



## Mentor's Workshop, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2005

### New role models for men in leadership

Men with experiences in paternity leave from Iceland, Sweden, Austria, Estonia and Hungary have been invited to the workshop in the frame of the European project BREAKING PATTERNS, being role models for other men:

- Iceland: Ari Edwald, managing director of the Confederation of Icelandic Employers  
 Friðfinnur Hermannsson, director of the Húsavík District Hospital  
 Friðrik Friðriksson, lawyer, Human Resource Dep./City of Reykjavík  
 Gísli Hrafn Atlason, sociologist, researcher  
 Jón Viðar Matthíasson, Chief of the Capital Area Fire Brigade
- Sweden: Sten Lindeberg, Director „Step-up“, Gender Management Institute
- Austria: Johannes Kammerer, teacher
- Estonia: Ülo Siivelt, NGO-leader
- Hungary: Balasz Endrei, trainer

Mostly men do become leaders at the age of 25 to 30. Many of them do not have children at that age. Are they interested in reconciliation?

There has been a survey about the topic in Iceland: People were asked what is important for them when choosing a workplace. Women: reconciliation is an important factor. Men: reconciliation is not important. But: There has been a great leap now: Young men are no longer willing to sacrifice their family lives for the job!

#### Background for the project

- Reproduction line is decreasing, educated women refuse to have children
- Reconciliation improves the lives of men, women and especially of children
- Divorcement rate is high when children are about 3 years old
- Future leaders: Most of them are about 25 – 30 years, corporate culture of managers, they don't exchange views with fathers, important to show to them

#### Target group for being mentees

Men, getting trained as (future) leaders

Objective: to show and consider, how a man profits from paternity leave – it is about experiences! The task of the 'role models' is to speak about: What have I done? How did I do it? What did I get out of it?

The core message of the mentoring is to inform and affirm: It is important to share responsibility and it is possible, "Don't miss the opportunity of your life!"

How business benefits: New social, organisational and participatory competences



Experiences on the personal level: Scandinavian experiences should not be seen as stereotypes, "It is possible in every country and on every level, it is a management task and management skills".

Hildur Jonsdottir, equal opportunity officer from the City of Reykjavik, welcomes the participants, especially the invited guests and mentors, introduction of their names and functions.

Christiana Weidel, project leader from Austria, introduces the project goals to the invited guests and mentors:

- show that reconciliation of family and work is possible also for men
- develop a training module to be implemented in leadership trainings
- convince training institutions to use the training
- distribute information via videoclip, posters and the media

### **Transnational statements: the legal framework for parental leave and positive examples of supportive men in leading positions: Austria, Hungary, Estonia**

#### **Käthlin Sander: Parental leave in Estonia:**

Parental Leave: up to 3 years of age. Child care allowance: fixed amount of money, not very high. Less than 1 % of the receivers are men. 2004 new possibility of parental benefit. Compensate the loss of income. Parental benefit is paid by the state. Working and non working parents can receive child care allowance. Fathers can take parental leave whenever they want. But they can only receive it when the child is six month old. Now a new law tries to prolong benefit for 3 more months. Among the receivers that get a higher amount (100% of the salary) there are more fathers. Fathers have the right to take 14 days off until the child is 2 months old. Though the money they receive is very low quite many fathers use this right. During that time the mother is also at home. Reconciliation: Ministry of Social affairs has made a brochure. It addresses the interest to spend more time with the child. The brochure recommends to try to work flexitime when returned to the workplace. A campaign encourages fathers to spend more time with the children. A father of the year is chosen. But it's always a man in a higher position, well educated. In the future it should be a younger father.

#### **Sabine Hilbert: Legal framework for parental leave in Austria**

Maternity protection	8 weeks before + 12 weeks after birth	Full pay
Maternal / paternal leave	Till the age of 18 months + max. 6 six months if shared	Protection against dismissal, not paid
Child care benefit	Till the age of 30 months + max. 6 months if shared	€ 14,53 / day = € 436,- / month

Mother and father can alternate twice, one part has to be at least 3 month. They can take 1 month together at first alternation. Right to save three month of parental leave till the child has its 7th birthday (school entry).



