and when. Such job-sharing is used in 9.5% of Spanish enterprises. In only 0.7% of enterprises can all employees benefit from this measure, and in 8.8% only some employees can do so.

**Table 4.** % of part-time working

	1992	1996	1998	2000
Women	13,7	17,0	17,2	17,2
Men	2,0	3,1	3,0	2,8
Total	5,8	8,0	8,1	8,2

(Encuesta de Población Activa.)

People work 8 hours a day, but are free to decide at what time they start and when they finish. This flexitime measure is used in about 59% of enterprises: in 17.4% for everybody and in 41.6% for some employees. (Chinchilla y otros 2003.) Employees may work more hours a day, but fewer days a week (1 day or ½ a day off per week). This compressed working week measure is available in 24.8% of enterprises. In 7.4% of enterprises, all employees can apply for this measure, while in 17.4%, only a few employees

can do so. People are hired according to a certain number of hours per year instead of a certain number of hours per day. Employers may take this yearly hours option in 42% of enterprises, all employees in 32% of enterprises, and only some employees in 10.7% of enterprises.

Employees can work less hours a day or per week, receiving a lower salary. Employees can benefit from this reduced working day measure in 50% of enterprises, all employees in 18% of them and only a few employees in 32.7% of enterprises. The Plan Concilia gives civil servants the opportunity to request a change in the fixed working schedule for two hours, for a determined period of time and under specific circumstances (needs related to the care of family members) subject to authorisation by his/her superior. This is intended specifically for single parent families.

Employees can work at home to avoid long trips. They can use this option in 21% of enterprises, all employees in 4% of enterprises, and only a few in 17.3% of enterprises. Apart from being able to work at home, employees are supplied with a telephone, PC, fax, and all the resources needed for work. 18.7% of enterprises offer this telework at home option, 0.7% of them to all employees, and 18% of enterprises to only a few employees. People can work in a satellite office near home to avoid long trips and traffic jams when commuting. This measure is available in 13% of enterprises. Employees may have teleconferences with colleagues or clients in other cities to avoid making trips. 47% of the enterprises offer these measures, 24% to all employees, and 23.3% to only some.

Employees may take time off from work subject to prior agreement during their professional career for personal reasons. 16% of enterprises offer this professional time off measure, 10% of enterprises to all workers and 6% to only some workers. Employees, subject to prior agreement with their superiors, may take unpaid holidays by renouncing their salary. 28.7% of enterprises offer this, 24.7% to all workers and 45% to only some.

Workers can exchange e.g. receive money instead of taking holidays or have additional holidays by receiving less salary. 10.6% of enterprises offer paid time banks, 7.3% of them to all workers and 3.3% to only some workers. Another issue for many civil servants is to reconcile work and professional training with family life. Training courses may now be realised during leave or extended leave.

## 2.3. Gender and equality policy - women in the labour market

### FINLAND

Finnish legislation guarantees equality between women and men. In practice, however, there remain problems concerning gender equality in Finnish society. The most serious of these problems are differences in pay, vertical segregation and violence against women. In working life, the use of fixed-term contracts is a common problem, especially in relation to young women. (Finnish National Board of Education 2006, MSAH 2006a.) The distribution of housework is still unequal, and women do approximately 10 hours more housework a week than men (Piekkola 2003, 5). The challenge to guarantee equal opportunities to everybody, regardless of gender, remains.

In comparison with other EU-countries, the differences in pay between women and men in Finland were the sixth largest and clearly over the average. Of all full-time wage-earners, the difference is still approximately 20%, when in other EU-countries it is on average 15 %. (Commission of the European Communities 2006.)

The Finnish labour market is strongly segregated, and this segregation is both horizontal and vertical. Vertical segregation means that the proportion of women in managerial positions is smaller than the proportion of men. (MSAH 2005, 17.) In 2005, the proportion of women at the highest management level of the public sector was 22%. Of all city and municipal managers, 13% were women in 2004. One fifth of professors, principals and vice-principals were women in 2004. In the private sector, the proportion of female managers was 1/4. (MSAH 2006a, 9.)

Horizontal segregation signifies the differentiation of the labour market into different fields of work for women and men. Women typically work in private and public services, and the men in production. Women are concentrated in the fields of social and health services and men in industry, transportation and construction. (MSAH 2005,16.) To give an example, the number of women in public and other services was 574 per 1000, and that of men 216 per 1000.

**Table 5.** The employed by activity (Statistics Finland 2006a)

	<b>In total</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
	<i>1000 persons</i>		
<b>Agriculture, gamehusbandry, fishingindustry and forestry</b>	115	82	34
<b>Industry in total</b>	460	329	131
<b>Construction in total</b>	158	147	11
<b>Trade</b>	301	153	147
<b>Accommodation and nutrition activity</b>	77	22	55
<b>Transport in all</b>	172	126	45
<b>Finance, assurance and business-life services</b>	322	166	156
<b>Public and other services in total</b>	790	216	574

## POLAND

Generally speaking, in Poland discrimination against women in the labour market is neither solely or mainly a legal issue, but has mainly social and cultural roots. An analysis of the existing legal framework proves that no areas exist that could be described as discriminatory on the grounds of sex (Hebda-Czaplicka, Kołaczek 2001, 88 et seq.).

Likewise, in a number of other countries, the key problem in the field of equal status of women and men is the gap between status de jure and de facto. The equal treatment of women and men in work is provided for both in the Polish Constitution and the Labour Code. They also guarantee equal rights to employment and promotion, equal pay for work of similar value and equal treatment regarding employment relationships, terms of employment, promotions and professional training.

In Poland, motherhood and child care are traditionally expected from women, with far-reaching consequences. Employers assume that women are mainly wives and mothers and that the fulfilment of these social roles is crucial to them and must inevitably collide with their working life. The interruption of employment in connection with motherhood also leads to the outdated of professional qualifications. Combining household obligations and work is additionally hindered by an insufficient infrastructure of support institutions since only well-off people can afford private services in that area. Problems include the insufficient flexibility of child care hours in child care institutions such as kindergartens and infant day nurseries, with inflexible working hours that fail to meet the different needs of parents. Another problem is their availability during different periods such as, for example, Saturdays, Sundays, bank holidays and vacations.

Discrimination in the labour market in Poland already occurs at the hiring stage. Research shows that questions put to women during job interviews by almost 40% of enterprises are not put to men (concerning the number of children, ability to work overtime, etc.). Such questions clearly concern the ability to balance work with family life and thus indicate that, in the eyes of employers, women are responsible for raising children and running the household.

Women are exclusively accused of such negative characteristics as frequent absences from work, having family obligations, being emotional and impulsive. Employers tend to think that men are more available and take less sick leave, while women are less efficient due to being absorbed by their family lives, are more frequently absent from work and are less productive. However, some also perceive that, as workers, women are loyal, hard-working, accurate and dutiful. However, in Poland, the impact of the stereotypical social and family roles of women and men remains strong, as can be seen in the very clear differentiation of responsibility for raising children and fulfilling family obligations.

The analysis of interviews held brings to light discriminatory practices encountered by people with family obligations, and that these affect women much more frequently and to a greater extent than men. Only women were asked questions concerning family obligations and having children. 20.6% of all respondents were asked by their potential employer about having children and these were exclusively women. A similar situation is observed regarding the question of procreation plans. This issue was addressed in the case of 13.2% of respondents and, again, these were solely women. During the same research, respondents claimed that, despite the official reasons given, the crucial reasons for not hiring them were family obligations, age and sex. However, it should be emphasised that such situations affected women only. In the light of such results, one can hardly deny the existence of discriminatory practices at the stage of the job interview (Żynel 2005, 43).

## **SPAIN**

The slightly positive evolution of women's access to the labour market has its counterpart in statistics on unemployment. This demonstrates that unemployment is the major starting point for women accessing the labour market. Since 1985, almost 50% of women who entered the labour market have been unemployed.

The labour market is strongly segregated in Spain. At European level, as well as in Spain, access for women to the labour market occurs at lower levels, for less qualified jobs or in traditional female jobs (i.e. the services sector). The domestic sector is occupied mainly by women. Concerning job categories, the greatest concentration of women is found in administrative posts, at 66.2%. In relation to scientific and intellectual jobs, women are in the majority in education, health and biology, while being in the minority in mathematics and physics. Within education, they are more represented at the lower levels.

**Table 6.** (%) of employed population by sector and sex in Andalusia 2001

Economic sectors	Women	Men
Services	83%	53%
Industry	7%	15%
Construction	1%	19%
Agriculture	9%	13%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Regarding the professional situation, 83% of women are hired, while 12% are self-employed, although in recent years entrepreneurship among women has been growing. The remaining 5% work in home care services within the informal economy. Also, vertical segregation is strong. Women are in the lower levels of occupations. The concentration of women in certain sectors is not reflected in decision making positions. A study on women and directorial jobs shows that there are no women in elite positions, only being represented in lower manager positions within enterprises among women aged between 30 and 40 (fewer than men). Only 7.6% of women are in a directorial position, and only 17% of senior positions in public administration are occupied by women.

Another characteristic is segregation among women themselves: there is a widening gap among women in qualified jobs, with a secure situation and well paid, and the major proportion of women in low qualified jobs, with less favourable or often unstable working conditions. The percentage of women working part-time is much higher than for men, as we can see from the table below. While men have twice as many full-time jobs than women, women have three times more part-time jobs than men.

**Table 7.** Women participation in working life

MEN OR WOMEN AT WORK. 2005	Men	Women
At work	60.0 %	40.0 %
□ Full time	65.4 %	34.6 %
□ Part time	21.9 %	78.1 %

### 2.3.1. Pay and gender

#### FINLAND

In comparison with other EU-countries, the differences in pay between women and men in Finland were the sixth largest and clearly over the average. Of all full-time wage-earners, the difference is still approximately 20 %, when in other EU countries it is on average 15 %. (Commission of the European Communities 2006.)

Some of these differences in pay are explained by the fact that women and men work in different fields, and that women more often work in the public sector. In some EU countries, the gender difference in education also explains the situation. However, in Finland, women have for a while been better educated than men. Attitudes and the fact that men ascend faster in their careers have an influence on pay. (MSAH 2006a.) It is noteworthy that women dominate those sectors and occupations where the level of pay is much lower than occupational groups in which male employment prevails. On the other hand, compared to many other European countries, the level of pay is particularly low in Finland in those sectors where women are dominant.

The government and labour market organisations agreed on a program for equal pay in 2005. The objective is to reduce the differences in wages between women and men by 5 percentage units by 2015. (MSAH 2006a.)

#### POLAND

Considering the level of pay in different occupational groups, we can see a clear difference between the levels of pay in the case of women and men, where men naturally have the advantage. For example, the pay of women holding managerial positions is almost 30% less compared to the pay of men. Research also shows very large differences in the levels of pay of women and men, considering their level of education. In 2004, the pay of working women with a higher education was almost 33% lower than that of men. Although working women demonstrate a much higher level of education, they rarely take up managerial positions, especially senior executive positions. In managerial professions, women represented 34.5% in 2004. Only 35.6% of employers were women. (Labour Force 2005, 96-97.)

An analysis of the structures of sections of the economy and the occupational/ qualification structure clearly shows the sections of the economy and the occupations dominated by women. Women prevailed in the following sections of the national economy: health care and social work (the share of women in total employment was 80.5%), education (75.8%) and financial intermediation (68.3%). The occupational group with the

largest female share is the group of clerical workers where the share of women in total employment in 2004 was 66.1%, and service workers and shop and market sales workers (63.6%); the smallest female share was in the group of plant and machine operators and assemblers where the share of working women was 12.6%. It is noteworthy that women dominate those sections and occupations where the level of pay is much lower than in other sections and occupational groups in which male employment prevails.

## SPAIN

There is still an important gap regarding salary between women and men, even when performing the same work. The average in the E.U. is around 16%, with less change in recent years. This difference increases depending on the country. According to data collected through surveys, in Spain women earn between 31.5% and 43.3% less than men with the same level of qualifications. The difference is greatest at the two extremes, amongst those without any qualifications and those with university-level ones. Within the group with university studies, this may be the result of the subemployment of women with university studies.

Differences also vary depending on sector, occupation, enterprise or professional category, but are always lower for women.

**Table 8.** Average earnings per worker and sector (gross yearly salary)

	WOMEN	MEN	% W/M
CONSTRUCTION	14.992,4	17.248,8	86,9
HOTEL AND CATERING TRADE	11.325,7	15.170,9	74,7
INDUSTRY	16.065,9	22.645,6	70,9
COMMERCE	13.529,2	20.494,1	66,0
TOTAL	15.775,1	22.174,1	71,1

Differences in pay are linked to many aspects, working time, seasonal issues, over-qualification, etc. Work performed by women is considered less qualified because they do it, and employers have ranked tasks differently depending on whether a woman or man performs them. The average annual basic salary for women is 71.1% of that of men, in other words, women receive 28.8% less than men (Structural Salary Survey 2002).

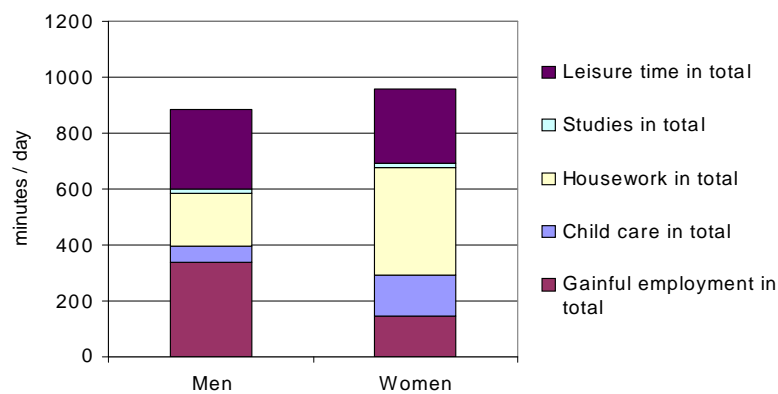
### 2.3.2. Time use and housework

#### FINLAND

The mothers of small children have the shortest working hours, and the fathers the longest. This means that mothers work less as employees because of obligations at home, while the fathers increase their income by stretching their working hours. Mothers with children between 7 and 17 years, have longer working weeks as employees than other women. (Haataja 2005, 71.)

The amount of unpaid housework done by women is approximately 10 hours more per week than housework done by men. This situation is the same for all age groups. The amount of housework increases as people get older. People who are 55-64 years old spend approximately 1-1.5 hours more on housework than those who are 45-54. (Piekkola 2003, 5.)

Housework is divided more evenly between men and women in shopping, taking care of pressing matters and household maintenance. Laundry and other tasks associated with clothes are almost entirely taken care of by women. Women also take most care of children, cleaning and cooking. The only housework that men have a bigger share in is household maintenance. If children participate in housework, this diminishes both the mother's and the father's share of housework. The bigger the household, the more children over 10-years old participate. Children participate mainly in cleaning and shopping. (Statistics Finland 2005c.)



**Figure 5.** Time use in families with children, with the youngest child at 0-6 years (Statistics Finland 2003b.)

## POLAND

In Poland, we have a rather traditional and almost stereotypical perception of the roles of women and men, whereby women bear most of the burden of household chores. Almost 47% of respondents stated that their families followed the traditional model where only women perform household chores and they are responsible for running the house and taking care of children (Żynel 2005, 52). Considering the results of research of the so-called time budget, i.e. ways of "spending" time on specified activities, we can see that, in Poland, women spend almost twice as much time as men on household duties and child care (see the tables below).

**Table 9.** 24-hour time use by gender in Poland

Specification of activity	Women	Men
Personal Care	11:12	10:53
Employment and travel related to work	6:23	7:39
Studies	4:53	5:10
Household and family care	4:30	2:36
Child care	2:17	1:28
Voluntary work and meetings	1:30	1:43
Social life and entertainment	1:33	1:38
Sports and outdoor activities	1:15	1:41
Hobbies and games	1:07	1:42
Mass media	2:48	3:14
Travel and unspecified time use	1:22	1:41

(Time use survey 1 VI 2003–31 V 2004, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2005, 129-131.)

The research shows that the most uneven distribution of household duties exists in the relationships of partners with children below the age of seven. Then, men "escape to work" and women downshift. Almost 40% of men do not devote even one hour of their time per day to household duties, so females claim, since men are not that self-critical. Their average time of thirty minutes says it all. Almost 50% of male respondents estimated that their partners devoted more than four hours a day to household chores. The household chores in which men prevail mainly include beating carpets and taking out the garbage. 33-55% of men declared that they did these chores. On the other hand, the most time-consuming daily chores such as cleaning, washing dishes, laundry, ironing are clearly expected from Polish women (77-92%) (Titkow, Duch-Krzystoszek, Budzowska 2001, 32).

## SPAIN

The Average Daily Time used by men and women for casual activities in hours and minutes shows that women work twice as many hours as men at home.

**Table 10.** Survey on time use 2002-2003 (INE.)

ACTIVITY	WOMEN	MEN
Personal Care	11:21	11:24
Work	6:51	8:22
Studies	5:09	5:18
Home & family	4:45	2:08
Voluntary work and meetings	1:46	1:54
Social life and leisure	2:09	2:18
Sport and open air activities	1:43	2:12
Hobbies and games	1:35	1:59
Communication sources	2:28	2:48
Travel and other unspecified time use	1:21	1:27

## 2.4 Family life and social policy

### 2.4.1 General situations

## FINLAND

In the 1980s and 1990s, Finnish family policy has aimed to provide a safe and positive growth environment for children, share child-related costs and ensure stable population development. Population development remains a challenge in the early 2000s due to the ageing of the population and low birth rates. Today, people typically start building a family at a more advanced age, while an increasing number do not do so at all. When older, it is more difficult to start a family, and the risk of involuntary childlessness increases. (MSAH 2003b, 9.) Due to rapidly changing working life, it is becoming increasingly important to discuss the effect of family policy measures which are designed to promote the reconciliation of work and family life with labour market participation. (Work & Family 1/97, 1.)

The new Government Programme (The Government Programme 2007, 53.) undertakes to decrease the ill-being and marginalisation of children, adolescents and families. It aims to address the problem of poverty in families with children and their growing inequality by improving their economic conditions. A specific Child, Adolescent and Family Welfare Policy Programme will be launched. Furthermore, families will be provided with a genuine opportunity to choose the form of care best suited to their children. Early childhood education and care services will be provided on a more extensive basis by increasing the availability of part-time care services and club activities and by opening new day care centres. Family day care services will also be improved.

To improve the well-being of families, parents of small children will be provided with more opportunities to spend time with their children. From 1 January 2010, the partial care allowance will increase to 90 euros in order to provide better compensation for the wage loss resulting from shorter working hours. At the same time, the partial care allowance will be made available to entrepreneurs.

According to the Government Programme, paternity leave will be extended by two weeks. This reform will be implemented in the Budget for 2010. Correspondingly, the possibility for the more extensive reform of parental leave systems will be examined. In order to promote genuine gender equality in working life, compensation for employer costs related to the families of employees will be increased. Family leave costs will be shared more equally between employers in fields dominated by men and those dominated by women. Furthermore, the share of public funding will be increased.

## **POLAND**

The family policy solutions that are currently used in Poland focus on the 2 working parents -model and are based on the principle of equal status between women and men. However, this does not translate into a fundamental transformation of the partnership family model in professional careers and intra-family duties. Social life is still heavily dominated by the family model where the woman is the main performer of the childcare function, even if she has to be the breadwinner too.

In practice, the rights that should allow balancing family and professional responsibilities and which are addressed to both working parents, are only used by women. For women, this is often a crucial barrier to access to the labour market and an impediment to their professional development. Simultaneously, such solutions frequently create various obstacles for employers and affect their attitudes toward women's work. The weaker position of women in the labour market naturally reinforces their position as the care provider and housekeeper.

## SPAIN

Spain is a state composed of autonomous regions, each with its own government. Family policies are drawn up by each region. At national level there is only a system of financial support for families with children which depends on the social security system and taxation system.

Other family policies depend on regional governments. In activities such as the project, EQUAL Malabaristas, being carried out in Andalusia, we have to take account of the regional context when discussing specific family policies.

In 2002, the government of the Junta de Andalucía adopted several measures in support of families. These measures are reviewed every year so as to adapt them to the social context.

