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### Project news

1. Reality check: What is going to work on national level?
2. Train-the-trainer: Swedish expertise for training institutes
3. Get EU-knowledge on fathers on paternity leave: Austria

### Our favorite web link for the autumn

Our project websites: [www.leadingfathers.info](http://www.leadingfathers.info)

## Reality check

Training men: What is going to work on national level?

**In the frame of the European project** "Breaking Patterns" a training module for future leaders has been developed about reconciliation of family and work.

In the last quarter of the EU project it is now time to implement the module in the training structures. Will the training be accepted? How will the target group react? Pilot trainings in Austria and Hungary have been testing the module and have got valuable reactions, which allowed adapting the curriculum. The next step will show how the training is taken up in real life.

These seem to be the critical points of the new training module:

- **Rationality versus emotions**

Changes of stereotypes always produce fear and hope at the same time. That mixture might bring up very intense reactions, which in leadership trainings is not easy to deal with. A two-hour-module does not allow extensive conflict resolution, but as there isn't more time available for the issue, the trainers have to cope with this task.

- **Trainer's competence**

The training module on reconciliation of family and work requires capable trainers, who have insights in the difficulties of reconciliation and also will be accepted by the participants, men and women who want to become leaders.

The concepts might be very different and the trainers should either be well integrated in the institution or be trained additionally to take over the teaching of the new module.

- **Money talks**

"You will not find trainers who will do it, unless you pay them really well", has been one of the reactions out of a partner's country. On the other hand, about 20 trainers have expressed their personal interest to take part in the upcoming train-the-trainer seminar in Austria. So, trainers will be found, no doubt, but there always should be a trainer couple, a gender duo, the testing clearly showed. Can that be managed, will it be paid?

The train-the-trainer seminar will be offered as a European module. So trainers will be able to express and exchange their fears and doubts and also find opportunities of motivation in a peer group.

Newsletter of the European Project  
Breaking Patterns

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## Save the date! 21st of Nov. 2005

Our final conference of the project Breaking Patterns awaits your participation!

### Venue:

ORF Landesstudio NÖ  
St. Pölten,  
Lower Austria

### Registration:

[office@4noel.at](mailto:office@4noel.at)  
Electronic registration will  
be available very soon on:  
[www.leadingfathers.info](http://www.leadingfathers.info)



# Parental leave: new responsibility for leaders

Leadership training will now also focus on reconciliation of family and work

*Future leaders have to acquire special skills and competences in order to fulfil their new role. As reconciliation of family and paid work gets more and more important for individuals as well as companies, institutions and organisations, leadership training has to reflect on this development.*

## Train the trainer seminar in Austria

In co-operation with the Academy of the Lower Austrian State Government a special presentation is organised for training institutions in Austria on October 20th, followed by a train-the-trainer seminar on the next day.

Maria Rigler, head of the Women's Department of the State Government, is very pleased about the positive reactions from the national level:

"The great interest for our new training module shows that our project came just at the right time. There is a need for new tools to make societal changes understandable and teachable to leaders."



*Maria Rigler  
Head of the Women's Department,  
state government Lower Austria,  
welcomes the new training module*

Men and women have to learn how to cope with reconciliation of family and work. Leaders have the responsibility to advance a family friendly atmosphere and not to repress it.

Maria Rigler: "Working with future leaders on breaking open stereotypes causes less resistance than to have to convince leaders in old traditional structures!"

The training module will be presented to delegates from training institutions of the chamber of commerce, chamber of labour, unions and political parties as well as private training institutions.

## Mentoring men in leadership

The training module is accompanied by a mentoring component, demonstrating to men in leadership training that already many men are taking the responsibility of reconciliation of family and paid work and how this is done.

Mentoring offers insights and exchange:

- How do successful leaders combine their duties for both work place and family?
- What are the success factors for leaders to foster reconciliation for men in their company, department or organisation?
- How do other men and leaders cope with arising problems concerning reconciliation?



*Christiana Weidel  
Manager of the transnational project,  
developed the idea of mentoring men in leadership*

Christiana Weidel: "Mentoring allows seeing the individual as well as the more general perspective of a problematic situation. We live in a fast changing world, leaders have to react on that and improve the conditions for their employees – every day." The mentoring procedure is explained in the training module, but mentors have to be found before, so participants can choose who suits their situation as a reflecting partner best.