After paternal leave right of part-time occupation till 4th of 7th birthday of child.

Child caring benefit: In average 436€ per month being paid for a child up to 30 month or 36th month, if both parents take care. Most regulations similar to parental leave.

Right to earn money up to € 14.600 per year.

Parental leave affects employment (not for self-employed persons, farmers, etc.), child caring benefit is a family benefit for everybody including self-employed persons, farmers, etc.

### The situation in Austria (April 2005)

April 05	Employees		Parental Leave		Child caring benefit	
Women + men	3.203.338	100 %	113.336	100 %	163.245	100 %
Women	1.468.747	45,85 %	110.512	97,47 %	158.076	96,83 %
Men	1.734.591	54,15 %	2.875	2,53 %	5.169	3,17 %

Those who are employed and get some money for child caring are either on parental leave or work part-time. Those who get child caring benefit include those who are not employed, i. e. farmers, self-employed, or not working.

The Lower Austrian State Government has installed a task force aiming at facilitating reconciliation of family and career.

### Reka Safrani: Legal framework in Hungary

It is hard to find data about child care leave. There are opinion polls that give a general picture of Hungary. The demographic change is a big issue. The population declines, in fact there is negative growth. Studies show that enabling women to work does not harm the family or the amount of children they get. The average age of marriage goes up. About 26% of the people in a relationship do not have children.

Opinion poll: research of what people think about gender roles. Population with traditional thinking: more men than women. But in average higher educated men are more open minded. For the maintenance of traditional gender roles men are responsible.

The concept of a Head of the Family: there is a change. More and more people reject the idea that there is a head of the family. Most people think the structure within the family must be more democratic. Of the people who accept the idea of a head of a family 99% of the men were the head of the family. But childcare was more shared than other tasks.

Parental Leave: Men and women are entitled to take it. In Hungary only 5 days for men and women, it's fully paid. Women go on a birth leave for 4 months. Everybody takes it. After the first 6 months either men or women can take leave. There are different kinds of benefit:

- 70% of the salary, you have to stay at home
- you get less money but you are allowed to work
- grand parents can also take leave and get pension as well



Only 6,3 % of the men took paternity leave, they can also be students. Why so few? The gap between men and women is big for economical reasons. Mothers of the men mostly do not approve their sons going on paternity leave. Even young people have conservative ideas on that. Men are afraid of losing their job. If fathers stay home it is out of financial reasons, they have no other choice. One grandfather took leave but authorities did not know about the regulation. It took him 3 months to rule that.

Men are threatened to lose their position. But men who make the experience are happy about it.

### **Hildur Jónsdóttir: Take-up rates, success factors and challenges of the Icelandic model of paternity leave**

The participation of women on the labour market has continually grown since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Now the gap between men and women is about 7 %, whereas the EU average is around 25 %. Life patterns of men and women are approximately equal, women on average work full time.

Iceland by tradition is a long working hour culture. More than 2/3 of the children stay in Kindergarten for 8 hours or more. Most of them are children of single parents.

The law on paternity leave was alternated in 2000 because of many reasons.

#### **Crucial points to change the law**

- Leave too short, economic compensation too low (below minimum wages)
- No flexibility, not in accordance with ideas about gender equality
- Different rights in the public and private labour markets

#### **The new legislation**

Maternity/Paternity leave – 9 months

- Not assignable rights: 2 x 3 months
  1. Mother 3 months
  2. Father 3 months
- Joint right 3 months

Paternity leave ends when the child reaches 18 months. There are special provisions in case of multiple births, stillbirth, miscarriage, illness of mother and newborn child.

#### **Rights to payment**

- 80 % of average wages for the last 12 (24) months, ending 2 months prior to birth
- Minimum payments for those with low wages (in part-time work)

Payments through a special fund which is financed by insurance levy, that is a certain percentage of the wages, paid by the employers.