The measures adopted have the following aim to

- establish specific policies for real and effective support for families so as to foster the welfare, development and sustainability of Andalusian families.
- ensure that both women and men are able to balance their professional and personal lives.
- attend to the specific needs of elderly people over 65 years of age as well as disabled people who are living with their families.
- implement specific policies to support single parent families.

Financial support is offered for the birth of each child, for hiring persons who re-enter the labour market after a period off for childcare and for hiring persons to mind children at home. There are also other kinds of support measures for dependant people, the disabled and the elderly. (cf. Section 2.4.5).

### 2.4.2. Family size, fertility and birth rates

## FINLAND

At the end of 2005, there were 1,426,000 families in Finland. In two thirds of these families, the parents were married, and in 21% they were cohabiting. The number of families with one parent was less than 13%. There were 828 families with a registered same-sex couple. The average size of each family was 2.8 family members. The number of reconstituted families was 52,000, which means 1,000 reconstituted families more than the year before. (Statistics Finland 2006b.)

**Table 11.** Family types (Statistics Finland 2005d)

Married couple	Married couple	Cohabiting couple	Cohabiting couple		
No children	With children	With children	No children	Mother with children	Father with children
33,7%	32,8%	7,9%	12,7%	10,7%	2,1%

Family size (Statistics Finland 2002.)

Families with 1 child	43.4 %
2 children	37.9 %
3 children	14.0 %
4 or more children	4.7 %

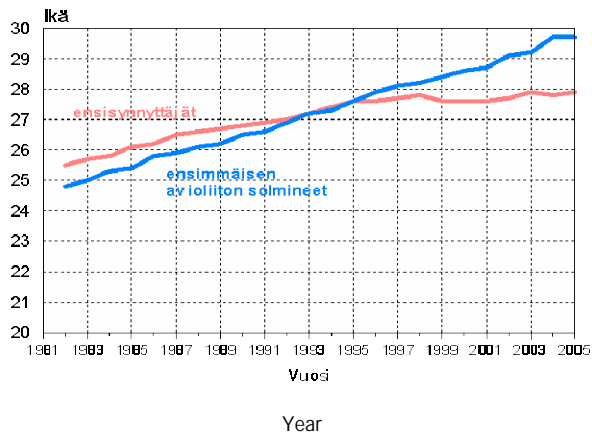
The number of divorces has increased since the 1970s and, in 2004, approximately 13,200 marriages ended in divorce. Approximately half of all married couples will divorce according to statistical prognoses. (Statistics Finland 2004a.)

Fertility rate and birth rate

In 2005, the total fertility rate was 1.8 children per woman (Statistics Finland 2006c). According to Statistics Finland (2002), the number of families with children has been slightly increasing, and at the same time more and more women remain childless. Also, the amount of older women having children has been increasing (Stakes 2006a).

In 2005, the average age of all women giving birth was 30 years, which is the same as in 2004. The average age of women having their first child was 27.9. In 2004 and 2005, the total fertility rate was 1.8 children per woman (Statistics Finland 2006c). The number of older women having children has been steadily increasing, with the number of women over 35 giving birth totalling 18.9% in 2005, when in 1995 the same figure was 15.1%. (Stakes 2006a.)

## Age of having first child and getting married



Grey line: having the first child Black line: getting married for the first time

**Figure 6.** The average age of women having their first child and getting married for the first time 1981-2005. (Statistics Finland 2005d.)

## POLAND

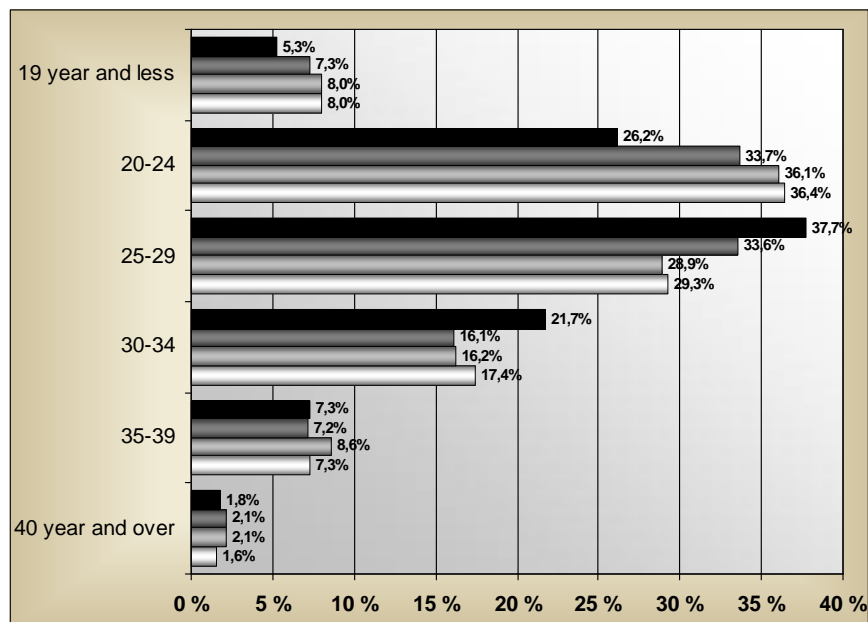
The results of the last census showed that, in 2002, Poland had 10,458,000 families, of which 8,001,000 were families with children. Marriages clearly predominate among families with children; their share was almost 80% in 2002, single mothers accounted for almost 17% of all families with children and single fathers almost 2%; almost 2% are children of non-formal marriages, so-called partnerships (in 2002, there were ca. 200,000 partnerships and almost half of these supported children).

The family model 2+1 prevails in the structure of families with children. The proportion of families with one child is as high as 47.6%, while that of families with two children is clearly smaller (35.2%), as it is for those with three children (11.8%) and four or more children (5.3%).

### Fertility rate and birth rate

From the early 1990s, the number of births in Poland has been systematically declining. Approximately 374,000 children were born in 2006; the birth rate then was 9.8%, 4.5 points lower than in 1990. A period of deep birth depression has persevered in Poland since 1989. In 2005, the birth rate was barely 1.2 when compared to the level of 2.2 in 1989.

Demographic transformations since the 1990s show that the peak fertility rate shifted from the group of women aged 20-24 to that of women aged 25-29. This is the result of choices more and more frequently made by young people, who decide to attain the desired level of education and financial stability first, and only then have a family and increase it.



**Figure 7.** Live births by age of mother (%) 1990-2005. (Central Statistical Office in Poland.)

The average age of women who gave birth to children in 2005 was 27.4 years, i.e. almost 1.5 years older than in early 1990; the age of women giving birth to their first child increased by almost 2.5 years, i.e. from 23 years to 25.4 years.

At the same time, the ratio of non-marriage births has been growing systematically for several years. In yearly 1990, ca. 6-7% were born out of wedlock while in recent years this figure totalled 17-19%. The growing non-marriage fertility rate alongside the declining total fertility rate could mean that the number of families created within partnerships is growing or could point to a growing number of single mothers who raise children on their own and make incomplete families.

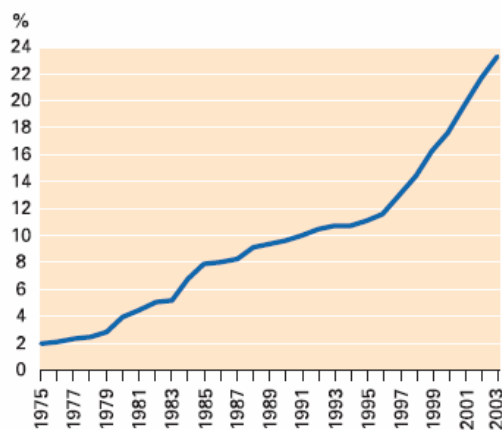
## SPAIN

Since 1970, fertility rates fell in Spain, from an average per woman of 2.8 in 1970, down to 1.2 births per woman in 2002. The average age for women giving birth to their first baby is 29.2 years of age (2002). Although this drop has occurred all over Europe, in Spain it has happened later. The birth rate in Spain is occasionally the lowest in the world, which means that Spanish society is aging at a high rate. In recent years, we have seen a slight increase thanks to immigrant women, mostly from Latin America (13.6% of births in 2004).

The average size of a Spanish family is 2.9 members, while the number of children per family is as follows: 22% of families have 0 children, 28% of families have 1 child, 31% of families have 2 children and 19% of families have more than 3 children.

The divorce rate is around 16% and the number of single parent families is around 10% (of those, 90% are single mothers). Another characteristic of the birth rate is described by the data appearing below, which refers to the average number of children born to non-married women (from 2% in 1975 shooting upwards to 23.4% in 2003).

**Gráfico 1.9. Porcentaje de nacidos fuera del matrimonio. 1975-2003**



Fuente: INE. Movimiento Natural de la Población.

**Figure 8.** Average number of babies born out of wedlock 1975 – 2003 (INE. Natural changes in the population.)

### 2.4.3. Child care and societal family policy instruments

#### FINLAND

##### Child care

In Finland, parents have the possibility to take care of their children during the 10 months after the child is born with the support of maternity, paternity and parental leave. After the parental leave, the parents can take care of their child at home on care leave until the child is three years old, or take their child either to private or municipal day care. Parents can also obtain different kinds of allowances when taking care of a sick child. In addition, all children receive child benefit until they turn 17.

The length of maternity leave is 105 working days; 30-50 days are used before giving birth, and 55-75 days afterwards. Maternity leave is an earnings related benefit, and is on average 66% of earnings. However, nearly half of all women who are employed receive full pay with employers making up the difference. Mothers who are not employed when having a child receive a minimum of 15.20 euros per day 6 days a week. Maternity leave is used by almost all mothers. Paternity leave can be taken during maternity or parental leave for a period of 18 days. Fathers who take the last two weeks of parental leave get 12 bonus days after the parental leave period. Payment is performed in the same way as for maternity leave. Of all fathers, approximately 2/3 use their paternity leave. (Salmi et al. 2006.)

Parental leave for mothers or fathers is 158 working days, and normally begins when the maternity leave ends. Each parent can take parental leave of at least 12 days in two parts. Parental leave for parents adopting a child is 180-234 days. Payment is performed in the same way as for maternity leave. Almost all mothers take parental leave whereas only 2-3 % of fathers do so. Childcare leave/ Child home care allowance can be taken from the end of parental leave until the child is three years old. Child care leave can be taken in two parts and the minimum length is one month. The average child care leave allowance in 2003 was 542 euros per month. (Salmi et al. 2006.)

Only a quarter of mothers having a child in 1999 returned to employment straight after their parental leave. Mothers stayed at home on average until their child was 18 months old. It seems that women out of work when having a child stay at home longer, supported by child care leave allowance. Rather than functioning as an alternative way of organising child care, child care leave allowance is also used as a source of income by unemployed women. (Lammi-Taskula 2004.)

Until the second school year of the child, parents have the possibility to work reduced working hours. This partial care leave must be negotiated with the employer, who can refuse it only if the reduced working hours would cause serious problems for the organisation. In such a situation, the reduced working hours must be 30 hours a week. Both parents can take partial care

leave simultaneously, as long as the leave is not taken during the same time of day. The amount of partial care allowance is 70 euros per month.

If a child under 10 years old falls ill, the parents can stay at home with the child for 4 days. There are no limits for how often this temporary child care leave can be used. The associated payment is normally full earnings, depending on collective agreements. (Salmi et al. 2006.) Special care allowance is paid to parents who help with their child's care during sickness or assist with the child's rehabilitation. The amount of special care allowance is the same as would be paid to the parent as sickness benefit entitlement. This allowance can be paid for 60 working days and can be extended for a further 30 days. (MSAH 2006c.)

Family allowance/Child benefit is paid for children until they turn 17. The amount depends on the number of children in the household. The allowance is 100 euros for one child, 110.50 for the second child, 131 for the third, 151.50 for the fourth and 172 euros for the next child/children. Single parents receive a supplement of 36.60 for each child. (Kela 2006b.) Parents can receive child care allowance for taking care of a sick child at home. This allowance is received if a child under 16 years of age is in need of care or rehabilitation for at least six months, and when the care incurs severe financial costs for the family. The monthly amounts for 2006 are 78.46 euros, 183.09 euros and 340.03 euros. (MSAH 2006d.)

## **POLAND**

### Societal family policy instruments

In Poland, the length of maternity leave is 18 weeks for the first child, 20 weeks for the second child and 28 weeks for the third child. Maternity benefit equals 100% of the mother's salary or wage. In 2002, working fathers were granted the right to use part of the maternity leave (provided that the mother first used at least 14 weeks of the maternity leave after the childbirth).

The child care allowance is granted to an employee who uses leave to take care of a sick child (until 14 years of age) or a healthy child (until 8 years of age) in the case of the unforeseen closure of the child's care centre or school or the illness or confinement to hospital of the parent who carries out the regular care of the child. Such leave may also be used to take care of another family member who is sick. The care allowance is paid for up to 60 days per year to an amount of 80% of the regular salary of the employee.

Child care leave may be used for a period up to 36 months, but no longer than until the child's fourth birthday. It may be extended for the next 36 months for a disabled, chronically ill or retarded child. Currently, the care allowance is an extra allowance on top of family benefits, which means that it depends on the family income. When on leave, the employee and his or her family are still entitled to use healthcare benefits and services and, as of the last day, the length of the leave is included in the length of service, which

is the basis for determining employee rights. In addition, special protection of the employee's contract of employment is ensured. In the mid-1990s the right to child care leave was levelled out between women and men.

The number of persons who use benefits related to balancing family and professional responsibilities has been declining since the beginning of the 1990s, affected by the decreasing number of births in Poland (from 550,000 in 1989 to 356,000 in 2004), but also by the current high unemployment and fear of losing one's job, particularly by women.

#### Monetary benefits to support the family in Poland

The existing system of family benefits in Poland is not an insurance based system. It is a benefit-provision system financed by the state budget and consists of family benefit, with extra allowances on top of family benefit, two types of benefits related to the birth of a child and care benefits, and care allowance and care benefit.

The aim of family benefit is to cover part of the living costs of a child. Eligible beneficiaries and extra allowances are determined on the basis of an income criterion – in 2006 it was PLN 504 (EUR 126) per head per family or PLN 583 (EUR 146) for families with a disabled child. On 1 September 2006, the amount of the benefit was changed to PLN 48 (EUR 12) for each child below 5 years of age, PLN 64 (EUR 16) for each child of 5 years of age and below 18 years of age and PLN 68 (EUR 17) for each child of 18 years of age and below 24 years of age. Family benefit is paid until a child is 18 years of age and is extended for children who continue in education – until they are 21 years of age, or 24 for a disabled child.

A family that is eligible for the family benefits may also receive extra allowances:

- childbirth allowance: a one-off payment of PLN 1,000 (EUR 250)
- child care allowance during the childcare leave, which may be used by the mother or father for a period of 24 calendar months, or 36 months in the case of more than one child arising from a single childbirth, or 72 months for a disabled child – PLN 400 (EUR 100)
- single parent allowance: PLN 170 (EUR 43) per child a month or PLN 340 (EUR 85) for all children, whichever is the lower
- large family allowance: PLN 80 (EUR 20) a month for the third and each subsequent child eligible to receive family benefit
- education and rehabilitation allowance for a disabled child: PLN 60 (EUR 15) a month until the child is 5 years of age and then PLN 80 (EUR 20) until the child is 24
- allowance for a child who attends a school located in another town: PLN 90 (EUR 23) a month when the child lives in the town in which the school resides or PLN 50 (EUR 13) a month when the child commutes to a school in another town
- school year inauguration allowance: PLN 100 (EUR 25) per child

In the beginning of 2006 a new monetary benefit was introduced. This is a one-off amount paid for the birth of a child regardless of the family's

income (the so-called “becikowe” or “baby’s sleeping bag”). The amount of the benefit is PLN 1,000 per child (EUR 250). In addition, municipalities are entitled to pass their own regulations to provide assistance in connection with the birth of a child.

The care allowance is granted to cover part of the related expenses to ensure care and assistance provided by another person to a disabled person who is not able to live unaided. On 1 September 2006, the amount of the allowance was set at PLN 153 per month and the eligible beneficiaries were disabled children, disabled persons of 16 years of age and older, provided that their disability is substantial, and persons of 75 years of age and older. The care benefit is granted when the mother or father of a substantially-disabled child resigns from his or her paid work to take care of the child. The amount of benefit is PLN 420 per month, provided that the family’s monthly income is no higher than PLN 583 per head.

## **SPAIN**

The following types of leave are based on Law 39/99, of 5th November, which promotes the reconciliation of professional and family life by working people. Nevertheless, many of these measures will be improved according to the new Law 3/2007 on effective equality between women and men, which has been recently adopted and will be further developed in the forthcoming years.

Maternity leave in adoption or taking in a child under pre-adoptive or permanent conditions is 16 weeks or more in the case of multiple births, and 2 weeks more for each child from the second onwards. The mother chooses how to distribute these weeks before or after the birth. However, she is obliged to take 6 out of the 16 right after the birth. The other 10 weeks can be distributed between the mother and father during the parental leave in a simultaneous or consecutive manner taking account of the fact that there are 10 weeks available for both parents, not for each of them. Paternity leave lasts two days (paid).

Women will have the right to enjoy an hour off everyday for babies less than 9 months old. This leave for unweaned babies option can be distributed in two parts by the worker or she can also choose to have her working day reduced by half an hour. This can be enjoyed by both the father and mother if both work. They have the right to a leave period no longer than three years for taking care of each natural or adopted child beginning from the date of birth or the judicial resolution date. Legal protection for family care includes a reduction of working hours for 6 to 8 years. This option will also be available for those taking care of unemployed family members suffering from some kind of mental, physical or sensory disability. By the same token, working hours can be reduced from 1/3 to 1/2 through an equitable salary reduction.

Leave for family care for a period no longer than three years is for caring for each natural or adopted child which in the case of permanent or pre-adoptive custody, begins on the date of birth or judicial resolution date. The

right to leave of one year exists- unless a longer period has been accepted under a collective agreement – for taking care of a family member (either a blood relative or an in-law) who does not work and needs care in daily life for reasons of age, accident or illness.

Apart from the improvements included in the new Law 3/2007 mentioned above, many organisations from both the private and public sector have introduced their own improvements through collective labour agreements.

An allowance of EUR 291 is paid for each child under the age of 18, and one of EUR 582 for an officially recognised disability equal to or over 33%. Greater financial support is available for the care of a person with a disability equal or superior to 65%, of EUR 3,217 a year. Support of EUR 4,825 a year is available for those with a disability equal or superior to 75% in need of support for mobility. A family receives EUR 451 for each birth after the second one. Financial support is also granted in the case of multiple births.

#### **2.4.4 Day care systems and other social services**

### **FINLAND**

#### **Day care**

All children under school age have the right to receive municipal day care either at a day care centre or in family day care. The costs are calculated according to the size of the family and their income level, and range between 18-200 euros a month. Day care services are free for low income families. (MSAH 2006b.) 23% of children under three years old and 62% of the children from three to five years old are in day care arranged by the municipality (Färkkilä et al. 2005).

Instead of municipal day care, the parents can make their own arrangements for child care supported by the private day care allowance. The private day care allowance can be received if the child is looked after by a private child minder recognised by the municipality (a private child care centre, a family child care provider or a hired caregiver). The amount of the private day care allowance is EUR 137 per child (Kela 2006a).

## POLAND

### Social services

Municipalities are responsible for the performance of functions related to the establishment, running and financing of childcare outlets (nursery schools, kindergartens), primary schools, junior secondary schools, and educational & cultural centres. Individuals and legal persons may create non-public educational centres.

Parents' participation in the financing of social services has been growing. Parents must pay increased fees for meals, services in excess of the minimum curricula and extra classes (music, art, foreign language etc.). In addition, regular fees have been introduced for the co-funding of nursery schools and kindergartens. However, municipalities are in no way obliged to provide any after-school activities and there is no uniform system of such facilities.

The burden imposed on parents in the form of fees for nursery schools and kindergartens was the main reason for the withdrawal from such services among the poorest families. The kindergarten fee for 1 child is higher than 30% of the minimum wage (net). Such a financial load is too heavy for many families and forces them to make sacrifices elsewhere.

