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UN-Decade for Women
World Conference, Copenhagen 1980

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Vienna 1980

Federal Ministry of Health
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DEVELOPMENT, INTRODUCTION AND IMPACT OF THE MOTHER & CHILD HEALTH PASSPORT IN AUSTRIA

I. Development and Background of the Project

1. Like many other things in medicine, also infant mortality has a variety of causes. Thus, it was a long way from determining that the rate of infant mortality in Austria was high as compared to other neighboring countries to realizing that Austria did not only lack modern equipment but also that Austrian women showed some reluctance to subject the very natural fact of pregnancy to permanent medical supervision.
2. Only an estimated 40% of all pregnant women received sufficient medical care. To make prenatal care more attractive, the idea of paying pregnant women a one-time cash allowance after completion of a given number of examinations was developed. In the meantime, however, pediatricians had become aware of this program and rightfully demanded that infant care should be included in it. As a result, the initial "Prenatal Care Passport" was changed into a "Mother & Child Health Passport", consisting of a two-part medical program, part one comprising prenatal care and part two dealing with medical care for the infant. The first Mother & Child Health Passport was issued in early 1974. The prerequisite to be paid out the one-time allowance of AS 8000 is the completion of four examinations during pregnancy and one checkup of the newborn during the first week after birth. Another AS 8000 are granted after proof of four examinations during the baby's first year of life.

II. Medical Program

A. Examinations during Pregnancy

3. The first physical examination of the pregnant woman - including a blood test - is done before the 16th week of pregnancy. A questionnaire to be filled out by the prospective mother includes profession, previous pregnancies, type and place of former deliveries, possible complications, weight and size of already born children. Then the prospective date of birth and the week of pregnancy must be assessed and the date of the checkup entered. This checkup as well as all follow-up examinations should include the following information: weight in kilograms, date of the fetus' first movements, circumference of the womb, state of the fundus, position of the fetus, fetal heart sounds, urine analysis, blood pressure, test of varices and edemas as well as for uterine hemorrhage, possible alcohol and nicotine consumption.
4. In addition, a certificate from a medical laboratory must be obtained covering blood group, rhesus factor, luetic reaction, hematocrit value, hemoglobine value, toxoplasmosis test. In case of rhesus incompatibility, follow-up examinations have to be carried out. The same applies if the toxoplasmosis test

showed a certain titer result. The laboratory test has to include a cytological swab and previous rhesus prophylaxis must be recorded. Past cases of rubella have to be entered. The doctor may recommend obstetrical gymnastics already at this stage.

5. The second checkup has to take place between the 17th and 20th week of pregnancy, including an internal examination, the third checkup between the 25th and 28th week and includes a blood test. Finally the fourth checkup takes place between the 35th and 38th week of pregnancy.

B. Examination of the Infant

6. The examinations of the infant must be carried out within the following time limits:

- a) one examination of the newborn during its first week of life;
- b) one examination between the 4th and 6th week;
- c) one examination between the 3rd and 5th month, another one between the 7th and 9th month as well as one examination between the 10th and 14th month of life.

7. All the above mentioned examinations are free of charge.

III. Impact and Evaluation

8. The following table shows rates of infant mortality in Austria from 1970 to 1978:

Table: Deaths within the first year of life per 1000 live births:

1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
25,9	26,1	25,2	23,8	23,5	20,5	18,2	16,8	15,0

9. This table clearly shows that in Austria infant mortality could be reduced drastically by more than 35 % in recent years. At present, about 95 % of all pregnant women participate in the Mother & Child Health Passport system and take the obligatory examinations. Since the introduction of the Mother & Child Health Passport, the number of examinations of pregnant women increased from 150,000 to more than 500,000 per year.

10. Procedures how to obtain and use the Mother & Child Health Passport are as follows: The Mother & Child Health Passport is a document obtainable by pregnant women free of charge through public health offices, hospitals outpatient departments, physicians or medical counseling centers.

IV. Costs

11. Since 1974 a total of 100,000 to 120,000 copies of the Mother & Child Health Passport were printed annually. Last year, printing costs amounted to some AS 2,600.000.

12. Expenditure for the examinations of pregnant women and infants under the Mother & Child Health Passport scheme amounts to approximately 270 million Austrian shillings per year. About 1.2 billion Austrian shillings per year are paid out for the allowances described above.

V. Outlook

13. There are plans to expand the official medical examination program by another medical checkup of the infant after its first year.

