Parents at Work

Experiences and Learnings for the Austrian Ombud

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The Parents at Work Project as a Treasure Chest for the Ombud

• First participation in an EU-financed project as partner – challenges in project management (on competences, underlining the European Added Value,...)

• First time asking former clients of Ombud for a feedback – this initiated developing a standardized feedback for Ombud’s clients (after closing a case)

• It was more than feedback! It was like raising a treasure: Making experiences of former clients visible and using them for research

• The result – a qualitative study also including the view of employers and comparable results from Croatia – is a substantial basis for various learnings
Learnings for the Ombud – target group Parents

70 -80 annual cases at the Ombud concerning discrimination as parents =>
underreporting ist obvious, massive discrimination and longterm consequences
proven by project research =>

Need of focusing on caretakers as a vulnerable group in diverse forms:

• Rise publicity of Ombud’s service for parents:
  - spreading the parents@work-products: films in social media, brochure
  - networking with multipliers (working chamber, counselling institutions,...)
  - adding perspective of parents in public discussions

• Arguments for increase of resources for the Ombud to manage cases
Learnings for the Ombud – target group Employers

So far the Ombud has no specialized offer for employers concerning prevention of discriminating caretakers. What is needed:

• Strengthen expertise within the Ombud (interplay of labour law regulations for parents with antidiscrimination law, how to deal with critical moments,...)
• Develop a standard workshop for employers and spread it among companies
• Offer tailormade counselling and supervision for employers following the workshop or in special situations
• Rise publicity of this service among employers
Learnings for the Ombud – other target groups

• Strengthen exchange with **specialized NGOs**, who represent parents/families with progressive and alternative concepts: rainbow families, single parents,…

• Write recommendations based on parents@work-research to put pressure on **decision makers** to:
  - improve legal conditions for parents,
  - to promote a gender-fair division of care work,…

• Strengthen cooperation with **social partners** to:
  - include the needs of care workers in social and labour law negotiations
Supportive aspects of recent developments

- Increased awareness of gender-divided care work
- More public attention on careworkers' needs
- New regulations relevant for parents (e.g. home-office)
- Chance for employers to introduce good standards for parents
- Covid-19; work-life balance directive

Parents@work: Experiences and Learnings for the Austrian Ombud
Vision....

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