Two trends are plainly visible within the scope of social services that should enable parents to balance their family and professional responsibilities: the declining number of users of such services (also due to a lower number of births); and the declining number of childcare centres. The number of nursery schools dropped from 1,553 in 1989 to 377 in 2004, and the number of kindergartens from 12,676 in 1989 to 7,746 in 2004. The number of children in nursery schools and kindergartens declined significantly too. As a result, while in European countries 70-80% of children in the age range of 3-5 attend various public childcare institutions, in Poland this ratio is only 20% (Ćwiek, Sobiech 2005, 3).

Another problem is the insufficiently flexible hours of care offered by childcare centres, for example kindergartens and nursery schools. Their opening hours are rigid and not adjusted to the varying needs of parents. After-school activities are not very popular among children and teens. The proportion of primary and junior and senior secondary schools is small (Balcerzak-Paradowska 2004, 263).

## **SPAIN**

### **Public daily care system**

The public daily care system in Spain is very varied. There is no national system as such but different subsystems at regional and local level, which may be public, private, or mixed, which means private but with public participation. In this sense, the most common services are:

Socio-educational centres (kindergartens) provide care for children from 4 months up to 6 years old. There are not enough centres to meet demand. Currently, only 12% of babies under three years of age have a place in public kindergartens whereas 100% of children after three years of age have the choice of attending publicly run nursery schools. These centres may be run by the municipality, regional government or a private enterprise (either with public participation or not).

There are Playschools in the above mentioned centres, and from 17.00 hours on as an extra service, there may be pedagogical activities such as games and entertainment for the children attending the centres. There is also Morning School in public educational centres (kindergartens and primary schools), the time between 7.30 and the official beginning of classes being considered "morning school", without formal activities. Each centre establishes care-based activities for children according to their age and characteristics.

Public educational centres have dining halls and offer lunch services for pupils and students at kindergartens, primary and secondary school. These last for two hours after the official end of the school day. Public educational centres (kindergartens, primary and secondary school) also offer different after school activities in the afternoons after regular classes such as leisure time, reading, sports, music, arts, handicraft, health education, first aid, ICT, languages and other subjects of interest to the students.

### **2.4.5. Care of the elderly and disabled**

## **FINLAND**

The main policy objective is that as many older people as possible are able to live independent lives in their own homes, and in a familiar social and living environment. Living at home is supported by rapid-access professional social welfare and health care services. Residential services and different forms of institutional care are provided to people who can no longer manage to live at home. Different types of services available for older people include home help and home nursing care, meals and help with cleaning, and the provision of rehabilitation assistive devices and service accommodation. (MSAH 2006f, Stakes 2006c.)

Relatives who take care of an older or a disabled person (or a child) are entitled to an allowance in support of informal care from the municipality. The municipality and the caregiver make a care agreement that includes a care and services plan. The person providing care does not have to be a family member. In 2006, the minimum allowance was 300 euros a month, and there is no upper limit for it. (MSAH 2006g.)

There is also private family care, which means care provided to a person around the clock in a private home outside the person's own home. Private family care is mainly arranged in terms of child welfare and care for disabled people. It is also used in care for elderly people, or as a type of mental health service. The main aim of private family care is to guarantee the homelike nature of the care. In 2006, the minimum allowance for private family care was 242 euros, and the maximum was 725 euros a month for each person cared for. (MSAH 2006h.)

The Finnish communal and private care system for the elderly is extensive and provides the bulk of care for the elderly. However, since Finland's ageing population is adding pressure to increasing the number of care places, care provided in the home by family members will be supported and encouraged.

## **POLAND**

In Poland, the family is mainly responsible for taking care of its dependants, especially aged persons, and such care is organised and financed primarily by the family. This is both due to the country's values (tradition, family bonds) and insufficient care services for dependants (CSO 2005b, 41).

In the Polish social assistance system, assistance in the form of specialised care is granted to single persons, who require the assistance of others due to their age, sickness or other factors, and who are not being taken care of, as well as persons who require the assistance of others, if the family is unable to provide such assistance. Care services include assistance in the fulfilment of everyday needs, caring for hygiene, treatment ordered by a doctor and, if possible, contact with the local community. Specialised care services are adjusted to particular needs resulting from the type of sickness or disability. The commune authorities determine the conditions for granting and payment for care and specialised services.

Persons, who require partial assistance in the fulfilment of their everyday needs due to age, sickness or disability, may be granted care services and specialised care services at a support centre, which is the basic organisational unit of day care social assistance centres. Another form of assistance for persons who require help due to their age lies in family assistance centres, which are a form of care and the fulfilment of basic needs provided 24 hours a day by a person at his or her place of residence for no less than three and no more than eight persons requiring assistance. If it is not possible to provide care services at the place of residence through the family and the

commune, a person requiring 24-hour assistance may apply for a transfer to a welfare facility (art. 54 of the act on social assistance).

Welfare facilities, depending on the type of recipients of services, are divided into homes for the following groups of persons: aged persons, the chronically ill with somatic disorders, the chronically mentally ill, the mentally retarded, mentally retarded children and youth and the physically handicapped. Welfare facilities can be managed, after obtaining a permit from the provincial governor, by territorial self-governing units (commune, district), the Catholic Church and other churches, religious associations, social organisations, foundations, associations and other legal and natural persons.

A stay at a welfare facility is subject to a charge up to the average monthly cost of living, determined by each self-government institution, depending on the scope of influence of such a unit (commune, district, province). Payment for a stay at a welfare facility is made, in the first instance, by the person subject to transfer to the facility, with the provision that his or her contribution cannot exceed 70% of his or her income and cannot exceed the full cost of the stay; in the second place, by the family, if its financial situation allows for it; in the third place, by the commune, which makes an additional contribution for staying at the welfare centre, if necessary.

Since the early nineties, the number of residential welfare facilities for dependants has been increasing systematically (from 629 in 1990 to 1,196 in 2005), as well as the number of places in these facilities. In late 2005, there were 1,196 residential welfare facilities in Poland. They offered 97.5 thousand places and were inhabited by 93.4 thousand people. Most inhabitants contribute to their stay, making payments from their old age or disability pension (about 72% inhabitants) and, for about 11%, the charges are mainly covered from social benefits. Only less than 5% paid the full amount for their stay.

Within the structure of inhabitants occupying various types of welfare facilities, the largest group consists of inhabitants of homes for the chronically ill with somatic disorders (26%) and homes for mentally retarded adults and mentally retarded children and youths (almost 25%). About 19% of inhabitants occupy mental health institutions and almost 17% occupy rest homes.

The number of places within welfare facilities is not adjusted to meet the related need. The number of persons awaiting a place increased visibly in particular after 2000 (to almost 20 thousand people), and then in 2004 it dropped to 8.5 thousand and, in 2005, to 6.9 thousand. It should be noted that the decrease in the number of persons awaiting a place in a welfare facility was caused by the amendment of the legal provisions on financing a stay at a welfare facility, and not by any actual improvement with regard to the fulfilment of needs.

In this situation, the only solution available and applied relatively often is the involvement of household members and other relatives in assistance or limiting the working hours of one of the partners in order to provide care for dependants. Research results have shown that women are more often

responsible for providing assistance – men very rarely provide care for dependants (CSO 2005, 41).

## **SPAIN**

The care of dependent people is very often achieved by the family. More than 80% of dependent elderly people receive care through informal networks. Women carry out 83% of this work. Thus, in Spain the needs of dependent people are tackled deficiently by the Health and Social Services, allowing a variety of major gaps in provision between one Autonomous Community and another. In Spain, 9% of the population suffers from some kind of disability. More than 32% of the elderly suffer from some kind of disability. (A survey on disability. Disability and State of Health of 1999, EDDDES 99.)

Recently, legislation has changed with the new Law 39/2006 on Personal Autonomy and Dependency, the first of its type in Europe through which the existence of a National System of Dependency with a universal character was introduced. Such a system will be considered as a fundamental pillar of the Welfare State together with other universal concepts such as Health, Education and Pensions. The National System for dependency includes the following kind of support for everyone in a situation of dependency due to disability, age or illness.

Services which promote personal autonomy prevent dependency from arising, and include telesupport, technical support for personal autonomy, home adaptation and accessibility support and personalisation support. Services on upkeep and care which are received at home are focused on housekeeping needs and personal care. It is possible to receive support at Day and Night Centres in Elderly Day Centres, in Centres for care targeting citizens under 65 years of age and in Centres for specialised care. Residential care is provided at rest homes and centres for disabled, dependent people. These services are public or partly public.

## **2.5 Summary**

Flexible working solutions are valuable as far as reconciling work and family life, especially when bringing up young children, is concerned. Although flexible working solutions are mostly regulated by law, they are not widely used in any of the three countries. Flexitime is the most commonly used flexible employment solution. At the beginning of the year 2000, 39% of men and 28% of women in Finland had the possibility to regulate their working hours using flexitime or some other kind of individual agreement similar to flexitime (Kandolin 2002).

Instead, in comparison with the EU 25 countries, fixed-term contracts are commonly used in Spain, Poland and Finland. Finland's situation of 17% is outstripped only by Spain with 32%, Poland with 23%, Portugal with 20% and Slovenia with 18%. (Lehto et al.2005.) Fixed-term contracts are very common, especially among young women. This is a major obstacle to creating a work-life balance for women. The use of fixed-term contracts increases the risk of unemployment, reduces income levels and causes uncertainty which affects planning for the future, starting a family and the use of parental leave.

The activity rate of women in the labour market in these three countries clearly reveals the difference between them. While the activity rate of women in Finland is quite high at 64.1% (2005), in Poland 47.9%, (2004) and Spain 46.4%, (2005) it is nearly the same. The difference between Poland and Spain is that the activity rate as a whole is rather low in Poland, while in Spain the difference between male 68.8% and female 46.4% activity rates is remarkable. The labour activity rate for women in Spain is higher for women between 35 and 39, dropping from 40 years on, which is about the time they give birth to their second child. Meanwhile, the labour activity rate for men remains unvaried for men between 35 and 49 years of age. In Spain, a difference in activity rates also occurs according to marital status. The higher the educational level of women, the less difference there is in the labour activity between them and men in all three countries.

A common characteristic between Poland and Finland is the fact that unemployed women are better educated than unemployed men. Although working women demonstrate a much higher level of education in Poland and a fairly higher one in Finland, they rarely take up managerial positions. Despite the better educational attainments of women in Poland and Finland, they receive 20-30% less salary, which directly affects the question of who in a family chooses to stay at home with children during family leave.

There is still an important gap regarding salary between women and men, even for the same work. In comparison with other EU-countries, the differences in pay between women and men in Finland were the sixth largest and clearly greater than average. Of all full-time wage-earners, the difference is still approximately 20% when, in other EU-countries, it is 15% on average. (Commission of the European Communities 2006) For example, in Poland the pay of women holding managerial positions is almost 30% less when compared to the pay of men. In Spain, women earn between 31.5% and 43.3% less than men with the same level of qualifications.

Another common characteristic between Finland, Poland and Spain is the segregation of the labour market. The differentiation of the labour market into different fields of work for women and men was strong in all three countries. Women also occupy the lower levels of occupations in all three societies. The concentration of women in certain sectors is not reflected in decision-making positions.

In Poland and also in Spain, motherhood and child care are traditionally expected from women, with far-reaching consequences. Employers seem to assume that women are mainly wives and mothers and that the fulfilment of those social roles is crucial for them and will inevitably collide with their

working life. The interruption of employment in connection with motherhood also leads to the outdatedness of professional qualifications. Discrimination against women in the labour market is not a legal issue, but mainly has social and cultural roots.

Women's inferior labour market position reinforces their role as child carers, including in Finland. Only a quarter of mothers having a child in 1999 returned to employment right after parental leave. It seems that women without work when having a child stay at home longer, supported by child care leave allowance. Rather than functioning as an alternative way of organising child care, child care leave allowance is also used as a source of income by unemployed women. (Lammi-Taskula 2004.) The number of fathers taking child care leave is estimated to be 2-3%. (Lammi-Taskula 2003.)

It is noteworthy that the fertility rate per woman is 1.24 in Poland, 1.25 in Spain and 1.8 in Finland. The average age for women giving birth to their first child is 25.4 years in Poland, 29.2 years in Spain and 27.9 years in Finland. The Finnish universal day care system allows both parents to engage in full-time work, which is one of the reasons that the fertility rate in Finland is higher than those of Poland and Spain. In Spain and Poland, there is no such extensive system, which forms a clear barrier to increasing the activity rates of women. While in European countries 70-80% of children in the age range of 3-5 attend various public childcare institutions, in Poland this ratio is only 20% (Ćwiek, Sobiech 2005, 3). In Finland in particular, the aging population will also require more and more care in the near future.

Although there are differences between these countries in terms of the work-family balance, it has become clear that the problems of equality between men and women are surprisingly similar. Differences in pay, fixed term contracts, the unfair share of housework and child care constitute only a few of our common problems. Women's inferior position in the labour market directly affects their possibility of balancing family and working life, clearly making it very challenging.

It should be emphasised here that benefits which make balancing the family and professional responsibilities easier seem to be a significant employment barrier for women in all three countries, due to the fact that in reality it is mainly women who use these family benefits. Despite the available legal options that allow for the equal utilisation of such benefits by women and men, women are still perceived, by tradition, as the persons mainly responsible for childcare. One means of improving the position of women in the labour market might be to encourage men to take more responsibility for the family through family leave system.

As Poland pointed out, we have a self-perpetuating system, which intensifies the discrimination of women in the labour market. In breaking this vicious spiral, focusing on its particular elements will not be enough, since other factors will still duplicate negative practices.

## 3. GOOD PRACTICES IN WORK - FAMILY BALANCE

### FINLAND

#### 3.1. Developing work and family practices in a day care centre

The good practice described in this document refers to a working process that helps employees of a day care centre identify practices promoting the reconciliation of work and family life, document them in an orientation file and develop them further. The development process increases employees' awareness of reconciliation methods and thus makes it easier for them to reconcile work and family life. This also results in more profound co-operation with parents.

During the process, employees learn to identify certain rights and obligations that make the reconciliation of work and family life easier. Increased interaction results in better understanding between employees with and without families. This results in the improved well-being of employees, sound co-operation with parents and day care which is responsive to the needs of children.

#### Development environment and actors

A day care centre is an environment where employees' wishes, parents' needs and the interests of the child all need to be taken into account. Staff and parents share the same challenge, both trying to find the balance between work and family life. Employees are worried about the well-being of children, repeated long days in care and the well-being of parents.

During the development period, about 20 employees were working in a Vantaa day care centre specialising in self-expression methods. Its staff comprised a supervisor, kindergarten teachers, special kindergarten teachers, children's nurses, assistants, ward domestics and kitchen workers. At the time of the experiment, the day care centre was providing day care for 70 children, aged 1 to 6 years, who were divided into five groups. Moreover, the centre had adopted flexible service hours to meet the needs of parents. Its service hours extended from 6:15 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Friday. It was particularly challenging to arrange care for children with parents on shift work, due to continually changing hours of work.

The entire staff of the day care centre was involved in work community development, supported by the Using Learning Networks to Build a Work-Family Balance project. Organised by the project, Learning Network days, various theme days and Open Forums served as mutual learning events, providing the opportunity to learn from the network's other development organisations. Furthermore, a development consultant provided by the project visited the day care centre on a frequent basis, providing support for development work. The day care centre was a member of the learning network, Towards a family-friendly work culture.

### Background and objectives

Various plans and agreements had already been prepared to promote the reconciliation of work and family life in the day care centre. However, workplace practices had not been documented and it was very difficult to appeal to them. Practices varied on a group-by-group basis, and matters were agreed verbally. There was confusion concerning e.g. meeting practices, flexible working hours and measures to be taken in cases of staff shortages. Furthermore, there was a need for common rules to resolve everyday problem situations and improve employees' working ability. Finally, additional support was required for co-operation with parents.

The following objectives were established: 1) the identification and 2) development of practices promoting the reconciliation of work and family life and, finally, 3) their documentation on an orientation file. This good practice refers to a working process manifested in the documentation process of mutually accepted rules and practices. Once these practices are documented, individual employees will have no need to look for corresponding information from a host of sources, and the gathered knowledge will not disappear when employees change.

The objective was to create the orientation file by means of a common, interactive process – and in this the process was regarded as being as important as the goal. The aim of the development work was to delve into the factors promoting employee working ability and well-being and increase the flexibility, openness and common responsibility of the entire working community. Enhanced working ability offers employees better possibilities to support families and extend the guardian/employee partnership in education and care. The concept of healthy selfishness became the underlying theme. Healthy selfishness refers to the employee's right to pay attention to his/her own family and well-being. Well-being at home and at work requires the ability to exercise one's own rights.

## Actors, structures and resources

All employees, including the supervisor, were involved in the development process. The entire process was coordinated by the responsible person, and a core group comprising key persons was formed to take care of planning, decision-making and the incorporation of documented practices into everyday life. The core group comprised members from the teams involved, one from each. Thanks to the members of the core group, other staff members were kept well informed of the development work throughout.

A development consultant helped to kick off the effort, followed the progress and provided support in various phases, bearing the big picture in mind. Such assistance results in more structured development activities, based on the consultant's duty to motivate, encourage and caution the participants if needed. Finally, he/she is expected to guide participants to work and develop themselves individually on a continuous basis. The consultant visited our sample day care centre regularly, about once every three months.

The core group convened about once a month. Issues were also discussed at weekly team meetings intended for the entire working community, which also helped to keep the entire staff involved in the development work on an ongoing basis. A total of 25 development work meetings were held, with a total duration of around 70 hours. With regard to development, the organisation of a so-called work night was found to be particularly useful.

## Organisation of the process

In practice, development work is divided into three stages: preparation, implementation and future orientation. In our sample day care centre, both the preparation and implementation stage took about one year.

### *Preparation stage*

- Identification of problems, development needs and expectations by means of discussions and e.g. a questionnaire.
- Analysis of discussion findings, special attention being paid to disagreements.
- Discussion of development themes and alternatives, documentation of ideas.
- Elaboration of objectives, selection of concrete development tasks.
- Selection of the core development group.
- Preparation of the action plan and assignment of responsible persons to each line of activity.
- Preparation of the schedule and its dissemination to everyone involved.

#### *Implementation stage*

- The core group convenes on a regular basis, e.g. about every three months. The consultant participates in e.g. every third meeting.
- A common work night is organised early enough to ensure the rapid commitment of the entire staff to the activities in hand. This event serves as a common forum for discussing the issues prepared by the core group and making joint decisions concerning the entire working community. Such decisions are documented on the orientation file. Examples include a mutually agreed definition of a good employee or rules for interaction. It is often the case that, in itself, common discussion of the matters mentioned above contributes to their realisation.
- Following the preparation phase, members of the core group introduce corresponding matters to teams, in which they are developed further. Mutually agreed rules are documented on the orientation file.

#### *Future orientation stage*

- Planning and implementation of regular meetings.
- Open discussion continues. If necessary, new issues are raised.
- Updated continuously, the orientation file will also serve as a documentation tool for future practice development. Documented agreements are subject to discussion and adjustments. It is natural to update the orientation file at the beginning of each period of operation.

#### Results and changes

With regard to concrete outputs, the process materialises in the form of an orientation file including the practices and agreements promoting the reconciliation of work and family life in the working community. Having common, documented rules applicable to the entire working community makes it easier to manage everyday routines. Since all employees are aware of their mutually defined rights and obligations, there are fewer conflicts. Thanks to the documentation process, it is easy to make employees committed and accountable to existing practices. It is also easy to orientate new employees to adopt workplace practices by using written material.

Clear, mutually agreed structures promote the working ability of employees and increase their healthy selfishness. An employee selfish in a healthy way has the courage to stick to the agreed working hours and defend a balanced family life. Healthy selfishness increases self-confidence and creates a more positive professional self-image, which results in better interaction between children and parents. At the same time, it generates the courage and openness needed in family life.

How to make this good practice permanent?

In day care centres, it may be difficult to find time for development work in the middle of everyday activities. The provision of day care for children requires full-time commitment. There is the risk that proven good practices such as healthy selfishness and the documentation of agreements will be buried in files. Positive experiences of the growth of resources and improved management of everyday life serve as motivational factors for future development work.