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REFUGES FOR BATTERED WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN IN VIENNA

I. Objectives

1. Violence by husbands against their wives and children is a fact that constantly worries the public. Existing welfare institutions, i.e. youth welfare offices, marriage and family counseling centers, etc. often have to deal with such cases, but are not in a capacity to help immediately and directly. What they can offer are long-term solutions to relieve existing tensions within the family but no means to avoid further use of force against these women. That means that the woman has to go back to her brutal environment and that her position does not really change. Therefore, it is an absolute necessity that battered wives and their children should be able to leave their threatened homes before any serious decisions - separation, divorce, possible settlement of the dispute, etc. - are made, as it was found that women under such emotional and physical pressure find it particularly hard to take decisions. In light of this it was important to create a place where women and their children could take refuge. Evidently, mothers should not be separated from their children, i.e. placed into different homes. International experience has shown that battered women - as soon as they are offered the concrete alternative of staying in a refuge - wish to make use of it. Wherever such institutions were set up more women came than could be accepted.

II. Location

2. Austria's two refuges are located in Vienna, the capital city counting 1.6 million inhabitants. One refuge is situated in the center of the city, while the other one lies in a suburban residential area. The refuges are also open to women from the Austrian federal provinces, who account for some 11 % of the total of persons seeking help.

III. Management

3. The refuges are run by an association founded in April 1978. The first refuge was opened in 1978 and the second one in 1980.

4. Like all such institutions, the first women's home was full from the very start and permanently filled beyond capacity since the beginning of 1979. By the end of 1979, the home had accommodated a total of 265 women and 353 children. The average number of persons staying at the refuge was 25 women and 30 to 35 children. In May 1979, the director of the Social Welfare Board, aware of the home's urgent needs, promised to support the establishment of a second refuge. The municipal councilor responsible for the social and health services also assured his support. Unfortunately, it was not possible to find a suitable building for a long time, because most of the houses missed the basic requirements: i.e. to own an integrated housefront and garden, and to be within easy reach of public transport.

5. The organizational set-up and management of both refuges fall completely within the responsibility of the women staying at the homes. The planning of the daily routine and any PR-work involved are carried out by the women and the staff members together. Each refuge has a full-time staff of 7 women, almost all of whom are trained social workers.

6. Before the opening of the first refuge, two staff members attended a practical course in a German refuge. For the rest of the staff the training consisted mainly of long term discussions and supervisory activities. The project has been supported by the Vienna Socialist Women's Movement in moral and material terms.

IV. Financing

7. The operation of the women's homes as such is financed by the Social Welfare Division of the municipal authorities of Vienna. In addition, the association receives donations which are used to help in individual cases.

V. Difficulties

8. Activities in the women's refuges showed that a large number of women had difficulties in dealing with the same authorities or professional groups that could be generalized as: courts-of-law, police departments, and physicians. In this respect it has been possible to reach concrete improvements by setting up an interdepartmental working group headed by State Secretary Johanna Dohnal. It is planned to set up similar working groups for any other complex problem areas that may arise.

VI. Generalizations

9. Violence against women can be found in a variety of cultures. It is not an individual problem and not abnormal or unusual. In the course of their lives most women experience a state of powerlessness and vulnerability. They realize that in this society women are considered as being inferior and having a lower social status than men. For these reasons, the problem of wife-beating must always be seen in connection with woman's inferior role in society.

10. The establishment of refuges for battered women and their children alone cannot solve the problem. These homes, however, can offer a realistic alternative to a large number of women. They may constitute a symbol that women are no longer helpless and that such undertakings may help to break the taboo of covering-up violence against women.

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GUIDANCE AND COUNCELLING OF WOMEN IN RURAL
DEVELOPMENT

Project: Farm Household Advisory Service in Austria

The Farm Household Advisory Service has existed in Austria since 1949.

I. Main objectives of the Farm Household Advisory Service:

- to help farmers families solve economic, human and social problems;
- to enrich the personality of farmers wives;
- to promote the acquisition of knowledge and aptitudes enabling farmers wives to participate as partners in farm management;
- to enable farmers wives to manage their household as well as possible;
- to inform the public more about farmers wives activities.