#### **Flexibility**

When in agreement with the employer the parent can take the leave in fragments (at least one week at a time) or with part-time work (e. g. 50 % work – 50 % leave). The leave has to be taken before the child is 18 months old. If there is no special



agreement the employee has the right to take the leave all at once. The parents can divide or take the joint part of the leave as they please.

### Stated goals

- Increase the participation of fathers in childcare to better the position of women on the labour market
- Increase fertility and better the economic situation of families with children

### Men's application of paternity leave as proportion of women's application:

In 2001: 82,4 %, in 2002: 83,6 %, in 2004: 84,3 %

### Average number of days

	2001	2002	2003
Men	39	68	94
Women	186	187	182

Women take most of the three extra months.

### Opinion polls about paternity leave

March 2003:

85 %: it is positive that men use their right to 3 – 6 months paternity leave

99 %: it is positive that women do it.

73,6 % employers are positive towards paternity leave

Women are more positive than men towards paternity leave, younger people are more positive than older.

October 2003

80 %: in favour of the new legislation

20%: it is difficult for men to take 3 months paternity leave

Employers think it is more difficult for a man to take 6 months paternity leave than for a woman.

### Success

- Family economy: yes
- Fathers and children: yes
- Women and the labour market: probably
- Fertility: probably

A longterm study is needed to prove the positive effect on the fertility rate. But Iceland has the second highest reproduction rate in Europe.

### Challenges

- Too little knowledge about the effects on the labour market and on domestic work



- Leave should be extended to 12 months, 4 – 4 – 4
- Too little knowledge about effects on ideas about men and women

There are still some questions to be studied

- What happens during parental leave?
- How do fathers use the time?
- How do couples deal with maybe different expectations about what is care?

### Sten Lindeberg: Parental leave in Sweden

Basic facts are in the manual for the training. Iceland and Sweden have got similar social systems. Parental Leave is not just traditionally but also financially grounded. Sweden has a good child care system, so parents do not need to have a bad conscious of being bad parents. The payment is according to your salary. All in all you get 480 days leave. 390 days you are entitled to get allowance according to your salary. For the rest you get a fixed amount, which is rather low. Within the first period you get 80 % of your salary, but there is a ceiling. You cannot get more than 80% of the average Swedish pay. If you surpass that you lose more then 20 %. There is a very liberal system for taking leave.

2004: 19 % of all parental leave days is taken by fathers. But 20 % of the fathers do not take leave at all. So fathers who take several months improve the statistics. But the figure is rising. Within a few decades we should have 50 % men.

Role models among companies:

- 1/3 promotes paternity leave
- 1/3 does nothing special
- 1/3 is against paternity leave

The figures tend to a positive direction. The company Ericsson is a good example. It introduced parental leave compensation. They filled up the gap between the 80% and 100%. Ericsson microway is a daughter company. There 6 months paternity are common, sometimes fathers even take 12 months. Managers did the same. They are role models for their employees. Ericsson has a special comeback-program. Mothers and fathers stay in contact with the company. The pressure comes from the fathers also. Paternity leave does not have economical advantages. But if we talk about recruiting or HR, it has.

There is a proposal now to increase parental leave in Sweden: 5 months compulsory for the mother, 5 months for the father and 5 months mother and father can share. But this opinion is not shared by all politicians and there is a debate that it is not good for the child to be away from the mothers. What is good for the child? When mum is at home, when both are at home? What time children should go to day care institutions? There is a lot of research on that, because a high degree of children that only stayed with their parents get a psychological disease. It is good to install a good balance between home and day care institution. Some parties wanted to raise parental leave to 3 years. In the day care institutions 99 % are women. Some feminists think it should only be women because of the risk of sexual abuse.

In Iceland the economical wealth depends on the women. We need their capacities for our economical wealth. So they have earned it to have a good child care system.