The starting point in making this good practice permanent is the inclusion of employees in the process during its preparation stage. Through personal reflection, it is possible for employees to see the resulting future benefits for themselves, their families and the working community. Co-operation results in new ideas which are required to transform agreements into everyday practices. Everything goes well once there is consistency between attitudes, values and everyday practices within the organisation.

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### 3.2. Commissioned studies on the reconciliation of work and family

This short article is a description of a process related to commissioned studies carried out within the learning network, "Researching work and the family," one of the networks belonging to the Finnish project, "Using learning networks to build a work-family balance". The process offers good practices and a research model that can be repeated elsewhere as a means of familiarising students and future professionals with the reconciliation of work and family and providing research based and up-to-date information to organisations.

#### Objectives

One of the objectives of the learning network in question was to introduce graduate students to the thematics of the reconciliation of work and family. The key aim was to promote research and acquire knowledge on this issue by helping future professionals in education, research and the social services to become acquainted with this topical issue. Instead of organising courses or seminars on the topic, a more active approach was selected: commissioned and supervised studies that would take place within the organisations included in the Finnish project, dealing with the themes suggested by these partners.

#### Research themes and actors

The research themes were formulated in close interaction with the organisations involved in the three learning networks of the Finnish project. The organisations were approached with a question about their needs, i.e. the issues on which they wished to gain up-to-date information, and the questions related to the work-family balance which they wished to be studied within their organisation. Thereafter, a list of 12 themes was compiled, and the recruitment of students began.

We received nearly 50 applications from undergraduate students, from whom the researchers were selected. This keen interest in the commissioned studies enabled us to select researchers from amongst the most able students. Those selected were planning or already working on their masters thesis.

The students carrying out the commissioned studies represented several disciplines (consumer economics, education, management and marketing, social policy, social psychology and sociology), and picked the themes which most interested them. This proved a successful strategy, since it helped ensure that they were highly motivated from the beginning. Nevertheless, the monetary compensation of 1000 euros was, of course, important. However, high quality work is best achieved through motivation and genuine interest.

List of research themes:

- Flexible working hours (three studies)
- Combining a demanding career with a family
- The family life of expatriates
- Co-operation between municipalities and NGOs
- Father groups in health care centres
- Families with disabled children
- Female entrepreneurs and the work-family challenge
- Care of elderly parents
- Middle aged singles and the work-family challenge
- Learning in learning networks

Five studies were directly linked to the learning network, "Towards a family friendly work culture". Three of these dealt with flexible working hours, one with combining a demanding career with a family, and one with people living abroad and separated from their families due to work.

Four studies were linked to the learning network, "Building support networks for the family". One dealt with co-operation between municipalities and local NGOs, one with father groups, one with families with disabled children and one investigated the work-family challenge in the lives of female entrepreneurs.

Two of the commissioned studies were more general in orientation and not directly linked to any learning network: one focused on people of the "sandwich generation" who were taking care of their elderly parents in addition to minors and work responsibilities, and the other dealt with middle-aged single women and the work-family balance in their lives. Finally, one study investigated the process of learning in learning networks.

#### Methodological approaches and the process

The students carrying out the commissioned studies were relatively free to define their preferred methodological approach. Considering the strong emphasis on qualitative methods and analysis in social and behavioural sciences in Finland during the last 20 years, it is unsurprising that the majority of studies applied a qualitative perspective and that data collection and analysis were more quantitative in character in only three. This, however, did not result in uniform methodologies, since a spectrum of orientations was employed, from text analysis to fenomenography and from life line analysis to discourse analysis. The requirements set in advance for data collection implied that, in the case of a survey, a minimum of 50 returned questionnaires is required while qualitative interviews should be based on a minimum of four interviews.

The main idea was to provide very concise studies based on concrete research problems rather than abstract or general ones. The students were offered extensive support during the research process, in the form of regular meetings of the whole group (seven meetings between the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2006 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 2007) and personal encounters between the project coordinator, who acted as the studies' supervisor, and the students. These encounters were either face-to-face meetings or telephone or e-mail discussions. The students received comments on their work during various phases, while the supervisor commented on the research plans, the data collection strategies (survey questionnaires and interview themes) and several drafts of the analysis and the report. At the beginning of the research process, the supervisor also acted as the mediator between the student and the organisation to which the study was linked, and took part in the planning meetings, where all parties were represented: the organisation, the student and the Finnish project. This mediating role was also required in the later phases of the research process in only a few cases, in order to ensure the progress of the studies involved.

## Results

While an adequate summary of the 12 studies would not be feasible here, it can be stated that, in general, the studies generated information relevant to the topic researched, which organisations will be able to use in developing their practices linked to the work-life balance. However, from the perspective of a more general interest in this theme, some individual findings should be mentioned.

The issue of equality arose in several studies and is undoubtedly of importance to the discussion of the work-life balance. How can fair and flexible practices in work organisations be secured, guaranteeing the equitable treatment of all employees with respect to work-family issues, when Finnish employees' family forms are more various than ever before and when the definition of the family has become subjective? The proportion of Finns living alone has increased during the last decade and at the beginning of this century, with almost 20% of the population now living alone (Families 2002, Statistics Finland 2003). In urban areas in particular, there are many one-person-households. However, this does not mean that these people do not have families. Rather than an intact nuclear family, for example, their families may comprise the members of their childhood family (parents, siblings), a partner living in a separate household, children from a dissolved marriage, or even close friends and intimates. Although these family ties may seem unconventional at first glance, they constitute everyday family life for a large number of people, and a significant amount of commitment, responsibility and reciprocal care is involved.

Thus the question arises: how can a work organisation take account of the variety of family forms in order to support all employees' well-being and the successful reconciliation of work and family on an equal basis? Many of the studies cast light on questions related to the equal rights and responsibilities of employees with respect to issues such as flexible working hours and telework, for example. Are all employees entitled to these possibilities, or only those with small children? What about middle aged employees taking care of elderly and demanding parents? Evidently, this will be a very topical question at both macro and micro level in Finnish society in the near future. Both legislative and social regulation, and employers, will have to adjust to demographic changes and the diversification of family forms.

Were the aims achieved?

The students' evaluations of the process were positive and encouraging. All except one of the 11 students who returned the evaluation questionnaire claimed that the research process had helped them form insights into the work-family discussion (rather well / very well) and that they had gained a great deal of new information and knowledge which they will put to use in the future. Many of the students aimed to work in this research field after graduation, and they particularly valued the possibility to gain research experience. Some students were drawn to the project due to their interest in the work and family themes.

Conclusion

The key elements of a successful process are the following: organisations which are willing and interested in participating in the study and acting as research subjects, graduate students with satisfactory research skills and committed to carrying out the study to a strict timetable, and adequate coordination resources.

Commissioned studies seem to offer a fruitful and effective research model. While the costs are reasonable, the supervision of studies carried out by inexperienced students demands resources (time, pedagogical skills, research experience etc.). Continuing and open interaction between the students and the coordinator of the studies is of key importance. It is evident that students who took part in the arranged meetings and sought to benefit from the supervision offered produced better research reports than those who chose to carry out the research based on minimum communication with the coordinator. Thus, it is important to remember that students – even the most able – have limited research competencies and ability to see what kind of knowledge would benefit the organisations involved. All this emphasises the importance of adequate coordination resources to a successful process.

The critical phases of the process lie in the beginning. It goes without saying that the recruitment of the students requires particular care. The point at which the students and organisations are brought together is also critical, since the two parties must achieve a mutual understanding with respect to the research: what is to be studied, why, and how? Without a common view of these matters, the process is very likely to run into difficulties sooner or later.

This research model can easily be integrated into various projects that aim to produce new research-based information or generate changes in attitudes and practices.

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### 3. 3. Home services through a day care centre experiment

In a seven-week experiment carried out during the autumn of 2006, a few Bachelor students in Social Services provided home services through a day care centre for its client families. The objective of this experiment was to make these services more accessible to families with children. It is easier to order home services provided through a day care centre, and the staff providing these services is already familiar. The experiment was carried out in co-operation between the private expression focused Illusia day care centre and the Laurea University of Applied Sciences. The objective was to develop a service concept to be used by the day care centre on a permanent basis.

#### Location and parties involved

The experiment was carried out in the day care centre specialising in self-expression methods which has operated for over 6 years in Vantaa. Together with two entrepreneurs, four other staff members work at the day care centre looking after 36 children from 29 families. The children are divided into five groups each consisting of 6-8 children and taken care of by a teacher of its own. The day care centre uses a variety of self-expression methods in education and care. Co-operation with parents is an important part of its everyday activities.

Home services were provided by a few students from the third biggest University of Applied Sciences in Finland. This Laurea University of Applied Sciences specialises in wellness, business skills, ICT and sustainable development. In addition to education, it is involved in regional development, research and co-operation with both the private and public sector. The practical work in the home service experiment was carried out by a few Bachelor students in Social Services from this University of Applied Sciences. On the average, it takes three and a half years to become a Bachelor of Social Services, and the studies include four training periods. The home service experiment was implemented by two third-year students, who completed an advanced training period of 8 weeks at the day care centre. Later, a second-year student would join them to carry out preliminary service mapping.

#### Mapping of needs and the starting points

The objectives of the learning network "Building support networks for the family" are to promote the well-being of families with parents working outside the home and to provide them with help in managing their everyday life. With these objectives in mind, both the promotion of co-operation between families and the development of services targeted at families have been considered important. The learning network includes actors from the third sector as well as both municipal and private service providers.

One key challenge faced by the learning network was the fact that in Finland, families with parents working outside the home still use home services on a very infrequent basis. This is often explained by poor availability of home services. In Finland, housework is traditionally something families themselves are responsible for, and on the other hand, the home is regarded as a private domain to which it is difficult to hire unknown people. Furthermore, in Finland it is relatively expensive to employ people. However, the overall price is decreased due to the tax reduction for household services, which some families may not be familiar with.

Preparations for the home service experiment at a day care centre were initiated during the spring of 2006. Parents were informed of the learning network project and the home service experiment in a parents' evening. The next step was to prepare an inquiry to the parents on what services and group activities they would be interested in. The student doing practical training at the day care centre prepared the inquiry together with the staff and drafted the summary of the consequent results.

A total of 16 families replied to the inquiry. Nearly all families were interested in occasional child care provided in the child's home or at the day care centre. Furthermore, a number of families were interested in the following services: house cleaning on a weekly basis, thorough house cleaning, children's haircut and child welfare services provided at the day care centre, and arrangement of children's parties. Some families were interested in co-operation with a flower shop nearby, repair and maintenance of clothing, shopping services and home delivery of food. The inquiry also asked whether the families would like to be involved in various group activities. Activity clubs for both parents and children turned out to be the most popular choice. Furthermore, some families were interested in e.g. flea market activities, education discussion evenings and children's activity clubs.

#### Practical arrangements of the home service experiment

One of the day care entrepreneurs, a project coordinator and the students from the Laurea University of Applied Sciences planned the service concept together during the autumn of 2006. A total of three planning meetings were held.

The students wrote an informative letter to the parents of the children two weeks before the beginning of the training period. The students introduced themselves and their services in the letter. Due to the short, seven-week duration of the experiment, the aim was to make parents oriented to the use of services beforehand.

The service selection included child care in the evenings, care of sick children, cleaning services and e.g. party arrangements. In addition to services provided at home, evening care was arranged at the day care centre on two evenings of the week. Due to the initial assumption that the demand for house cleaning will be high, a decision was made to restrict this service to one day of the week.

A list for service reservation was located in the hallway of the day care centre. Reservations for home services had to be made by the Thursday of the preceding week. An exception was the care of sick children, in which case service could be provided with one-day notice. In practice, the students adapted a relatively flexible approach to the scheduling of reservations.

Services were subject to a small charge. At the end of each month, the students submitted an invoice for the services used to the client families. Furthermore, parents were advised on how to pay the employers' contributions. Services provided during the experiment were subject to a charge because the experiment was designed to give a realistic picture of the use of such services. On the other hand, the price was kept to a minimum because of the assumption that the short duration of the experiment makes it more difficult for the families to utilise the tax reduction for household services. In the future, prices should be high enough to generate a reasonable profit.

#### Implementation of the home service experiment

The total duration of the service experiment was seven weeks. A total of ten families utilised the included services. In total, families used the evening child care service on seven occasions and the care of sick children twice, while the number of families using the house cleaning service was three. The evening child care provided at Illusia Day Care Centre did not become very popular: five children attended on the first occasion and two on the second. The number of total service hours during the seven-week period amounted to 43 hours. The first week of the service experiment was spent getting to know each other without any home service orders. In practice, therefore, work was carried out during a period of six weeks.

At the end of the experiment, the students carried out an additional inquiry on the success of the experiment. A total of nine families replied to the inquiry, each of which hoped for a continuation of the services. Services were regarded as necessary, and families believed that there will be increased demand for such services once parents learn to use them. Families also hoped for a more professional provider for house cleaning services. With regard to child care, the former acquaintance of children and parents with workers through the day care centre and the resulting ease of service use were regarded as positive.

#### The home service experiment as an innovation

The experiment generated two types of innovations. On the one hand, home service provided through a day care centre is a new service type, while it also involved development work carried out by the Bachelor students in Social Services from the University of Applied Sciences during their practical training period. On the other hand co-operation between the counselling

teacher of the students and the private service provider in the development of the new service was fruitful for both parties.

#### Provision of home services through a day care centre as an innovation

On the basis of the home service experiment it can be noticed that there is demand for extensive home services, and it is easy to acquire home services from a day care centre. Parents were satisfied with the child care provider already familiar from the day care centre. This is especially important in the care of sick children. Children were pleased with the familiar child care provider working at home, and they were not confused by the different roles of the worker as an employee at the day care centre and as a home service worker.

The work requires flexibility from the worker's part, and work weeks are rather unpredictable in practice. This is why this work might also be performed on a part-time basis, e.g. while pursuing studies. Evening care service in the facilities of a day care centre might turn out to be popular, but service hours should be determined with great care: the service hours in the experiment (18:00 p.m. - 20:00 p.m.) were generally regarded as taking place too late, and some families considered the duration of the service too short. The service should probably start right after the day care centre hours, which means that children should also be offered dinner.

Families hoped for more professional house cleaning services. In practice it may be the case that the same person should not provide house cleaning services and other services. On the other hand, different tasks added variety to the work of the person providing home services. This service concept can be regarded as a competitive advantage for a company. However, it would require a slightly bigger unit than a day care centre for 30 children, or several day care units to make these services widely available and profitable for the entrepreneur.

The entrepreneurs at the day care centre in question have thought about and made calculations of the profitability of various service types. Examples of these include a full-time employee working both as a substitute and as a home service worker, a home day care provider as part of the service selection of the day care centre, an employee responsible for institutional care, and the provision of home services. After the experiment it was decided that the service will be continued by offering temporary employment services provided by an employee working on an hourly basis.

#### Development of a new service model in co-operation

The involvement of students in the development work has served as a key resource. As part of their practical training, diploma work and other theoretical studies, students have an opportunity to carry out extensive development work, which benefits both parties. On the one hand, students are provided with challenging tasks and invaluable contacts with working life,

while co-operation partners have access to additional working resources needed in development work.

From the viewpoint of the student, the development of a new operational model was a challenging task. It must be remembered that students need to be familiarised with the tasks well in advance. Eight weeks is too short a period to learn the work thoroughly. Students need to be motivated and already somehow familiar with the work area. The home service experiment was participated by two students who supported one another. One of them had a degree in practical nursing and the other had also done practical training at a day care centre before. Students need work-specific guidance provided both by the work community and the counselling teacher on a continuous basis. A number of meetings involving the responsible person at work, the teacher and the students were held before, during and after the experiment on a regular basis.

The work community should be committed to development work so that the entire work community is aware of the activities of the students and that they are not expected to perform e.g. activities normally included in practical training. The educational institution should be committed to the experiment so that the tasks involved in practical training can be redesigned to meet the needs of the experiment. In order to make the experiment successful, the counselling teacher needs more resources compared to regular training. In this case, it was the learning network project that made extra resources available. Reporting must be taken care of: students must be advised on how to prepare a report describing clearly the development work carried out. This report, which can also be published, must be available to all co-operation partners. Guidance is also needed with regard to reporting.

#### Concluding remarks

The home services provided during the experiment will continue to be available to the clients of the day care centre in question. The experiment also had wider significance. It proved in practice that there is demand for home services and that it is possible to improve their availability with the help of small innovations.

A simple reservation and invoicing system was created during the experiment, and it can be utilised when the new service concept becomes a permanent practice. The experiment generated a number of new ideas for the development of new services: would it be possible to offer these services to other families in the area as well? Or could the service concept be utilised in the care of sick school-aged children? And what kind of role could a day care centre assume as a coordinator of other family services?

It is difficult for an entrepreneur running a small day care business to make innovations and test new services alone. Co-operation with educational institution provides new opportunities for these activities. Such co-operation makes it possible to test with minimal economic risk services that may become profitable business in the long run.

The experiment provided the students from the University of Applied Sciences with experience in development work in the form of an inspiring and challenging advanced training job. From the viewpoint of the University of Applied Sciences, the integration of the pedagogical and developmental work implicit in the experiment was highly successful.

"Mom, I could be sick again, and you could go to work", stated a young girl after a day at home with home service workers. The home service experiment was thus appreciated by the child clients of the day care centre as well.

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### **3. 4. Change Agents for Work and Family – a training programme**

The good practice described in this document refers to a training programme entitled, Change Agents for Work and Family. It was implemented during the Using Learning Networks to Build a Work-Family Balance Project. Two separate training programmes were targeted at those responsible for the development of working communities, those interested in development work as well as entrepreneurs with an interest in becoming experts in the reconciliation of work and family life. The target group consisted of managers and supervisors in companies, educational institutions and other workplaces, personnel development providers, entrepreneurs, experts, association representatives and teachers.

This good practice was developed between 2005 and 2007. After the planning process in the autumn of 2005, the first training programme was launched in the spring of 2006, followed by another one in the autumn of 2006. The training programmes were carried out by the Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education, in co-operation with its extensive expert network.

The aims of the training programmes are to improve the readiness to plan and implement work-related measures in support of the reconciliation of work and family life, convey information on various aspects of the reconciliation of work and family life, produce tools and practical ideas for development work, improve the readiness to initiate various development processes, guide participants in utilising their own experience and knowledge and finally provide participants with the opportunity to develop professionally into well-being experts.

#### Development environment and involved actors

The Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education – a university continuing education, research and development organisation - served as the environment for good practice development. This organisation was also responsible for the elaboration of the objectives and contents of the study programmes. A number of researchers, instructors and other experts in the field of work and family life were involved in the implementation of these study programmes.

The person responsible for the study programmes took care of planning, the recruitment of instructors, communication with both instructors and students, and practical arrangements. This person was expected to have experience in education, planning and various aspects of the reconciliation of work and family life. The ability to access extensive networks to be utilised in the recruitment of the numerous experts for the training programme was viewed as beneficial, the implementation of such a programme requiring a number of experts in the field of work and family life: researchers, developers and instructors.

Instructors and experts in charge of individual development assignments should have practical experience and a research background in the development of working communities, in addition to their individual areas of expertise. Closely connected to the students' own workplaces, their individual development assignments deal with arrangements and innovations related to the reconciliation of work and family life in their home organisations.

Some of the students selected for these two training programmes were already involved in the Using Learning Networks to Build a Work-Family Balance project, while some came from outside the project. Both training programmes were to have a maximum of 25 students. The programmes were advertised on the project home page and in a few newspapers. Internally, the training programme was notified at events held within the project's three learning networks, as well as at the initial seminar and open forums.

Each candidate was accepted individually onto the programmes. Training was free of charge to the participants, but when accepting registrations, candidates were informed of the importance of commitment and the penalty fee resulting from any failure to inform the organiser of a cancellation. A total of 24 candidates registered for the first programme, while the number of registrants for the second programme was 14. Most of the participants were company employees and entrepreneurs, but there were also participants from public administration as well as some people beginning or returning from family leave and a few unemployed people planning to start a corresponding education service company.

#### Structure of the training programme

The training programme is designed to provide training in the development of working communities, and aims to improve the readiness of the participating supervisors, personnel developers, consultants and those responsible for well-being at work to plan and initiate various development measures and practices in support of the reconciliation of work and family life in their home organisations, with the ultimate goal of making working communities more family-friendly. The training programme is designed to train work/family life change agents for organisations.