II. Fields covered by the advisory activities:

Building and living (building new houses, structural alterations, furnishing), heating, house water supply, sanitation, socio-economic problems, reorganizing farms (with a view to partly or largely earning incomes from non-agricultural sources), farm management, nutrition, planning of work and calculation of cost, providing lodgings for paying guests, calculations for farm management and housekeeping, housekeeping technique, rural cooperatives, health care, cultivation of folklore, horticulture, and projects in rural areas.

Farm Household advisers also do important work by looking after rural youth groups and by participating in vocational training of farmers wives, i.e. from apprentice to assistant and finally to graduate in rural home economics.

In order to ensure that farmers wives use efficiently and economically loans granted for investments in the farm household, in providing lodgings for guests and in the "Buschenschank" (wine tavern run by wine growers), the advisors are ordered to treat all applicants for loans as clients requiring advice.

III. Organization

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry supports and promotes the Farm Household Service by

- o financial promotion;
- o coordination of planning and implementation of advisory programmes;
- o coordination of projects for the further development and testing of new advisory methods;
- o collaboration in the extension training of advisors;
- o collaboration in the working out of auxiliary aids for advisors;
- o working out and publishing aids for advisors;
- o publication of the periodical "Foerderungsdienst" (Promotion Service);
- o collaboration with international organizations.

The advisors are employed by the Provincial Chambers of Agriculture. Each of the nine Austrian Federal Provinces is subdivided into districts. The branches of the Provincial Chambers of Agriculture are the District Chambers of Farmers, in which the advisors have their offices.

The advisor collaborates and coordinates her activities with the farmers wife, the Farmers Wives Organization, the Community and other institutions as well as with other advisory services and with the Provincial Chambers of Agriculture.

Construction, extension and furnishing of Advisory Centers

The most important activities of the Farm Household Advisory Service are generally carried out, jointly with the farmers wives and daughters in the "Farmers Wives Houses" and in the Local Advisory Centers (see project "Construction, Extension and Furnishing of Advisory Centers").

IV. Federal and regional programmes

The federal programme "Purposeful Housekeeping - a Contribution to the Achievement of the Aims in Life" is to end in 1980. The first part was concerned with economic tasks, the second part with social and cultural tasks in the household. As the subject is very large and difficult, it was necessary to spread the programme over several years. At the beginning of the programme and during its implementation the advisors were trained on federal and provincial levels and provided with the appropriate advisory aids.

Example of Planning and Implementation of a special project: Correct Nutrition for the Rural Population

A) Investigation by questionnaires on eating habits of farmers families

B) Implementation of the Special Programme

- a) Additional training of all advisors on a federal level to implement the programme, comprising systematic assistance for subsequent measures and for the transfer of information to farmers wives. Farmers wives should not only be informed on correct nutrition but also on the labour and money required for this purpose, thus conforming to one of the advisors objectives - the training of farmers wives to think in economic terms.
- b) Further training of advisors on a provincial level to acquaint them with regional requirements. Preparing courses and lectures.

C) Supporting measures

- Financial aid granted by the Federal Government and the Federal Provinces for improvements in the farm kitchen and in housekeeping technique.
- Provincial youth groups take part in a competition entitled "I cook for a week"; judging the entries and selecting the winner.

D) Evaluation

- Eating habits are very difficult to change. The Programme should be of interest not only to the farmers wife and daughter but also to all members of the farmers family.
- Good effects on school children (sandwiches).
- Excellent effects on organization of storage (deepfreeze).
- Control data on the physical condition of young men in rural areas (conscription board).
- Great interest shown for this programme by farmers wives.
- No study has so far been made to assess the success of this project.

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WOMEN AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Austria's National Machinery