## Having success in companies - with strategy

How to inform men in a company about the good things in parental fatherhood?

The project group of "Breaking Patterns" defined 7 winning steps which should lead to a sensibilised enterprise:

1. Define firstly how the goal of parental leave for men will benefit the company
2. Inform the staff how they could benefit. Use good examples  
– find people within the company and use European models for illustration
3. Deal with resistance: Listen to those who are sceptical, answer them, understanding the critical points
4. Involve staff. Find stories of life, how they could realise it, success stories from Europe
5. Support your middle management
6. Monitor the change – revisit the circle. Plan new circle, talk about it
7. Spread the information. Internally, externally and on the European level

### Tips and hints to succeed with your plan

- Start working with the boss, ask for his or her views
- Put forward negotiation and consulting
- Install a personal consultation for everyone interested in parental leave
- Train HR managers to be consultants for the employees on leave at any time
- Process of team building: good occasion for employers to formulate and find solutions
- Project meetings: involve fathers on leave
- "Mandate for action" – the more empowered employees, the more loyal to the company
- Try once a party for fathers with babies
- Team of employers should decide how to share working time between them
- Financial planning: how much will it cost the company, when a father takes a leave?



**Remember:** If the company is not prepared for fathers on paternity leave the project might end before it begun.

## Facts & figures

How to take parental leave ...

... in Austria



### Legal framework

In Austria paternal leave is ruled by a separate law act (Väter-Karenzgesetz), two other laws concern fathers and mothers. Eight weeks prior and eight weeks<sup>1</sup> after birth the maternity protection law forbids the employment of mothers. During this period the mothers get payment from health insurance substituting their regular income.

After this period either mother or father can take paternal or maternal leave till the child is 2 years old. Sharing the leave between mother and father is not obligatory. They can alternate twice; one part of the paternal/maternal leave has to be at least three months. The first time father and mother alternate, they can take one month together. Three (or six months for mother and father) months of the paternal/maternal leave can be postponed till the 7th birthday of the child.

Paternal/maternal leave is not connected to any payments; it protects employed parents against dismissal. Since 2004 fathers and mothers have also been entitled to demand part-time occupation for a minimum of three months till the 7th birthday of the child after or instead of paternal/maternal leave. They have to negotiate about the beginning, duration, and extent of the part-time occupation with their employer. They are protected against dismissal till the 4th birthday of the child.

### Child caring benefit

Child caring benefit is a family oriented benefit for employed parents as well as other parents. The father or mother gets 436€ per month till the child is 30 months old or 36 months, if mother and father apply for it alternately. Mother and father can alternate twice. The minimum period is three months. Receiving the benefit, the mother or father is not allowed to earn more than 14.600€ per year.

Statistics available refer to mothers or fathers receiving child caring benefit and not to those, who are on maternal/paternal leave. In June 2005<sup>2</sup> 3,3% of all persons receiving child caring benefit have been fathers. Regarding the age of the child this percentage varies, as the following table shows:

June 2005	Fathers		Mothers		Total	
<b>Till 1<sup>st</sup> birthday</b>	1.058	1,8%	59.022	100%	60.080	35,4%
<b>Till 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday</b>	1.498	2,1%	69.940	100%	71.438	42,1%
<b>Till 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday</b>	3.011	8,5%	35.091	100%	38.102	22,5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.567</b>	<b>3,4%</b>	<b>164.053</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>169.620</b>	<b>100%</b>

Reconciliation of family and work is mostly a female issue. The activity rate among women aged 15 to 64 is 65% in Austria<sup>3</sup>, among women aged 20 to 49 years it is 79%. 45% of all mothers aged 20 to 49 years work part-time, only 2% of men do so. 36% of mothers (but only 1% of fathers) say, they care for a child mainly or alone.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 12 weeks after a Caesarean section or twin birth.

<sup>2</sup> Source: monthly statistics of the Centre of Competence for Child Caring Benefit of the Health Insurance Company of Lower Austria)

<sup>3</sup> Source: EU Labour Force Survey, 4th quarter 2004. ;

<sup>4</sup> Source: Statistics Austria, Austrian Mikrozensus (sample survey), Sept. 2002