The implementation of the study programmes includes a pre-assignment, contact teaching days and workshops; a total of 10 contact teaching days, work in pairs and small groups, work in a web environment (Moodle) and individual development assignments and corresponding feedback.

The themes of the first training programme:

1. Reconciliation of work and family life
2. How to generate and control change, well-being in change
3. Role and skills of a change agent
4. Family – different family stages, diversity of families and management of everyday life

5. Work – stages of career, diversity of careers, flexible working hours and organisation
6. Well-being at work and in other areas of life
7. Work legislation and equality
8. Family-friendly organisational culture
9. Future challenges facing the reconciliation of work and family life
10. Presentation of development assignments.

## Process

A total of two training programmes were carried out during the project. The first served as a pilot programme, and the second was developed further on the basis of the experiences and feedback gained from the first programme. The first programme also included an extensive evaluation process. Feedback on each day of the course was gathered using a form with both open and closed questions. Feedback on the first training programme was gathered by means of an extensive interim and final evaluation.

## Progress of the process (the first training programme)

*Planning the programme* – autumn 2005: Selection of the person responsible for the study programme, elaboration of the objectives and contents of the study programme and communication activities.

*Implementation of the programme* – spring 2006: Procurement of instructors, communication and marketing activities, selection of participants for the first training programme, launch of the training programme, start of the work on the development assignment, consultant support, individual work on the development assignment and interim evaluation.

*Implementation and ending of the programme* – autumn 2006: Contact teaching days continued, work on development assignments, development assignments completed, ending of the programme and final evaluation of the programme.

## Results

During the training programme, participants completed a development assignment related to their work or personal expertise. Although these programmes did not provide professional qualifications, they increased their participants' readiness to initiate and implement change processes and interventions in workplaces, and work towards the reconciliation of work and family life in various contexts. The development assignments completed in the first programme were related e.g. to the following topics:

- Well-being at work – the reconciliation of work and family life as a business success factor

- The importance of social support networks: adult students with families
- A time management coach as a change agent in the reconciliation of work and family life
- Time thieves in a hospital automation laboratory
- A written checklist for parents returning to work
- Orientation practices at a nursery school
- Laboratory facilities of a joint emergency hospital unit – facility design and well-being at work
- Reconciliation of work and family life in light of research and three thematic interviews
- Issues related to the reconciliation of work and family life from the viewpoint of Ministry employees aged over 55

All those who completed the programme were awarded a certificate. About half of the students on the first programme graduated, by the due date. And almost all the rest at a later date. In the final evaluation, students were asked about their expectations with respect to their studies and how well these were fulfilled. Their responses focused on the dissemination of information (factual and theoretical information), interaction (networking and sharing of knowledge), the student himself/herself (self-development and impact on everyday routines) and working life (impact on routine working life and benefits to the workplace). Nearly all respondents' expectations were met either partly or totally. The feedback received also indicates that participants learned to identify their own values and control their own time management. Furthermore, the development assignment was regarded as useful, and the programme was considered diverse and successful.

How to make this good practice permanent?

The future aim is to organise corresponding training programmes as part of university continuing education services. In future, such study programmes will be subject to a charge and probably carried out over a shorter period of time. It will also be possible to modularise the programme so as to integrate its various modules into separate training programmes such as those dealing with management, well-being at work and the development of working communities.

In the future, programmes and tailored, module-based courses will provide education for future change agents who will work in different environments to make working communities more family-friendly.

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## POLAND

### 3.5. Methodology of family life and career balancing training for the entire family based on flexible work solutions

This good practice is a training model for young parents who can participate in the training course as a family (mother, father, and child(ren)). The training shows how to balance the professional career with the family life using flexible work solutions. The participants of the training are persons who need the family-career balance most, i.e. working parents of small children. Because of the need to ensure care of children, the participants are divided into two groups (mothers and fathers). When one of the parents is attending a training course, the other parent stays with their child(ren). The training course covers a 3-day cycle (4 hours of lectures a day for each group) from Friday to Sunday outside the place of residence of the participants.

The described training methodology is a Gender Mainstreaming tool, as it affects the equal chances of men and women in the labour market and in private life.

Such training courses:

- increase the awareness and knowledge of flexible labour solutions and methods to balance the professional career and family life
- facilitate the return of parents to work after a maternity or paternity leave
- present and promote one of the ways to ensure appropriate care of children
- overcome stereotypes concerning the role of a woman in professional and family life.

The innovativeness and usefulness of the Good Practice

The described training model takes into account the need to ensure that a child/children are appropriately looked after when a parent is participating in the training course. Training courses, especially those that last several days, are a heavy burden for the parents of a small child. The good practice prepared by the Partnership is a reply to the lack of comprehensive and complete solutions that would enable persons with small children who are interested in acquiring new skills and knowledge to participate in training courses. The organisational structure of the training assumes an equal distribution of duties between the parents, and the training activities cover the entire family.

The location of a training course outside the place of residence of the beneficiaries, in a leisure centre, takes into account the need to leave behind all the everyday problems and duties, ensures appropriate concentration on the subject issues of the training course, ensures a good time connected with

care of the child/children (the resort is adapted to the needs of parents and children), and supports the involvement of men in family duties.

The training model can be addressed to persons who look after dependant persons, including small children, disabled persons or elderly people, and can also be used by all employees who want to take advantage of flexible work. Another group of beneficiaries includes employers from all the sectors in the labour market – private companies, public administration of any level and non-governmental organisations.

The prepared methodology can be implemented by any institutions that arrange training courses, employee associations, trade unions, self-government bodies and institutions that promote equal opportunities and treatment of men and women in the labour market. The primary objective of the described training is to promote methods that can enable young parents to balance their professional careers and family life. In addition to the transfer of knowledge of flexible work advantages, the method of organisation of the training should reinforce family integration and ease sharing the childcare duties between the parents. Furthermore, such organisation of the training promotes the partnership family model and the increased commitment of fathers to childcare.

#### The environment of the Good Practice

Currently, the social practice causes that persons who give up work to start a maternity or post-maternity leave are practically eliminated from the labour market. Even in cases when a childcare leave is only temporary, it creates serious problems to return to the previous job because the professional skills of an employee become outdated. For persons who combine the fulfilment of their employee and parenthood duties, the focus on their professional career has frequently a negative impact on performance of their family roles. The consequences of an imbalance between the family life and work may include: a decision to defer the first birth, a lower quality of work, stress, frustrations, conflicts and a lack of satisfaction from work.

The prepared training methodology is to strengthen the position of young parents in the labour market by providing them with necessary legal, economic and psychological knowledge and practical skills in the area of flexible work – to ensure that they do not give up their work and do not neglect their family duties. Training participants gain necessary knowledge to assess and select the appropriate form of flexible work to ensure a better balance between their time allocated to work and their family situation. In addition, communications and negotiation skills they acquire during the training will make possible for them to convince their employers of benefits from flexible work to be gained by their companies. The flexible work training methodology allows a promotion of flexible forms of employment, in particular those allowing combination of family life and professional career. And this should alleviate employers' fears about hiring parents with small children.

At the preliminary stage of the process to work out the good practice, a questionnaire survey was carried out concerning the flexible work knowledge and possible applications. The survey covered over 300 employees (parents of children under 7) and 500 employers. The results validated the thesis that flexible work has few live applications, which is mainly an outcome of the lack of practical information about it and the ignorance of labour law. After that, the initial methodology of training to promote flexible work knowledge was verified. The process to refine the good practice started in June and ended in December 2006. During that period, 10 training courses were held with the same team of trainers. In the process: the pilot training programme was verified, the training materials were prepared and the training contents and materials were reviewed. After each training course, its participants filled a questionnaire to assess the professional and organisational aspects of the training, trainers and usefulness of the contents provided. The facilitators have considered the organisational and curriculum comments to finally adjust the methodology to the needs of the target group of beneficiaries.

#### Presentation of the Good Practice

Players: Good Practice involves 3 groups of players:

1. Organisers: from the training organisation perspective it is crucial to attract appropriate persons, who will take care of the organisational aspects of the training: recruitment of participants, organisation of training facilities, reproduction of training materials, and evaluation of training courses;
2. Trainers: appropriate lecturers in particular subject areas should be recruited. To ensure top quality of a training course, trainers should be experts in relevant areas with a few years of trainer experience;
3. Participants: presented training courses are targeted at working parents (with children under 7), people expecting a baby (pregnant women and their partners) and parents on maternity or post-maternity leave. Both parents together with their child/children can enrol for a training course.

#### Structure

The detailed scope of the training has been prepared by experts with multi-year experience in facilitating flexible work training courses. The curriculum includes 3 theme blocks, conducted by 3 trainers. On each training day, individual blocks are delivered consecutively for the first and second group. The theme blocks are based on the following assumptions:

1. To provide the training participants with the knowledge necessary to use flexible work solutions
  - to convince employers that flexible work solutions are justified and beneficial and
  - to work out general principles of implementation of flexible work and specific activities to be carried out during such implementation

2. To present the current legal regulations in the scope of flexible work to the participants
  - to present flexible forms of employment as set forth in the Labour Code (contract of employment for a definite period, contract of replacement of an absent employee, part-time employment, lease of an employee), other forms
  - telework, work via a temporary labour agency
  - flexible organisation of working time with the use of various work timing systems (equivalent, interrupted, task implementation working time systems, the short working week systems and the so-called weekend work system)
  - labour law status of an employee who has family duties
3. To train practical skills that would be useful in flexible work applications
  - to elaborate the competence profile by specifying the required and desired attributes of persons employed under flexible work schemes
  - to learn techniques of influence that are needed to convince employers of benefits from the implementation of flexible work by their organisations
  - to learn work time planning principles
  - to verify the principles of shared childcare and upbringing by both parents.

#### Process, results and mainstreaming

The described good practice can be divided into the following stages:  
 Stage 1 – recruitment, Stage 2 – class preparation and Stage 3 – evaluation.

Participants were recruited in the course of a promotional campaign that included distribution of leaflets, posters (put up mainly at places frequented by parents, e.g. nursery schools, children's garment and toy shops, play centres, clinics and counselling centres for women), contacts with future parents at antenatal classes, contacts at the Municipal Family Support Centre, as well as via other institutions that could assist in recruitment of prospective participants of the project and general information in the media and on the project's website.

The objective of the tested training methodology is to:

- raise the participants' awareness and knowledge of flexible work solutions that make easier to combine their professional careers and family life;
- make the people aware of the need to carry out such training courses;
- promote and to increase the frequency of use of flexible work solutions among the people who have problems to balance their professional careers and family life;
- provide practical knowledge to help select appropriate flexible work solutions and convince the employer that such solutions are significant;
- provide support to determine one's own needs and difficulties in connection with different social roles: parent and employee;
- provide support to indicate the optimum time of return of a mother to the labour market after a parenthood leave (change of the scope of duties of both parents, definition of rules of shared childcare and upbringing);
- overcome stereotypes relating to the role of a woman in the professional and private life.

Under the Project, the plan of promotion of the good practice has been prepared. The good practice will be implemented by horizontal and vertical actions. Vertical actions will be aimed at representatives of legislative bodies, and their main goal will be to encourage appropriate changes in the legal systems to improve the effectiveness of use of flexible work. Horizontal activities will comprise, first of all, vigorous promotions of particular components of the outcome among employees, employers, associations of employers, trade unions, public employment services and training institutions.

The following promotion channels will be used: press releases, publications (guides), conferences, seminars and websites.

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### **3.6. Balanced professional activation – integration and reintegration with the labour market of employees with dependents**

The described practice is tested and prepared for implementation under Theme G: “Reconciling family and professional life, as well as reintegration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services”, operating program – Community Initiative EQUAL Program for Poland in the years 2004-2006. Having regard to the above, design of this practice has relied on the assumption that the solutions developed are to apply concurrently to a number of areas of social life: to the labour market in terms of services of labour market institutions, to the social assistance system and management standards in enterprises in terms of implementation of flexible solutions in the area of work organisation and support services for employees with dependents.

Model characteristics of the described practice have been worked out within the framework of testing innovative advisory and training solutions by labour market institutions with respect to parents remaining on child care leaves and may apply across all the institutions offering services or support to persons experiencing difficulties in reconciling family and professional life as a result of looking after their dependents.

The practice will be deemed good and worthy of dissemination owing to an innovative combination of advisory and training services provided by a number of institutions within a single activation process and to a combination of a number of advisory areas within a single methodology, namely career advice services, personnel consulting and psychological and family counseling. Previous practices associated with professional activation of persons with dependents do not offer the advantages of the described practice because:

- They are selective in concentrating only on one aspect of the problem associated, in most cases, with the profiled activity of the institution providing the service – family counseling institutions associated with financial support provide their services in isolation from the services of labour market institutions. As a result, financial assistance generates only ad hoc effects. Labour market institutions do not incorporate family aspects in their services. Consequently, training or employment offers are not customized to the needs of that client group and, finally, personnel consulting agencies focus on the entrepreneur while overlooking the individual needs of the employee. As a result, they fail to implement flexible forms of employment.
- Are inaccessible because the institutions, when focusing on a specific client group, overlook the problem of reconciliation of professional and family life by incorporating in the clients' qualifications non-substantial formal criteria (status of the unemployed person, income level, household size, etc.).
- Lack consistency, as professional activation services provided by various institutions are not coordinated and have no common standard. When seeking an advisory service from different institutions, each time the Client

obtains it from scratch. Consequently, the same stages of activation are reiterated on multiple occasions and the client's advancement is limited to the general level of preliminary services.

The presented good practice relies on organisational and cooperative solutions overcoming the identified barriers, making it an innovative practice that is worthy of dissemination. The practice is based on the activation balancing priority that is reconciliation of professional and family life in integration and reintegration with the labour market of employees with dependents. A comprehensive professional activation service assumes cooperation of various institutions within the cooperative model under which institutions are responsible for individual stages of activation and specialize in them. Thus, consistency of provided services and their accessibility are enhanced.

#### Operating environment of the Good Practice

The described practice is being implemented in the years 2006-2007 in the Podlaskie province, with a special emphasis on residents of the city of Białystok. The offer targets, first of all, persons on parental leaves (either maternity or child care leaves) within the city's boundaries, which is related to the location of advisory services, training rooms and the child-minding room. Employed parents on maternity or child care leaves are the clients of the model, as pointed out earlier, under the described practice although the universal aspect of that practice enables application of the model solutions also with respect to other employed persons with dependents (disabled, ill or elderly individuals) who must reconcile their professional life with ever growing demands of family life. Under the described practice, a group of clients is composed of 150 mothers retained pursuant to employment contracts who, while being on parental leaves, take up training and seek advisory services to prevent their professional qualifications from becoming obsolete as a result of lengthy absence from work.

The purpose of the described project is to provide advisory and training support to parents so that they do not lose their professional qualifications or competencies as employees when on parental leaves lasting from many months to a few years. The key aspect of the entire advisory and training process is the employer's participation in that practice as the party giving an opinion and suggesting directions for advancing the employees' education or professional career path during parental leaves. In this sense, employers are both clients and participants of the implemented practice.

Under the practice, the process of advisory and training service is implemented by Białostocka Fundacja Kształcenie Kadr (professional guidance and personnel consulting) and Zakład Doskonalenia Zawodowego in Białystoku (professional training). The first participant is a non-governmental organisation, a market institution specializing in coordination and implementation of regional projects targeting unemployed persons and persons threatened with unemployment across all the districts of the Podlaskie province. The second key participant of the practice is a training

institution with a track record in continuous education of adults, engaged in execution of training projects targeting persons threatened with unemployment via a network of district professional education centres. Other participants of the practice include partners of the "Flexible Employee – Partner Family" project executed within the framework of Community initiative EQUAL, i.e. Wyższa Szkoła Ekonomiczna w Białymstoku (Białystok School of Economics) and Izba Przemysłowo Handlowa w Białymstoku (Białystok Chamber of Commerce and Industry).

The purpose of the pursued practice includes both the ad hoc impact associated with improvement of clients' professional situation and empirical verification of model solutions prepared for implementation across a number of provinces within the framework of national partnership. In the first aspect, effectiveness of the practice will be measured by the rate of the clients' successful return to work after the end of the child care leave. The success of that return shall be understood as keeping of the job and further professional development of the employee following the end of the parental leave. Assumptions as to effectiveness of the practice in this respect are, therefore, related to incorporation of the risk of actual loss of work or professional status which, in spite of legal solutions provided for under the Labour Code, face employees going on long-term parental leaves. In a wider context, effectiveness of the practice refers to institutional and partnership solutions, i.e. effective mainstreaming. In this dimension, it is assumed that the practice will be effective and the model positively verified if such practice is successfully implemented into the daily practice of other labour market institutions in the region and across partner provinces.

The biggest difficulty and, at the same time, challenge of mainstreaming this practice is to transpose innovative, unusual and costly methodological and administrative solutions of the practice into the daily practice of local labour market institutions, following discontinuance of external financing of that practice. Considering the issues associated with change of the social practice and difficulties with financing additional non-standard services, the mainstreaming philosophy of this practice relies on partner acceptance of the obligation to continue the practice by the institutions previously dealing with similar problem area in a random, non-systematic or occasional mode. Under that strategy, the institutions implementing the practice become users of the balanced activation model, drawing from that participation not only obligations, but also measurable benefits diagnosed by SWOT analyses for each group of potential actors.

#### Introduction of the Good Practice

The actors of the pursued practice include both clients and participants of that practice. The participants can be presented in a dramatic convention as actors of three dramas, i.e. three types of conflict situations constituting the essence of trilateral reconciliation of professional and family life, i.e. in three dimensions: Employee, Employer and Parent. In the Employee aspect,

the employed person on a child care leave is the client of the practice and the employer personifies the remaining actors, understood as a party to a dispute, and professional advisors, psychologists and trainers understood as moderators agreeing the terms of representation of the employer's and employee's needs in the training project.

In the Employer aspect, the company undergoing an organisational crisis in connection with the employee's departure on child care leave is the client of the practice. In this setting, advisory and training institutions are actors as well as other participants of the practice providing advisory services in the area of application of flexible solutions in employing such person and planning his/her training and professional development when on leave so as to minimize the employer's cost in connection with assumption by the employee of new guardianship tasks at the expense of his/her availability at work and thus avoid solutions related to temporary and, subsequently, permanent replacement of the employee on leave in the company.

In the Parent aspect, an employee going through a crisis due to experienced difficulties in reconciling new demands of family life with his/her previous professional activeness is the client. The actors in this setting include family members capable of assuming guardian roles thus reducing the employee's burden of house tasks and family psychologists and personal coaches advising on organisational and partnership solutions in families mitigating the risk of the guardian's decision to withdraw from professional life.

## Structure

The basic element of the pursued practice is the methodology of advisory/training service leveraging all the available resources of the institutions involved in its partnership aspect and incorporating, to the same extent, the professional and family dimension, problems in terms of procedures and tools applied under the methodology. That methodology is, therefore, the basic and streamlining element of the practice understood as the scheme and standard of provided services, i.e. standardised process of the practice. The basic structural factors, or resources of the practice, include:

- Professional advisors – representing the employee's needs
- Personal advisors – representing the employer's needs
- Psychologists and coaches – representing the family's needs
- Trainers – raising the employee's professional qualifications
- Lawyers and consultants – providing legal advice
- Purpose-built child-minding room – in which qualified female guardians take care of children during training sessions and
- Special advisory/diagnostic tools geared to multiple aspects of the problem (work environment, professional development and family).

Under the model result disseminated within the scope of mainstreaming activities, both advisory and organisational solutions standardised in that practice as well as resources of local institutions entering into agreement for application of the balanced model of professional activation of employees with dependents will constitute essential resources.

#### Process

An employee on parental leave (maternity or child care) is the client of the adopted practice. At the first stage, the client goes to the training institution as the person interested in undertaking free professional training during parental leave. Considering the guiding purpose of the pursued practice, namely reconciliation of professional and family life, the client is directed at the second stage to an advisory institution cooperating with the training institution. From this moment onwards, advisory and training services will intertwine and complement each other under a single advisory and training process conducted through systematic cooperation of these institutions and in the form of direct working contacts between advisors, psychologists and trainers servicing a given client. Thus, the advisory process supports and improves the training service by enhancing its accuracy and effectiveness. The client directed to the advisory institution obtains, in the first place, a professional guidance service on a group basis consisting in a diagnosis of professional predisposition in the form of questionnaires and exercises carried out in a group.