1. Improvement of the social and economic status of women in Austria is recognized as a primary goal requiring cooperation of government and federal administration with interest groups representing employees and employers. Legal and other measures are deliberated in tripartite structures typical for Austria, decided by consensus and passed by Parliament. Since the beginning of industrialization at the turn of the century, these measures have been concentrated on improved working conditions for women, fewer working hours, prenatal and antenatal protective measures and regulations concerning job security, especially for women. At the same time efforts have been made to broaden vocational training opportunities, to ensure higher education and supplementary training, to extend social security benefits to include health and accident protection as well as unemployment and pension insurance. The last decade has brought strong emphasis on the equal treatment of men and women.
2. In addition to occupational associations based on voluntary membership, such as trade unions for employed persons and employers' organizations, there are legally constituted representative bodies for each sector.
3. Such bodies were originally set up by employers in the nineteenth century as Chambers of Commerce, which had general economic functions but soon came to represent the employers in their relations with workers. On the workers' side, the counterpart in the form of the Chambers of Labor was established after the end of the First World War and constitutionally founded in 1920.
4. At the present time on the employers' side there exists the Federal Chamber of Industry (Bundeswirtschaftskammer), comprising industry, trades, commerce, finance and insurance, internal and international transport. In accordance with the federal structure of Austria, there are similarly constituted Chambers of Industry in each of the nine provinces. For the agricultural sector there are Chambers of Agriculture in each province and representation at the federal level is assured by the conference of the presidents of the individual Chambers of Agriculture, a body which is voluntary and not legally established. Members of the free professions such as doctors, veterinarians, lawyers, engineers, etc. are also organized in similar bodies.
5. On the workers' side there is the Austrian Congress of the Chambers of Labor (Arbeiterkammertag), with which the individual chambers for wage and salary earners in the provinces are affiliated. In addition, there are province chambers for wage and salary earners in agriculture and forestry, which, as on the employers' side, affiliate voluntarily with a federal conference of Chambers members of governing bodies and the field of competence of all these chambers are laid down by law. All of them, in addition to other duties, have the legal right to be heard on the occasion of parliamentary consideration of government Bills or to put forward proposals on behalf of their members to the government or the legislative bodies. This legally established right of consultation is one of the most important features of the mechanics of Austrian politics, and therefore also of its social policy. In the Viennese Chamber of Labor a Women's Division has been in existence since 1920.

6. While the Chambers of Labor are legally established bodies, as described above, the trade unions are voluntary organizations of employees categorized according to vocation. There exist fifteen separate trade unions which are joined under one cover organization, the Austrian Federal Trade Unions (AFTU).

7. Cooperation between the Chambers of Labor and the trade unions is not provided for by law, but is assured by the fact that there is a relative unity of persons belonging to these bodies. On the employers' side there is close cooperation between voluntary organizations such as the Association of Austrian Industrialists and the chambers.

8. Several female parliament members are part of the union movement as was the first female member of the cabinet in Austria, who became Federal Minister for Social Affairs in 1966. In addition to the two female members of the Austrian federal government who have been in office since 1970, Federal Chancellor Dr. Bruno Kreisky nominated four new State Secretaries, all of whom are women, in 1979. In addition to the State Secretary Franziska Fast in the FMSA are State Secretaries for general women's issues in the Federal Chancellery, for consumer affairs in the Federal Ministry for Commerce, Trade and Industry and for housing issues in the Federal Ministry for Building and Technology.

9. The first step toward a firm administrative foundation for dealings with women's issues in a ministry was taken in 1966 by the first female minister in Austria, the Federal Minister for Social Affairs. The creation of a Women's Division on a national level corresponded to international recommendations, particularly of the ILO, which suggested the establishment of a central institution with mechanisms allowing systematic consultations with employers' and employees' organizations.

10. Since its establishment the objectives of this division have consistently broadened, particularly as a result of preparations for the IWY and during the first half of the UN Women's Decade. The latter also led other departments as well to administratively deal with these issues. Internationally, the Women's Division maintains a double function: on the one hand, it informs Austrian institutions regarding international standards in women's affairs; on the other hand, it passes Austrian standards on to international organizations. In many cases this "clearing-house-function" allows the opportunity for the Women's Division to stimulate new activities in Austrian institutions by drawing attention to positive examples in other nations, international recommendations or resolutions, etc.

11. A further significant step toward an improvement in the occupational status of women was taken with the legal foundation of Committee IV for Women's Affairs in Labor Market Policy of the Advisory Council for Labor Market Policy as provided by the Labor Market Promotion Act., BGBl.Nr. 31/1969. The chairperson of Committee IV is the head of the above-mentioned Division for general issues of working women; preparation and secretarial work for the committee is also administered by this division.

12. Due to structural differences within Austria, the interests of working women must be individually represented at the regional level. For this reason contact officials were installed in each provincial employment office, whose task it was to promote equal opportunities and equal treatment for working women in co-operation with the provincial structures of the above-mentioned employers' and employees' organizations and to participate in decision-making gremiums at the regional level.

13. Based on the Equal Opportunities Act (BGBl.Nr. 108/1979), which deals with equal treatment for men and women with respect to payment, the Equality Commission was established by the FMSA on July 13, 1979. The commission deals with all issues connected with discrimination of women through unequal pay. It is the duty of the commission to answer appeals of interest groups by providing expert opinions in cases of discrimination of women through unequal pay. It may, however, also be officially called into action.