The following stage of the service involves assignment of a personal coach to the client, such coach being a professional advisor, psychologist with a track record in family counselling. During a face-to-face meeting, the coach identifies the client's personal situation, while taking into consideration, to the same extent, his/her professional and family problems. Next, the coach encourages the client to contact his/her employer and complete, as homework, jointly with the employer a questionnaire probing the employer's needs and suggestions in terms of the employee's professional education. The meeting with the employer is an opportunity to renew contacts with the employer during a lengthy leave and, most importantly, builds the climate of joint planning of the employee's future and, thus, creates conditions for committing the employer to further employment of the employee after the end of the parental leave. With the questionnaire completed by the employer, the client meets his/her coach once again face to face.

During the meeting, the professional advisor becomes familiar with the client's professional improvement needs and, on the basis of previously diagnosed professional predispositions and the employee's potential and taking into consideration the employer's expectations develops, in consultation with the client, his/her customised training profile. All such profiles are composed of thematic modules associated with professional qualifications and of additional training modules associated with social and psychological competencies enhancing the employee's qualities and his/her adaptation capabilities after resumption of work. Thus, a 100-hour customised training program is developed catering for the needs of the client

and his/her employer. In the event of inability to reconcile under a single training programme the needs of the employer and of the employee, which is usually indicative of lack of a consistent professional vision of the employee by the employer and the client, additional trilateral negotiations are held at the Consultation Point involving the employer, the employee and the coach. Following the completion of the first stage of training, the client's personal coach sums up the results of the training in the course of another advisory meeting and, depending on the arrangements with the client and identified needs designs, jointly with the client, an additional 50-hour training programme or recommends the client for implementation of flexible forms of employment.

## Results

The result of the pursued practice may be a universal model of professional activation. Such model is a flowchart of activation services incorporating a balance of professional and family life. Efficient operation of the model assumes establishment of a local coalition of institutions at the district or commune level in charge of execution of individual stages of the client's activation that have been incorporated in this model. In the cooperative context, the model describes the principles of cooperation between the institutions for the benefit of the activated client and the scope of responsibility of such institutions in terms of the model's operation and financing in the daily practice. The model will also comprise organisational recommendations for its application under specific projects financed by ESF.

The general model of balanced professional activation, in principle, is a systemic combination of standardised descriptions of subsequent stages of professional activation. The system of developed stages assumes alternative application of the model subject to the detailed characteristic of the target group. The User of the model decides about the Client's point of entry into and exit from the model depending on the type of the target group represented by it, diagnosis of his/her professional and family situation and the stage of activation (type of service), via which the Client applies to the Model.

The model of balanced professional activation is designed to reduce psychological and institutional barriers facing persons with dependents, with special emphasis on reconciliation of professional and family life. At the same time, the model is meant to provide guidance to institutions carrying out related training projects and to labour market and family assistance institutions. Such guidance will offer optimum solutions for various target groups and modes of financing activities by recommending innovative solutions whose practical verification takes place under Measure Two.

## Mainstreaming and dissemination

The basic aspect of the impact of application of the result is adoption of innovative solutions in the labour market enabling use of new (advisory and training) activation practices that, at a lower cost and more effectively, will permanently change the status of persons reconciling professional and family life in the labour market. Innovativeness of the solutions consists in establishment of a coalition of institutions operating a single activation model (process). Each of the institutions will be responsible for the designated stage of activation (type of services) specialising in this respect. The client served by the implemented activation model is handled by various institutions at subsequent levels of the advisory/training process, holding his/her own individual client card transparent to new institutions. This approach combines the know-how of all the institutions making up the coalition generating a competence synergy.

At the first stage of implementation, nationwide promotion of the Activation Model based on the local coalition of labour market institutions will be arranged. In the process, media and institutional patrons of the model will be secured, with special emphasis on government offices and ministries overseeing the operations of institutions making up the envisaged local coalition. During the second stage of implementation, measures will be taken across five regions of Poland corresponding to the area of operation of the Partners implementing the result aimed at establishment of local coalitions of labour market institutions that will use the Model.

Under local agreements, principles of cooperation and data exchange will be developed for the purposes of joint implementation of client activation paths standardised in the model, with special emphasis on having one client handled by a sequence of institutions in charge of various stages of activation. During the implementation period, training sessions for potential users of the Model and extensive involvement on the part of local government authorities being a major stakeholder of the established local coalitions are envisaged.

In order to coordinate the efforts by the institutions forming the local coalition, the launch of a dedicated website is envisaged that will facilitate communication between the institutions using the model.

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### **3.7. Family-Friendly Employer - a competition that supports the family and builds the value of the workplace**

The presented good practice refers to presenting the model covering rules for organizing the competition "Family-Friendly Employer". This competition is addressed to employers both from the public and private sphere. The competition's main idea is to promote those workplaces, which create a positive working environment, free of discriminatory influences, and in particular, those, which help their employees to balance professional and family duties. In order to differentiate the scope of relations between the employee and employer, it is proposed to organize the competition in two categories: for employers with up to 50 employees, and employers with more than 50 employees.

The competition's formula significantly influences maintenance of a sound balance between the professional and the family life of employees. The awards granted in the course of the competition serve to appreciate those workplaces, which apply in their practice such organizational solutions that support the balance between professional and family life. During the assessment procedure, particular attention is paid to organizational solutions such as the use of flexible forms of work. It has been ascertained that flexible forms of work, especially if they are adapted to the needs of an individual employee, can strongly facilitate the fulfillment of family duties by those employees, who face such obligations.

#### **Operating environment of the Good Practice**

The environment of employers, to whom the competition is addressed, is not very much interested in creating favourable conditions, allowing their employees to balance professional and family duties. This entails the need of implementing certain organizational solutions that do not translate directly into the results of the enterprise's operations. Quite to the contrary, frequently they can cause organizational difficulties in the labor process. It is worth noting that large enterprises, recognized and renowned, perceive the need to build their image on the basis of values known as "business social responsibility". In the case of smaller workplaces, and especially of the SME sector, the social influences – including factors tied to facilitating the balancing of family and professional life for employees – are treated primarily as own beliefs and attitude. This results from the lack of tools that would allow evaluation of such attitudes, as well as from the lack of presentation of the benefits stemming from pro-social attitude to employers. The proposed competition, by focusing on positive models, enables change of attitudes in this area. The evaluation tool, applied in the course of competition procedure, allows qualification of the attitudes of individual employers. The public promotion of competition's winners leads to positive perception of the selected groups of enterprises. This later translates to their perception by

potential consumers, customers and the whole community. The fact of influencing employees, by increasing their motivation for work, is also not to be forgotten.

The detailed goals of the competition

1. Promotion of those employers, who create favourable working environment, free of discriminatory influences resulting from the distinctness of employed persons, and in particular those, tied to parenthood and the resulting family obligations.
2. Popularization of mechanisms and tools associated with to the development of personnel potential and to building the employer-employee relations. This covers the implementation of, and encourages the use of flexible work schemes, specialist training in the human resources area, IT solutions linked to HR issues, training that increases qualifications of employees and other factors, which lead to development of the enterprise's employees.
3. Propagating examples of good practice in the area of employer -employee relations, through presenting innovative solutions, applied by employers.
4. Promotion and creation in the public opinion of the employer's image – as a socially responsible entrepreneur, creating jobs and hiring employees while respecting their privacy and the right to determine their own priorities, in particular those tied to family planning.

Participants

The competition is addressed to employers, whose employees are hired under regular employment contracts. It is proposed that participation in the competition should be open only to those employers, who have been running their business without interruptions for at least 12 months, counting from the date of applying for the competition. The competition is open to employers from the private, public and local government sectors, as well as to institutions and non-government organizations. In order to take into account the differences in personnel policy resulting from employment size, it is recommended to organize the competition in two categories. It is proposed to divide the employers into two groups: with up to 50 and more than 50 employees.

Structure

The main tool used in the competition's organization is the process of evaluation analysis, which allows calculation of a preliminary rating and selection of the entities that best meet the competition criteria from among all applying employers. This process is supported by the evaluation questionnaire, which contains references to criteria enabling estimation of

the degree to which the given workplace creates conditions friendly for employees' families. The form enables the presentation of a points rating, derived from the analysis of measurable factors, as well as from non-measurable areas, defined in the course of the individual assessment of the person conducting the analysis. For this reason, it is recommended that the analysis should be performed by experienced persons, who are aware of the issues vital to the functioning of enterprises. It is proposed to divide the questionnaire into 3 categories, covering indicator analysis of the relations between employer and employees, measurable indicator analysis of the structure and nature of employment and individual assessment of family-supporting solutions applied in the organization.

## Process

The model for competition organization consists of three stages:

*Stage I:* Application for the competition – Covers the employer's application for the competition, by completing an application form and delivering it to the entity organizing the competition. The application form may be submitted by the employer, an employee representing the employer, or by a social organization. In the case of application not submitted by the employer, the organizing entity asks the employer for agreement to participate in the competition.

*Stage II:* Evaluation analysis of competition participants, drawing up the ranking – Includes the evaluation analysis conducted by an external expert, who, on the basis of the evaluation form, interviews and an analysis of personnel potential conducted at the workplace, draws up a report assessing the given employer. A maximum of 100 points can be obtained in the questionnaire. The evaluation results shall be used to draw a preliminary ranking of competition participants. This will be used to recommend 5 employers from the category of up to 50 employees, and 5 employers in the category of more than 50 employees, who obtained the highest ratings, to participate in stage III of the competition.

*Stage III:* Evaluation by the competition's managing committee and nomination of winners – Competition participants, recommended during stage II, are evaluated by the members of competition's managing committee. During the competition session, experts evaluating the recommended employers shall present to managing committee members the results of their analysis, together with justification of the assessment. Following this presentation, and potential additional explanations provided by the experts, the managing committee members shall make their own assessment, granting the participants additional points, on a 0 to 50 scale (calculated as arithmetical average of points granted by individual managing committee members). The total number of points allocated by the experts as a result of their evaluation, and by the managing committee members, will constitute the final result, on the basis of which the title of "Family-Friendly Employer" would be granted in the individual categories.

Presentation of the Competition results and the conferment of titles takes place during the gala finale of the "Family-Friendly Employer" competition. Invitation to the gala event would be extended to all competition participants, the competition's charter, to important figures in the business life of the area in which the competition is organized. It is important to provide an appropriate setting for the celebration, which is meant to stress the importance of the competition, to celebrate the winners, and thus to encourage others to participate in further repetition of the competition.

## Results

The above-described actions, covering the organization of the "Family-Friendly Employer", are intended to lead to increase among the employers the motivation to exert social influence, in particular with respect to their personnel. The growing awareness of, and recognition of the value of human capital for enterprise development, shows the need to build social trust, expressed in the creation of friendly working environment. Propagation of activities tied to this competition is intended to achieve an increase in the employers' involvement in applying organizational solutions that would allow their employees to balance work and family life.

## Mainstreaming and dissemination

Due to the nature of the competition, which refers to the social aspects of the work environment, it is recommended to publicize the competition's idea as broadly as possible. To achieve this, it is necessary to establish a team that would be able to take upon itself the competition's organization. Initiation of activities connected to the competition is particularly desirable in those environments, which are dominated by the SME sector, as it requires special promotion of social attitudes in the workplace. In order to avoid pushing to the margin those workplaces, whose organization potential is smaller, it is proposed to organize the competition on a regional level, as this would make it easier to refer to the realities and specific features of smaller enterprises. Given the need to achieve the broadest possible influence, it is recommended to consider a model, where the competition would be organized on a regional level, and next the regional winners would participate in the nationwide edition.

In order for the competition to work on the regional level, it is necessary to have the required potential, to conduct the competition. Given the fact that the competition covers relations between employers and employees, it appears justified that institutions representing business circles (chambers of commerce) or employers (trade unions) should be interested in taking the role of competition coordinator. Under the optimal model, the competition would be organized by a group of partners representing various communities. It would also be desirable for the competition to be organized by an institution with nationwide regional structures, with knowledge of the local market, and having the necessary potential to organize the competition on the local level.

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### **3.8. Flexible child care institution - a model of nursery and kindergarten aligned with the needs of employed parents**

The good practice described herein is tested in the town of Białystok. It has been developed as an element of the strategy for reconciliation of job with family life by parents of children aged up to 7. The design of the practice was based on the assumption that the solutions worked out would cover several areas of the social life: labour market solutions covering labour market institutions, social aid system and corporate management standards related to the implementation of flexible work organisation forms facilitating reconciliation of business responsibilities with family duties as well as social services related to care of dependants.

The social service activities in the field of care of dependants are aimed at working out a comprehensive model of making public child care institutions more flexible. The action pattern developed is supposed to cover organizational, legal and financial issues as well as those related to the organization of care and education. The model can be applied in whole or in part to any public child care institution. It provides specific operating solutions enabling a unit to align its offer with the needs of employed parents. It is assumed that any solutions developed will take into account the specificity of nurseries and kindergartens in the field of organization, administration, finance and education. The model is an innovative project not only because it covers the public child care system, but also due to its innovative nature compared to the existing status of that area of social life.

#### **Operating environment of the Good Practice**

The good practice is a reply to parents' growing demand for more flexible child care institutions, in particular, longer hours and broader scope of care provided by public institutions, i.e. nurseries and kindergartens. From parents' point of view, service provided by child care institutions, especially nurseries and kindergartens, is a very important support for parents in reconciling job and parental functions. Their purpose is not only to assist in solving the issue of providing care to employed parents' children; they also perform essential educational and socialisation-related tasks. In Poland, just like in many other countries, number of places in child care institutions is too low compared to the demand. This is due to the fact that the said institutions (especially kindergartens) are considered to be an education system element and the fact that parents themselves attach great importance to this form of child care. Public institutions provide the greatest number of places. The private sector develops more slowly; moreover, parents prefer public institutions, mainly due to lower fees and, generally, higher quality of service provided. Local authorities are in charge of organisation and functioning of such institutions. The demand exceeds financial capacities of local governments by far.

Essential changes to the social service sector took place in Poland during the transformation. They mainly consisted in the assignment of powers of the government with respect to the organisation and financing to local governments and in the introduction of free or quasi-free market (commercialization of social services). Communities are in charge of setting up, maintaining and financing care and educational institutions such as nurseries and kindergartens. The changes to the social service system also resulted in an increase in parents' financial contributions to the institutions. It consisted in increasing fees for meals, introducing fees for services exceeding the minimum and introducing a fixed fee in order to finance the institutions. In the 1990s, the number of care and educational institutions for young children was significantly reduced and a big decrease in demand for services of such institutions reflected by a reduced number of their users was recorded.

The competition in the labour market makes employees try to adapt to employers' growing requirements. This often means not only flexible work hours or shift work, but also being at employer's disposal up to 7 days a week in extreme cases. Growing requirements of the labor market also result in increasing needs of people having children, who choose the public child care system since they have no other possibility. Ensuring good child care during parents' work requires extended opening hours of institutions and opening them on other week days, e.g. Saturday. Working parents' increased expectations are often due to their studying part time. This means that studies affect parents' needs concerning the existing public child care system.

When the project strategy was being developed, public institutions were offering their child care services in standard hours, i.e. 6:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. on work days (from Monday to Friday) in most of cases. Local government kindergartens were not providing care on holidays, i.e. Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. The survey carried out in 2006 showed that almost 20% of parents using institutional child care were ending work after 4:30 p.m. Therefore, opening hours of kindergartens and nurseries were too short for every fifth parent to collect the child themselves. This makes parents look for alternative solutions that are sometimes very onerous and often very costly. Extending opening hours of institutions is essential for this group.

The above conclusions have been confirmed by the results of the pilot survey carried out by the Białystok School of Economics in May 2005 among parents of children aged up to 7. The following factors facilitating reconciling family duties with job responsibilities were pointed out:

- good location of the kindergarten or nursery: 53.5%
- reduced fees for the kindergarten or nursery: 50.5%
- extended opening hours of the institutions: 46.5%
- possibility to bring children to the institution on Saturday or Sunday: 25.7%
- extended network of kindergartens: 9.9%
- extended network of nurseries: 2%

Please note that extension of network of public nurseries and kindergartens was only deemed an important factor supporting reconciliation of family duties with job responsibilities by less than 10% of respondents. Extended opening hours and opening them on Saturday or Sunday are more important. According to the survey carried out in May 2006 on a sample of 500 parents of children aged up to 7, only 14% of respondents stated that the institution attended by their children had extended its opening hours in the last year. Only 4% of parents surveyed stated that the nursery or the kindergarten offered care on Saturday or Sunday. Please note that even if an institution allows for it, an earlier request, a minimum number of children and additional fees are required.

The results of 2006 survey also confirm the importance of extended opening hours. 44% of respondents deemed such solution to be good and 24% - to be very good. 28% of parents deemed the opening of institutions on Saturday or Sunday to be a good solution, and 19% deemed it to be a very good solution facilitating reconciling job responsibilities with family duties.

#### Actors

The described good practice including a ready-made organizational and financial model of making public child care institutions more flexible can be used by each local government managing nurseries and kindergartens. Of course, institutions themselves may also be interested in the deployment of new forms of organization allowing for better alignment with the requirements of employed parents. Companies and institutions willing to assist their personnel in reconciling job with family duties may also be interested in this good practice; they may use the solutions developed in order to convince bodies managing public nurseries and kindergartens to make required changes to their functioning.

#### Structure and process

New, currently tested items offered by institutions mainly include extended availability consisting of:

- extended opening hours on work days, i.e. from Monday to Friday, instead of 6:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (kindergartens) or from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. (nurseries)
- providing care on Saturday on different terms in nurseries and in kindergartens. As health care institutions, nurseries may only provide care to children recorded by them.

Therefore, both nurseries are also available to parents on Saturday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. in the test period. The kindergartens testing the new offer make up a network where duties on Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. are fixed. Children attending all the seven kindergartens may be brought to the kindergarten on duty by their parents.

Activities required in order to implement the good practice worked out will include getting acquainted with the experience of the institutions testing the model in Białystok in the first place. Approval of managing bodies is required in order to promote flexibility of kindergartens and nurseries in Poland. Analyzing of parents' demand should be the first stage of preparations. It can be done by including relevant questions identifying parents' actual needs with respect to services offered by institutions in the application form completed by parents requesting a place in an institution for their children.

Our experience shows that not all of the institutions active in a given area must be available on days usually free of work, such as Saturday. The experience of the existing network of seven kindergartens in Białystok where a duty schedule aligned with parents' needs on ongoing basis is valuable. Two institutions are on duty every Saturday meeting parents' needs in full. Identification of parents' needs and alignment of availability of institutions with them are essential.

The described model of making child care institutions more flexible does not actually require any new resources nevertheless it requires reorganization of the existing ones. Increasing the number of staff may be necessary, if opening hours are extended. It is actually the only additional cost item since the cost of additional meals and other costs of feeding children in the institution will be covered by parents. Costs of additional personnel could be reduced if volunteers or interns are employed; of course, they would only be an addition to professional, skilled care providers. According to the financial standing of the institution, parents could make a greater contribution to the costs of their children's stay in extra hours, but the fee should be reasonable and affordable to parents. More than 50% of parents surveyed agree to such solution.

## Results

The good practice will result in parents' increased access to the public child care which will enable them to study, improve their skills and implement job-related plans. It will indirectly allow them to find jobs or to keep the existing ones. As a result, it will also assist them in re-integration with the society; mothers willing to resume work after maternity or child care leave are particularly concerned. Please note that the good practice will increase both parents' opportunities of social promotion. It will also enable employed parents to better perform parental tasks and to reconcile them with job responsibilities more easily. From the point of view of equality of sexes, the good practice described should have a positive effect on the equalization of women's and men's opportunities. Women, whose position on the labor market is relatively worse and who perform maternity and child care functions in the first place will be able to flexibly adapt to labor market requirements. Since job is very important to most of women, ability to reconcile family and job must be essential to them. It is not possible without partner's support reflected by a partner family model, but support from

institutions providing dependant care services are also required. Extension of opening hours of professional child care providers will not only make facing day-to-day challenges related to reconciliation of job with family duties easier, but will also enable working in flexible hours and increase women's chances of finding a job by allowing them to participate in training courses or part time studies. Men who have not been fully involved in the education of their children due to their job responsibilities so far will be able to get more involved in it.