14. In November 1979 a State Secretary was appointed in the FMSA. In addition to her function as chairperson of the Equality Commission and her ensuing efforts to eliminate wage discrimination against women in collective and individual contracts, the State Secretary strives to realize the abolishment of sex-specific segmentation in the labor market. Participation in weekly cabinet meetings allows her to present women's issues at the highest governmental level and to coordinate them with other efforts.

INITIATIVES TOWARD ACTIVE MEASURES AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN IN PROGRAMS

A. The establishment of a State Secretary in the FMSA (Federal Ministry of Social Affairs)

15. Direct contact to workers' councils and employers in the course of visits to firms and provincial employment offices are expected to open new occupational and educational opportunities for girls and women. Public relations materials support efforts to obtain apprenticeships for technically talented girls in non-traditional vocations and to subsidize women (according to the Labor Market Promotion Act) with some relevant work experience in attaining better qualifications by means of the apprenticeship completion examination. Prisoners in a women's prison will also be helped to obtain occupational qualifications.

16. Strong contacts to the AFTU and the affiliated unions have allowed an intensification of discussions with union officials with respect to discrimination of women in collective agreements. A work group composed of the union chairpersons and the State Secretary discusses open and latent discrimination in collective agreements and methods toward its elimination.

17. An action initiated by State Secretary FAST entitled "Hallo Kollegin" ("Hello, Colleague") allows direct contact between working women and the State Secretary. Guidance and counseling regarding work-related problems are given unbureaucratically.

B. Women's Division

18. As a basis for dealing with general issues of working women, the Women's Division has maintained contacts to research institutions, to university and non-university institutes and especially to the Austrian Central Statistical Office. With respect to the latter, for example, it makes suggestions for special microcensus programs dealing with women's work, takes part in consultations regarding questionnaires and programs of evaluation.

19. Since the early 1970s the Woman's Division has also commissioned studies dealing with pressing issues. The results of this research appear in a series on the social and occupational status of women. Further studies are carried out to allow the completion of Austrian national papers for various international organizations. The publications

discussed above as well as other brochures (i.e. "A New Start -- Back to Work") are made available at no cost not only to opinion leaders, interest groups and national and non-governmental organizations but also to all official libraries, university libraries, interested individuals and institutions.

20. In an effort to implement the objectives of the World Plan of Action for the IWY a relevant check list which dealt with existing and planned measures was formulated and sent out. The reported measures were then presented in a catalog comparing them to the present situation in Austria and to demands of the UN World Plan of Action, which was then distributed on a broad basis. For many non-governmental institutions and individuals the checklist and the catalog provided initial stimulation for possible related actions.

21. As a result of initiatives of the Women's Division the Austrian Federal Government supported the International Institute for Labour Studies in organizing an International Symposium dealing with "Women and Industrial relations". The preparations for the symposium allowed the publication of documentary material (in German and English) which was produced in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for Science and Research and led to the commissioning of a study of all Austrian collective contracts with respect to stipulations which openly show or suggest discrimination of women. The results of these studies thus paved the way for the Equal Opportunities Act.

C. Committee IV for Women's Affairs in Labor Market Policy

22. Consultations dealt largely with better qualifications for working women and measures toward abolishment of the sex-specific segmentation of the labor market. The advancement of women workers is included in future objectives in the yearly labor market policy priority programs based on labor market predictions, which are realized differentially at the regional level.

D. Contact officials

23. The activity of the contact officials since June, 1978 has been extremely positive especially because regional detailed knowledge and implementational measures are of such importance in labor market policy. Public relations on the regional level are also particularly effective. In labor market services women's interests were of prime importance with respect to information about labor market training and opportunities for advancement, advertising open vacancies with employers, carrying out special orders, counseling and monitoring, training programs and grants for subsidies provided by the Labor Market Promotion Act.

E. Equality Commission

24. The activities of the commission in the last months show an increasing emanating effect on the firms in which attempts have been made to adjust wages to correspond to the Equal Opportunities Act. Due to the legal demand, existing discrimination is often eliminated internally and through collective bargaining without direct need for the Equality Commission. Sex-specific work designations were eliminated in the course of recently completed collective bargaining and differential evaluation of identical activities was abolished. The notion of equal treatment is beginning to root itself in the consciousness of the economic partners; equality policies will be continued.