#### Mainstreaming and dissemination

The developed good practice being a tested model of making public kindergartens and nurseries more flexible has been made a part of the strategy of dissemination of the results of the project. As a result of a national level project, the practice has been notified to the National Thematic Network; it has been appraised highly and approved for dissemination.

It will be disseminated by means of horizontal and vertical activities. Vertical activities will focus on promoting greater flexibility of institutions managed by communities. This will be supported by information meetings based mainly on experience gained at the model testing stage in Białystok.

Horizontal activities are aimed at starting nation-wide discussion on the solutions proposed and the sense of changes to the child care system. This will be done through an Internet site, conferences, seminars, press publications and dissemination of survey reports.

The institutions involved at the testing stage, i.e. seven kindergartens and two nurseries in Białystok, will play the key role in the dissemination of the good practice presented. They will participate in the dissemination and mainstreaming process mainly by sharing the unique knowledge and experience gained.

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## SPAIN

### 3.9. SOLIDARI@S

From the beginning of the 80's, there has been a massive increase in women's access to the labour market. Responding to this phenomenon, the savings bank Caja Granada has drawn up a set of measures in order to assure total equality between women and men inside their organisation, removing the obstacles for equal opportunities and favouring a balance between both private and professional lives. The range of measures includes solutions in the fields of training, promotion, working hours, leave, financial needs, prevention of labour risks, etc.

In this way, Caja Granada is tackling all discriminations based on gender, favouring women's access to all posts, boosting equal opportunities, and managing its human resources in an efficient way in preparation for the future.

This good practice has a comprehensive approach, including various aspects of the company such as recruitment, training, personnel recruitment, promotion policy, measures designed to favour the private/professional, etc, in effect at all levels within the organisation. Furthermore, these measures have been included in the trade union agreement.

It is an innovative practice, as it was the first time that such measures were adopted in the organisation. There are two main advantages to this: on the one hand, it was set up by a consensus between the employer and the Trade Unions, counting on the support of top management; on the other hand it is easy to transfer to other organisations, at a minimum cost and without the need for specific structures or additional resources.

This good practice is an overall plan for equality within the enterprise, having an effect in different fields and at all levels. It means a change in corporate and institutional practices (e.g. personnel recruitment procedures, training, more women at higher levels, etc) until the presence of women in decision-making positions reflects the overall percentage of women on the staff.

Considering its effects on the field of private/professional balance, we can highlight the following measures:

#### 1. Prevention of risks related to work

To ensure the security and health of pregnant workers, and although all jobs are already evaluated, women may ask for a specific evaluation of their position within one month from the request.

2. Improvements to the general law and the trade union agreement: Equal rights for legal couples than for married couples. Four days for birth, adoption or reception of children. If there is the need for a trip of more than

75km, the permit will be of five days, two working days for passing, accident or severe illness or hospitalization of his/her spouse or legal couple or up to second degree relatives and one day for marriage of up to second degree relatives.

3. Improvements to the law 39/99 to foster work-life reconciliation of working people:

- To extend maternity leave for 14 days more, the right to reduce working time for one hour (or twice half-an-hour) for breastfeeding till the child is 9 months old. This permit can be shifted according to the demand of the beneficiary.
- Reduction of one hour at the beginning of the day till the child is 12 months old.
- Reduction of two hours at the beginning of the working day till the child is 6 months old
- Up to 14 additional days to the maternity leave. This can be used by the mother or the father in case that both are working.
- To recognise the right to breastfeeding not as a mother's right, but as a right given to the child. This means it will be according to the number of children in case of multiple births.

4. Substitution of maternity leaves

The leaves due to any of the following reasons will be subject to substitution for the whole period by interim contracts: Maternity leave (included the 14 extra days), breastfeeding and non-paid leaves and times-off for child care.

5. Non-paid leaves

Non-paid leaves will be given in specific circumstances duly certified, such as for the complete physical and mental recovering in case of passing of his/her spouse, couple or child, to care about his/her spouse, couple or relatives up the second degree in case of illness or recovering, to prepare for internal competitive examinations, to prepare for exams or PhD and for other cases and circumstances of special interest. At the demand of the beneficiary, financial obligations with the institution (credits, mortgages, etc.) will be suspended during this period.

6. Grants for kindergarten and training

Grants for kindergartens/nurseries for children from 0-3 years of age: Gourmet check, grants for education of children between 3 and 25 years of age, grants for education of disabled children without limit of age and loans at 0% for employees whose children have to stay away from home due to studies.

7. Transfer due to illness of relatives and resettlement

Illness or disability with need for treatment of first degree (max.5,0 points).If the relative lives with the applicant: 0,5, if the time for transfer to the centre for treatment is > 60': 0,5 and if the frequency of the treatment is > 2 times a week: 0,5. Resettlement (máx.4 points). For each year that married or legal

couples live separate because of jobs of more than 60 km of distance: 0,3 for each family member: 0,3 and if the earnings of the family are < 30.000 euros per year: 0,3.

#### 8. Transfers due to gender violence

There is no need for a vacant at destination. Those workers who have suffered from gender violence, and who ask for a transfer to another town, will be immediately attended, being able to return to their usual place of work once the danger has disappeared.

#### 9. Caja Solidaria

The aim is to favour participation in all activities of Caja Granada which for certain reasons, are carried out in non-working hours (training, work meetings, etc.) in equal opportunities for female and male employees in charge of children or dependant persons, so as to be able to reconcile family and work life. The beneficiaries are all employees who want to participate on a voluntary basis, with a monthly contribution of 3€ + 2€ per beneficiary. Functioning trough financial support of 50% of the costs related to care of dependant people at home or at legal centres (kindergartens, day-care centres, etc.)

#### 10. Leisure activities

Carrying out of leisure activities on bank holidays and short holidays in educational centers while parents are working. The beneficiaries are children of employees. The activities are financed through Caja Solidaria.

### Operating environment of the Good Practice

The Good Practice is developed at all levels and all territories of the organisation. For its success, it is essential to count on the support and the participation of all responsible persons, not only of the department for human resources. Its development is permanent and for all employees.

The aims are to eliminate any kind of inequality between women and men within the organisation, by introducing positive measures that allow to overcome the existing attitudes and stereotypes that represent obstacles to equal opportunities for women, to eliminate all obstacles that prevent women from accessing certain jobs in equal conditions to men (higher level positions, specific professional cathegories) and to give women opportunities to situate themselves on a real equal basis regarding men.

For drawing up these measures, a specific Committee was created, composed by women of all levels within the organisation, and supported by the department for human resources. In order to take into account the beneficiaries needs and demands, a previous diagnosis was carried out to:

- identify unequal situations based on gender.
- identify the major problems and set priorities in order to solve them.
- demonstrate the need for positive actions within the organisation.
- set a starting point for future comparisons and analysis.

- identify the needs for training and career development of the employees.
- know the potential of the staff.

In this diagnosis, the following strong and weak points were stressed: Women hold mostly administrative positions (93,8% of female employees), the lack of women in managing positions, most of all in director and coordinator positions (4,6% of female employees), the youth of female employees in comparison to male employees (62,2% of women are under 30 years of age vs 27,2% of men), the high educational level of upcoming generations, hence the women who are entering labour market during the last years and the high level of interest towards continuing training shown by women.

Besides this, we found the usual trite and stereotypes such as: women are more often absent from work than men, women are not interested in promotion, etc. All these trites are difficult to eliminate. For this reason the expected results were at long term.

In order to measure these results, quantity indicators were established such as n° of women in higher and intermediate managing positions, n° of women at all levels of decision-making in relation with the percentage of female employees, n° of persons who apply for reconciliation measures and % of substitutions in case of maternity leaves.

Furthermore, some resistance was shown by certain sectors within the enterprise, for which these measures were seen as threats. There are besides that very specific stereotypes; the marketing department is considered as mainly a male sector. The work is associated to stereotyped male "qualities". There is no identification with women. Very often in recruitment procedures, there is a preference for male candidates.

## Introduction of the Good Practice

### Actors and structure

Actors are all employees, the structure, as well as representatives from the trade unions. The main strength is the goodwill and consciousness of all people involved. This good practice has no need for any specific structural factors for its development. Nevertheless, in this case, a Department for equal opportunities was created for the permanent follow-up. At the same time, the OPTIMA programme from the Ministry of labour and Social Affairs was used as a framework for helping enterprises and organisations to set up measures which are considered necessary to reach equality between women and men.

### Process

In the framework of European programmes for equal opportunities, the Presidency of the Andalusian regional government adopted by order of May 31<sup>st</sup> 1996, the figure of "Collaborating organisation for equal opportunities

between women and men". For its development the Instituto Andaluz de la Mujer (Regional Women's Institute) and the two major trade unions, CC.OO and U.G.T., launched the OPTIMA programme. From this point onwards, the different phases of the process of carrying out the good practice have been the following:

1. Commitment of the Presidency of Caja Granada with the programme. On August 1<sup>st</sup> 1996, the president of Caja Granada, together with the Director of the Instituto Andaluz de la Mujer, signed a collaboration agreement in order to establish measures towards equal opportunities between women and men.
2. The department for human resources, with the permanent and effective support of the presidency (specific actions to remove obstacles) creates a Committee of women in charge of drawing up possible measures within the organisation.
3. The work of this Committee is supported by the trade unions and the structure of the organisation.
4. Training actions are undertaken for the whole of the staff, specially for those persons in higher positions to reach a change in mentalities and attitudes.
5. The agreed measures are carried out. There is a follow-up and evaluation. Proposals for improvement are also made. The initial Committee turns into the department for equal opportunities. Its role is the follow-up and evaluation of the results and the aims, and the proposal of new and better measures.

## Results

The results are clear at the light of the quantitative results according to the indicators mentioned above. There is an increasing number of women in higher positions since these measures have been carried out (twice as high as in the beginning). The percent of substitutions due to maternal leaves is of a 100%. The number of persons applying for reconciliation measures is growing. But we can also highlight qualitative results, as shown by a recent study on labour atmosphere and work satisfaction:

- People think that the measures concerning reconciliation have had a positive impact on their lives, favouring work-life balance.
- There is a greater sense of belonging to the organisation, as people think the enterprise gives response to their needs and demands.
- People apply for reconciliation measures in a very natural way, seeing them as a right, not as a favor. Measures are considered something usual, which is integrated in the daily life of the enterprise, both by the beneficiaries as well as the persons who give authorisation.
- There is a greater motivation among employees.

## Mainstreaming and dissemination

In this case, the good practice has not been a pilot project, but has been developed at all levels and for all employees from the very beginning. There is no need for transfer inside the organisation.

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### 3.10. Residence for the elderly Fuente Salinas - reconciliation measures in quality management

The good practice consists of a favourable work culture regarding the balance between private and professional lives within the care services sector for dependent people, more specifically for elderly people. It is about the specific organisation of working hours for the employees in old people's homes in order to allow them reconcile their professional life with their personal and family life.

The organisation in this case is not easy, as we are talking about shift work, where elderly dependent persons with specific needs to attend are being cared for. These people need almost permanent attention and are very sensitive to changes in schedules, staff, etc. This new organisation of working hours has to take into account these specific needs and respect schedules, rhythms and preferences of the elderly. On the other hand, the employees also need to balance their professional life with their personal and family life. In this sense, working hours need to be organised in such a way as to satisfy the needs of both the employees and the clients.

In this case, the good practice is different from the usual organising systems of working hours within enterprises of the same sector (e.g. the anti-stress system in hospitals), because the need was felt to establish a distinct system, adapted to the needs of both the employees and the clients, focusing on a more personal approach towards both parties. This means that no standard models have been adopted. Alternatively, the working hours have not only been organised in terms of the needs of the enterprise – in this case the needs of the dependent persons - but also in terms of the needs for reconciliation of the employees.

This system may be used by other enterprises or organisations with similar characteristics - shift work and care services to dependent people – but could equally be used in cases of goods manufacturing. This implies a common needs' analysis of the people involved, and an organisation of timetables according to the results of the analysis.

#### Operating environment of Good Practice

As mentioned above, this good practice has been developed in the field of care services for dependent people and consists of a favourable work culture towards the balance between professional and private lives. Specifically, this has been implemented within an old people's home. Its implementation is permanent and it is directed towards the whole staff, although more specifically for Geriatric Auxiliary Nurses who have to work shifts.

The project comes from a quality management improvement plan promoted by the management team and the Personnel Department, with the

professional support of a quality consultant. The aim of the quality management plan is to improve the services offered to the residents. One way to achieve this is by means of a better care service as a result of greater-motivated personnel. This means that another aim was to have a common benefit for both personnel and residents.

The needs of the beneficiaries are taken into account by the fact that they are directly participating in the analysis and identification of their needs, as well as drawing-up proposals on timetable organisation and later on measures for improvement. This has generated great expectations and at the same time some fears concerning the necessary adaptations for change. The main doubt was to know if it would be possible to match both the needs of the elderly people and the ones of the staff.

The way to measure the effectiveness is through quality indicators, more specifically through the use of certain formats to evaluate the level of satisfaction of the residents and the staff. This evaluation is done by the person responsible for personnel, with the support of the consultant.

The main obstacle comes from the frequent changes in the staff, according to the needs for care. The profile of the staff depends on the number of elderly people and their level of dependence. The more residents there are, and the higher their level of dependency, the more staff with specific skills for their care is required, and vice versa. This implies frequent readjustments of working schedules.

#### Stakeholders

The stakeholders who participate in good practice are the management team, the Human Resources Manager, and the staff, above all the Geriatric Auxiliary Nurses (the duty nurse plus the auxiliaries). In addition to this, a quality adviser participates periodically as external support the development of the quality management improvement plan.

The necessary qualities that the stakeholders should have are basically the capacity for analysis and for organising work teams, looking for a balance between the needs of the staff and the ones of the residents.

#### Structure

The framework is the setting-up of a quality management improvement plan. Good practice is one of the measures within this plan. In this sense, the support of the Quality Consultant is essential in the early stages. This support may be reduced once the measures are fully integrated within the enterprise. The Human Resources Manager is also a key figure, as they are the person from the enterprise who will be in charge of implementing the plan and of doing the follow-up. In this sense we can state that human resources are a key factor to this measure. Common interest and joint work are the keys for success.

## Process

The process takes place within the quality management improvement plan. The steps are determined by the plan according to an established protocol, which has been adopted by common agreement. The different phases are:

- Definition of the Quality Management Plan (Management Team, Personnel Department, Consultant)
- Drawing-up of protocols (Personnel Department, Consultant)
- Meetings with the staff for the needs' analysis proposal making (Management Team, Staff, Personnel Department)
- Carrying-out of the measures (Management Team, Personnel Department, Staff)
- Follow-up and evaluation (Human Resources Manager, Consultant, periodic meetings with the staff)
- Readjustments of the measures according to the level of achievement and the proposals for improvement (Personnel Department, Quality Adviser).

## Results

The results are positive. The qualitative evaluations done to measure the level of satisfaction among the staff have reflected that the personnel are happy with the measures. The specific organisation of working hours serves as a useful tool to favour the balance between the private lives and professional lives of the staff, while responding at the same time to the residents' needs. A balance between the needs of the staff and the ones of the elderly has been achieved. The staff is happy with the way shifts have been organised and feels motivated and satisfied.

## Mainstreaming and dissemination

Regarding mainstreaming and dissemination, the system will be implemented within three further centres belonging to the Fuente Salinas group, these are two other old people's homes located in two major towns of Andalusia, Jaen and Almeria, and one in the Social Health Complex located in Fuente Vaqueros, Granada.

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## 4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### 4. 1. Good Practices for the reconciliation of work and family

This book is the result of extensive national and international co-operation. It is based on the urge to understand the challenges and practices related to the reconciliation of work and family life better, taking account of different socio-cultural circumstances. From this, the need emerged to examine the initial circumstances in each development partnership country and collect corresponding good practices related to the reconciliation of work and family life which have been identified and developed as a result of project activities. It seemed appropriate to publish the development results in the form of a publication that is easy to read and understand.

In the introductory section we defined what we mean by good practices. This definition was agreed upon by the development partners. With regard to individual projects, it encouraged us to select the most innovative models suitable for mainstreaming and replication. This selection was difficult, because the projects also provided quite a number of other good practices, which will be introduced in other contexts. As a matter of fact, the chapter dealing with good practices is the core of the book and summarises the basic concept. The 11 practices introduced in this chapter have provided new ways of tackling social problems and initiated significant changes in certain organisational practices.

Without a more detailed discussion of the reservations already presented in the early part of the book it can be said that, as a rule, the term "good practice" is used to refer to practices that contribute to socially significant positive effects. However, in the case of EQUAL projects, the definition is more exact. Community Initiatives aim to identify practices suitable for mainstreaming into more widespread use. (Hyvästä paras 2004, 13.) With regard to the practices identified within our projects implemented in the three partner countries, both of these conditions are met. They can be termed good practices with good reason.

In this publication, the good practices developed in the projects of the three participating countries have been described extensively and in detail. This detailed approach has been adopted in order to promote the mainstreaming and replication of the practices.

#### 4.1.2. Innovative Good Practices

Good Practice as a concept is context-dependent and flexible. A good practice does not need to be completely new, for its usefulness is determined in relation to existing practices. (Hyvästä paras 2004, 9.) Some of the good practices identified in the Finnish, Polish and Spanish projects are like this: they contribute to improving certain existing workplace practices. Innovative improvements in work shift planning or the documentation of unwritten practices have a crucial effect on the individual's ability to reconcile work and family life. Implemented measures have also promoted equality: during the project period, the number of women in the management of a Spanish organisation has doubled. This is just one example of the results achieved.

The basic problem with the identification of good practices is that, due to their success, they tend to be taken for granted. In many cases, such practices are adopted almost automatically. (Hyvästä paras 2004, 17.) This applies e.g. to the documentation of so-called tacit knowledge, i.e. permanent organisational practices. A superficially simple measure may have a variety of positive effects on well-being. Documented practices can be included both in a handbook for old employees and in an orientation handbook for new ones. This documentation and identification work has been carried out in the Finnish day care centre introduced in this book as well as in a number of other partner organisations within the Finnish project. Identification of good practices is also supported by an extensive evaluation system, which has received special attention within these projects. We have been collecting data on a continuous basis to support our evaluative thinking.

New, innovative practices have also been developed. Examples of these are the home service experiment carried out in Finland and the family-friendliness competition arranged in Poland. In the Finnish experiment, home services were provided through a day care centre. This made services more accessible, and thanks to a familiar service provider, parents developed a strong sense of trust in the services offered. Students from the University of Applied Sciences were provided with an opportunity to acquire meaningful work experience. The competition arranged in Poland was targeted at workplaces, and the most successful organisation in the area of family-friendliness was selected as the winner.

The starting point for good practices is their social usefulness. Administrative decisions alone are not enough to make any practices popular or lead to their dissemination. (Hyvästä paras 2004, 18.) Each of the good practices introduced in this publication have their roots in the circumstances and needs of the partner organisations participating in these projects. In some cases, the development target has been clear from the outset, while in some other organisations, the development task was determined after the initial survey carried out by the project. The good practices identified and developed within our projects belong to the sphere of social innovations, which refer to those designed to solve social problems. Social innovations

typically arise from everyday needs and as a result of co-operation (Hyvästä paras 2004, 21).

#### **4.1.3. Our Good Practices in a nutshell**

Four Finnish good practices, showing remarkable social innovativeness, were selected from a number of successful development results. The first was related to development activities carried out in a municipal day care centre. This development work was an interactive process during which a number of operations were simultaneously developed into more family-friendly ones. Various structures supporting family-friendliness were pretty much intact, but the existing good practices had not been documented. As a result, development work was manifested in the orientation file which now includes documentations of both the previously existing and new good practices identified during the process.

A total of 12 commissioned research projects on various aspects of work and family life were carried out within the learning network on work and family research. These research projects were carried out by a number of university students from different fields who were at the final stages of their studies. Research topics varied from flexible working hours to the problems related to the reconciliation of work and family life which had been faced by female entrepreneurs. The aim was to gather research information and familiarise students with different aspects of work and family life. Research topics were discovered within the learning networks of the project.

The above-mentioned provision of home services through a day care centre also turned out to be a remarkable innovation. Participating Social Services students offered home services through a private day care centre to its client families, the purpose of this experiment being to make these services more attractive to families with children. With proper supervision, this kind of service provision increased parents' trust in the services provided, making them more attractive.

A training programme entitled Change Agents for Work and Family was introduced as the last but not least of the Finnish project's innovations. The objective of the study programme was to improve the readiness to plan and implement work-related measures in support of the reconciliation of work and family. Participants included those responsible for, and interested in, working community development, and entrepreneurs. The programme touched on various topics related to the reconciliation of work and family and development work as well as discussing what it means to be a change agent. With regard to the reconciliation of work and family, students' development assignments have been very useful to their employer organisations as well as individual employees and clients.

The first Polish case involved education targeted at families with small children and thus with the most urgent need to find genuine solutions to the reconciliation of work and family life. Targeted at both parents, this

education allowed one of the parents stay at home with children during the other's classes. The objective of the education was to increase knowledge of flexible work arrangements, tackle women's stereotypical roles and increase fathers' participation in child care.

The second Polish case related to this subject matter involves an experiment designed to find ways of reconciling the employer's and the employee's needs in cases where the employee is embarking on parental leave. Correspondingly, this experiment provided free education to employees during their parental leave to help them maintain their professional skills. To enable this, child care services were provided in the education centre's facilities. The role of employers in the experiment was to provide opinions and suggestions concerning the employee's future prospects and career opportunities during his/her parental leave.

The extremely innovative idea behind the third Polish case was a competition for workplaces arranged to identify the most family-friendly workplace in the region. The competition was designed to increase employers' awareness of the human capital within their organisations and their commitment to the development of family-friendly work solutions at organisational level. Several workplaces with jobs especially challenging from the viewpoint of the reconciliation of work and family life were selected for the competition. This competition will reach its climax during a gala evening at which the award ceremony will be staged. The gala evening will be organised to emphasise the importance of the competition and to encourage people to increase the number of family-friendly practices in companies. Therefore, the aim is to promote responsible business practices and spread information on their mutual benefits to employers and employees alike.

The fourth Polish case concentrated on the development of the day care system to make it more flexible and thus increase women's opportunities to participate in working life. Much work has been done to promote gender equality in Poland. An especially important goal was to make the opening hours of day care centres more flexible in order to meet the needs of e.g. parents performing shift work. Experiences have been promising, as the description above suggests.

With regard to the Spanish case, an interesting development process was implemented in a rest home. Due to shift work, a rest home is a challenging workplace in terms of the reconciliation of work and family life. The continuous care needed by the elderly sets its own challenges. The project began to develop work shift planning to make it more individualised and flexible. The question was: how can we make schedules more suitable for everyone? The aim was to reorganise schedules to find the optimal solution for both employees and the elderly. Thanks to common discussions, quality control and inquiries, the situation was clarified and certain genuine solutions were found. The results are positive, and employees are currently satisfied with the organisation of shifts. Co-operation proved to be the key to finding the balance between the needs of employees and the elderly.

Equality questions have also served as key topics within the project implemented in Spain. In addition to other activities, this project has launched an advertising campaign to promote men's participation in

housework. The first Spanish case was devoted to finding ways to eliminate organisational practices preventing women's career development. To achieve this goal, new, positive methods were introduced to reveal existing values and stereotypes in support of inequality. In particular, the aim was to remove obstacles preventing women from being promoted to management positions. By means of analyses and comparisons, staff strengths and various needs related to education and career development were identified. Finally, an agreement specifying methods for promoting equality was signed. Consequently, the agreed methods were adopted, after which they have been subject to follow-up and evaluation. As a result, the proportion of women in higher positions has doubled compared to the initial situation. Work motivation has increased due to the organisation's responsiveness to the needs of its employees. The number of people subject to various flexible arrangements has increased and people find that the methods for reconciling work and family life have had a positive effect on their lives.

Occasionally, the development of good practices has proceeded rather slowly, and sometimes the process has even seemed chaotic. Are we achieving anything? All is well that ends well. In the midst of everyday life, little weekly and monthly steps forward may occasionally remain unnoticed, but in retrospect the results are clearly visible. Many significant good practices have been developed and our partner organisations are eager to spread information about the development work carried out. The continuity of good practices in these organisations seems assured, for in many some of the good practices developed within our project have already become a permanent part of everyday routines.

#### **4.1.4. Future perspectives**

The objective of the European Union (EU) is to make the good practices identified and developed within the projects more widely available for their application. The aim is to create new solutions for national labour market, industrial and educational policies (Hyvästä paras 2004).

This is a crucial aspect worth bearing in mind. We have already carried out this dissemination work within our individual national projects, and are currently doing so within our international co-operation network. This very publication is a good example of such work. May it serve as a starting point for the dissemination of models and practices in everyday life!

Full-scale dissemination of the new practices can be witnessed only in the coming years. For example, productisation processes related to various study programmes are underway. The positive attitude adopted by the participating organisations and the positive development results speak for themselves. There are already examples of the dissemination and establishment of practices in each partnership country.

Although this transnational project is about to end, co-operation will continue in the form of activities related to the dissemination and

establishment of results. It would also be interesting to gain an insight into our international partners' cases in e.g. five years' time, by means of a follow-up report. Or why not arrange an EU-wide Family-Friendly Practice Establishment Competition?

## APPENDIX 1.

### GLOSSARY

This glossary of terms related to gender and the reconciliation of professional and family life is the product of work jointly performed by the three Development Partnerships (DPs) of Finland, Poland and Spain within the framework of the transnational project, "Time for partnership, partnership for time," within the EQUAL CI.

It provides definitions of the most common terms appearing in project products, in order to promote the better understanding of such terms. The process of forming this glossary comprised several steps. First the elaboration of a list of 20 terms by each of the three DPs, in the common working language, English. Then the selection of around 40 initial terms considered to be the most frequently used. After that, writing the definition of each term in English and reaching a consensus on the definitions and the final selection of 38 terms. At last the translation of the terms and their definitions into the partners' three languages and their adaptation to specific contexts.

Regarding the final step, we should emphasise that the partners did not aim at precisely identical definitions in all four languages. While a consensus was reached on the general definition of the terms in the English version, some adaptation was required in some cases to account for the specificity of each language as well as other issues related to the context (culture, speech etc.) so as to guarantee the perfect understanding of each term in Finland, Spain and Poland.

As an example, we refer to the term, "parenthood," which includes both parents, versus the individual terms, "motherhood," referring to the mother, and "fatherhood," referring to the father. Since the term, "parenthood," does not exist in the Spanish language, the Spanish definition differs slightly from the other languages in this respect.

We would like to give our special thanks to all who collaborated in creating this glossary.

#### *Care*

The care of dependant persons (children, the elderly, the ill, the disabled) has two aspects: a practical one consisting of a set of activities to help or support these people in their daily lives, and an emotional one through showing affection. Until now, these activities have mainly taken place within the domestic or reproductive sphere\*<sup>1</sup>, and have been carried out principally by women.

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<sup>1</sup> The asterisk indicates that the term is defined elsewhere in the glossary.

### *Discrimination*

Discrimination means the deprivation of equal rights and persecution of a person or whole social group due to its ethnic background, sexual orientation, nationality, racial or religious affiliation, political views, gender or age. It includes intentional as well as unintentional activities which lead to depriving such people of the rights and benefits which all others have. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated in a less favourable manner than others in the same circumstances. The person is judged on the account of gender, for example, and not on the basis of professional competences. Indirect discrimination occurs when legislation, policy or practices which are ostensibly neutral place a person of, say, a certain gender in an unfavourable position in comparison with the opposite gender. Gender discrimination refers to activities which deprive some of their fundamental rights and independence in political, economical, social, cultural, civil and other spheres, on account of their sex.

### *Diversity*

This refers to a varied set of characteristics – similar or different – among persons, including age, gender, race, religion, nationality, physical strength, sexual orientation, ways of thinking, educational level and all of the elements which make each person unique.

### *Employment*

An activity carried out by persons in order to produce goods and services in return for a salary. This takes place in the productive sphere\*.

### *Equal opportunities for women and men*

This refers to the lack of any sexist barriers to the participation of women and men in various spheres (economics, politics, social participation and decision-making) and activities (education, training and employment) on the basis of equality. The principle of equal treatment and opportunities for both women and men means the lack of any direct or indirect discrimination\* based on gender\*, especially relating to maternity, paternity, family duties or marital status.

### *Equal opportunities policies*

This term refers to measures and strategies aimed at balancing the participation of women and men both in the productive sphere\* and the reproductive sphere\*. These measures fix specific actions to be carried out within a specific time and are usually developed through Equality Plans at national, regional or local level.

### *Family duties*

The duties of women and men related to the attention and care\* of dependant persons (due to age, disability or illness).

### *Family friendliness*

Family friendliness means positive attitudes, due consideration and supportive policies aimed at families and their everyday lives. For example, in an organisational setting family friendliness comprises several elements: supportive management, and a flexible and positive attitude towards the family and towards the challenge of reconciling work and family life. A workplace can be considered family friendly if the people working there can successfully respond to the demands of both family and working life, and the workplace acknowledges that family responsibilities concern both men and women.

### *Flexible forms of work*

This term relates to flexible working hours as well as flexible, untypical forms of work (based on untypical employment relations). Working hours refer to the time during which an employee works in a firm or another place determined by the employer. The organisation of working hours depends on the employer. Examples of flexible working hours: compressed working time, task-based working time, individual schedule, flexible hours etc.

Flexible forms of work are most often used to define employment in unconventional ways. Examples of flexible agreements are: a fee-for-task agreement, a contract for a specific task, "zero hours" contracts ("on call arrangement"), job share, part-time work and annualised hours.

Those who have flexible forms of work are people employed by a firm on a defined time contract or in order to perform specific work, part-time workers, some categories of independent worker, temporary workers who work for several days, working from home and teleworkers etc.

### *Gender*

Gender refers to the way of understanding, perceiving and attributing certain characteristics and behaviour to women and men practised by a society and culture. This term relates to socio-cultural differences, which are taught and changeable in time and exist within the same cultural criteria as well as in different cultures (intercultural differences). The term "gender" should be distinguished from the biological differences among men and women (sex). Gender as a category for analysis (as in gender studies) deals with social-cultural identities. Areas of interest include the social and cultural roles of men and women, femininity, masculinity, equality and the fight against gender discrimination\*.

### *Gender equality*

We refer to gender equality when women and men have the same social value, equal rights and duties and when they have the same access to resources.

### *Gender mainstreaming*

This is a strategy for making the concerns and needs of women and men an integral part of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. Such a strategy would seek to promote equality between women and men, mobilising all general policies and measures for the specific purpose of achieving equality by actively and openly taking equality into account in their design, implementation and monitoring and the evaluation of their possible effects on the respective situations of women and men (gender perspective)<sup>2</sup>.

### *Household*

A household is composed of people sharing housing or a residence (a house or an apartment) and constituting an economic unit.

### *Housework*

Housework refers to the reproductive and productive work performed in households.

### *Job sharing*

An arrangement in which the duties and working hours of one post are shared between two or more employees. The salary and other benefits are shared proportionally. In most cases, each employee works on selected days of the week. All employees who work based on job sharing terms and conditions are responsible for the overall result. The advantage of job sharing lies in the possibility of enhancing the effectiveness of work and employing employees with different qualifications. This kind of untypical work could be a way of avoiding laying off workers while constituting an opportunity for men and women.

### *Labour market segregation*

This refers to the concentration of women and men in specific jobs according to gender.

- Horizontal segregation in employment and training: the concentration of women in specific jobs or studies, e.g. hair dresser, nursery, education.
- Vertical segregation in employment: the concentration and 'ghettoing' of women into low category jobs, with fewer women in executive or decision-making positions.
- Internal segregation in employment: this refers to the sharing of tasks between women and men according to the sexual division of work\* and gender roles\* within the same job category.

### *Learning*

Learning is understood as a dynamic process of interaction between the learner and his/her environment; a process in which the learner is an active subject. Learning is always related to the social and cultural context in which

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\* The asterisk indicates that the term is defined elsewhere in the glossary.

it takes place. The structure of the learning process can be characterised as cyclical, and involves active reflection on experiences, feelings and impressions. Learning creates a change in the thinking of the learner, and this change is achieved through active reflection on experiences. In a learning process, the learner creates meanings and knowledge is considered to accumulate expertise that cannot be evaluated by any external or objective (for example, "professional") criteria.

#### *Learning in networks*

Learning in networks refers to the process of learning which occurs within a network of actors interacting with one another. (See learning\* and learning networks\*)

#### *Learning networks*

Learning networks refer to networks of actors that interact with the purpose of sharing ideas and experiences. They are constructed "environments" intended for learning: organised events, seminars and workshops but also email-lists and electronic discussion groups on the internet that encourage dialogue and interaction between actors. In addition, learning networks can be considered the subjects of learning. This idea is linked to the framework of situated learning, where individual and collective learning processes are seen to complement one another. The key processes of learning networks are the principles of learning together, creating knowledge and sharing know-how.

#### *Network/networking activity*

A network is a configuration composed of a set of actors and the relations between them. Networking refers to the active use of social relations; for example, in seeking information or other resources through network relationships.

#### *Organisational culture*

Organisational culture refers to the set of values, norms, attitudes and role expectations that affect behaviour and practices in a given organisation. Some norms and values may be explicit and openly discussed while some may be implicit and "hidden". Organisational culture evolves slowly and is closely bound to the historical development of the organisation. Attempts to introduce new norms or practices and thus to evoke a change in an organisational culture are difficult, since there is often a great deal of resistance, both passive and active, to change.

#### *Parenthood*

Parenthood is the gender neutral term for childrearing activities, the most important of which seek to meet the child's emotional and physiological needs. Parenthood may be biological (genetic) in origin, but may also be social as in step-families or families with adopted children. Parenthood is also legally sanctioned, giving parents responsibilities towards their minor children that they cannot discard without prompting state intervention. Although the term has gained ground during recent years, gender neutral discourse has

not led to significant changes in the status and responsibilities accorded to mothers and fathers.

#### *Motherhood*

Motherhood refers to parenting performed by mothers and characterised by day-to-day care of the child as well as taking care of his/her psychological and emotional needs. Very often, motherhood is still emphasised at the expense of fatherhood as the primary category of parenting.

#### *Fatherhood*

Fatherhood, i.e. parenting performed by fathers, has been subject to radical change in many Western societies during recent decades. Some of the elements traditionally associated with fatherhood (authority, distance, the role of primary breadwinner in the family) have been supplanted by aspects of everyday care in which fathers are expected to take part.

#### *Part-time job*

An agreement in which, the week-long or average working time within one accounting period is less, than that of a full-time job. This form of employment enables employees to adjust their working time to their individual needs and possibilities. In many cases, a part-time job enhances one's chances to start in a new job, return to work or remain in work, especially where professional work is combined with home duties. Part-time employees should not be treated worse than full-time employees, despite the potential to diminish their pay in proportion to that of a regular post.

#### *Productive work/productive sphere*

This is work performed in the productive sphere\*. It is socially recognised, paid and valued and generates social prestige. The productive sphere is the space in which all interactions of a group take place in order to produce goods and services for consumption and exchange. Usually, these activities are termed "work" and generate an income – mainly a salary. Traditionally, such work is considered to be the prerogative of men as a result of the sexual division of work\*.

#### *Reconciliation*

An activity aimed at rendering the different spheres of life, which are apparently separate, compatible. This goes beyond the mere sharing of responsibilities, since both productive and reproductive functions, public and private space and the productive\* and reproductive sphere\* are interdependent.

#### *Reproductive work/reproductive sphere*

This refers to the sphere associated with caring for the welfare of members of a family, and thus that of society as a whole. It takes place in the reproductive sphere\*. Reproductive work has two dimensions, an economic one and an emotional one (relationships), and is essential to sustaining human life. This work is mostly invisible, undervalued, barely perceived even

by its beneficiaries and unpaid. It is also known as domestic work. The reproductive sphere includes all interactions by a group of people promoting the group's survival. It includes reproduction, upbringing, care\*, emotional support and the organisation of the home. This work is traditionally considered as being performed by women as a result of the sexual division of work\*.

#### *Sexual division of work*

The division of paid and non-paid work between women and men, both in the productive sphere\* and in the reproductive sphere\*, according to the roles traditionally allocated to women and men. Problems arise when more value is accorded to a certain kind of work than another, as in the sexual division of work. Work performed by women (in both spheres) has less economic and social value than that performed by men.

#### *Shared responsibility*

This is about equally sharing responsibilities and duties related to the domestic sphere or reproductive sphere\* of those people living together, who are at once the subjects and beneficiaries of these duties.

#### *Social role*

A social role refers to a set of behavioural expectations relating to a person in a given social position. It is a set of rights and duties resulting from occupying a social position. Every role has its own imperatives, bans and determined margin of flexibility. In contemporary society, people act in several roles. In some situations, these roles may be in conflict with one another. The number conflicts can be reduced by choosing appropriate roles.

#### *Stereotype*

A stereotype is an ideological construct which constitutes a simplified and often emotionally charged image, accepted by a person as a result of his or her own observations, the opinions of others or patterns passed down by society. Although we differentiate between negative, neutral and positive stereotypes, we most often encounter negative ones. Stereotypes are often based on insufficient and false knowledge of the world, which is bolstered by tradition and difficult to change. Stereotypes can exacerbate prejudices held with respect to any given group.

#### *Support networks*

Support networks may refer to the various people surrounding individuals or families that offer help and assistance in times of need, for example friends and relatives. They can include organisations and professionals, for example healthcare officials and representatives of social services (nursery school teachers and other day care professionals, social workers etc.). A support network is the web of actors that provides access to material and immaterial resources.

#### *Support services for families*

Support services for families refer to services offered by the state, organisations (enterprises as well as NGOs) and individual actors. Services may include material or immaterial assistance and resources needed by families in various situations. Support services may also consist of peer group activities that empower the participants rather than simply objectifying them as the recipients of help.

#### *Telework*

This constitutes working from home by means of communication technology. Telework is performed when information and communication technologies (ICTs) are applied to enable work to be performed at a distance from the place where the work results are required or work would conventionally have been done. It includes:

- Home-based telework or "telecommuting", when an employee or contractor works at home instead of travelling to an employer's or customer's premises.
- Alternating telework, when work is partly done from home and partly in the office
- Mobile telework, when executives, professionals or service staff using information and communication technologies (ICTs) deliver the results of their work "on the road," enabling them to devote more attention to customers.
- Telecentres are local offices equipped with facilities for people who prefer not to work from home who but wish to avoid the cost, time and inconvenience of commuting (a specific kind of telecentre is a telecottage which is usually organised in a cottage, unused outbuilding, sectioned classroom or traditional office.)

#### *Vocational counselling*

Vocational counselling refers to a process by which a consultant supports an individual or group of persons in their professional careers (in selecting or changing a profession, employment, educational direction and professional training). Vocational counselling takes the individual's psychophysics and life situation into consideration, as well as labour market needs.

#### *Work*

Work is the performance of any physical or mental activity aimed at satisfying the needs and demands of the productive and reproductive sphere of human life, although this term is often used as a synonym for employment and productive work\*.

#### *Work conditions*

This refers to the conditions under which work is carried out, such as hours, salary, type of contract, bonus, leave, security and health measures, promotion etc.

*Work-life balance (reconciliation of personal, family and professional life)*

This refers to the individual's experience that the different spheres (private, public, personal) of life are in balance and that s/he is able to lead a satisfying life in all of these spheres. It is also about achieving the balanced participation of women and men, both in family life and the labour market. The key term is balanced participation, which means that women and men are equally represented in the productive sphere\* and the reproductive sphere\*. Within the productive sphere\* this means introducing systems such as parental leave to care for dependant persons (children, the disabled, the elderly), as well as creating new ways of organising work in order to allow women and men to combine work with household and family duties\*. Within the reproductive sphere, we talk about shared responsibility\*.

*Work-life balance policies*

This is the set of public measures and actions tending towards the sharing of activities related to work, joint management of the home and the care of dependant persons between women and men.

## APPENDIX 2.

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