Jón Viðar Matthíasson, Chief of the Fire Brigade: “We enforce paternity leave even though it is very difficult for us to organise the leave. We have a lot of problems to solve because we have to replace the people and it is not easy to find suitable people. But we are a helping organisation. If people have a problem they should trust in us. But if we do not help our own employees how can people believe in us?”

### Kindergarten – a crucial element in child care leave

**Austria:** Children can go to kindergarten at the age of three. Some kindergartens have special regulations. In Lower Austria the kindergarten is free until 12 o'clock. If it takes longer parents have to pay. In Vienna you have to pay for half a day, too. Whole day costs around 250 Euro per months. In addition to the kindergarten there are crèches for younger children and caring mothers as well as flying nannies.

**Hungary:** A child has the right to go to kindergarten at the age of 3. Additionally there is a network of crèches, from half a year on. But the mother has to prove that she works. The capacity of the crèches is much less than the need. People use the grandparents. Women used to retire at an early age so young grandmothers are wide spread. In the bigger cities there is huge black labour market of nannies.

**Estonia:** The age limit is 1 ½ but there is a big lack of places. Many parents have to use private kindergartens. They are expensive. Young couples cannot afford them. We also have a black labour market for nannies. Most of the population tries to get an educated nanny. They have to prove that they are certificated nannies. The Tallinn City is planning to install a system that when you get a certified nanny, the City government is going to pay for the nanny.

**Iceland:** In Iceland we have comprehensive system There is no difference between crèche and kindergarten. The demand is met now. There is a high satisfaction with the playschools. 80 % of the parents say they are very pleased. The level of services is very high. The staff is also trained to deal with disabilities.

### Round Table for mentors of Iceland, Sweden, Hungary, Estonia and Austria

1. Reflections and statements
2. How did you reach agreement – how did you arrange to take paternity leave?
3. What are the fears and major obstacles? How did you overcome those?

#### 1) Reflections and statements

**Sten:** In Sweden it has taken about 30 years to get to our situation. In Iceland it only took a few years to come to this situation.

**Balasz:** In Iceland there are only few people, in Hungary there are 10 million people. Employers don't have the right to say no? This is not imaginable in Hungary.

**Freddy:** Because we are so few people it was easy to change society, to change trends. We do not have so many differences between classes.

**Hans:** This is a crucial point. You can get the impression it is only because of money, but this is not the case. It is also a question of the mind and I got strange reactions when I was on paternal leave.

**Freddy:** I agree. Money has a certain value in Iceland. A crucial point is that men have to go on paternity leave for 3 months and if they do not take it, they do not get it.

**Balasz:** How will it influence the life and the society, when men stay at home with babies.

**Gisli:** Well, we do not know. But I believe that if you take care for your child in the beginning, people will also do that later on.



**Freddy:** Maybe, but it is not like in the fairy tales, they lived together happily ever after.

**Balasz:** Did the roles change?

**Freddy:** Yes. I think we all know that it is difficult to be a houseman. But to feel it is something else!

**Hans:** I want to add something. I did not mean that money is not important, but it is not everything. Like you said: if it is on the air, then that is very important.

## 2) How did you reach agreements?

**Freddy:** It was easy to talk to the boss who, as a Minister of Health, stood behind the law about paternal leave. I also had to talk to colleagues, as there could be no other person taken to work for the period. Phone and computer were available at home, could communicate when necessary. Was actually not needed so much during that time. Sure that everyone would put family in the first place on the life-list. In the past the doctors were working for years without vacation. But now, newcomers ask surely whether there will also be time for personal life.

**Sten:** A person can choose more family-friendly company to work with. New areas (like IT) are recruiting young people who have children. Also, it is important for a father to ask for the leave. Without asking will not get anything for sure. Maybe it will turn out that the boss is not so reluctant to give that leave.

**Gisli:** All fathers tried to take their leave in a way that is also suitable for the company. On the other hand father should not give the impression at the workplace as if he would be ready to keep on fulfilling any tasks when asked during the leave. Employers might even consider it better that fathers would take all time off, not partly home/partly at work dividing their attention.

**Freddy:** It took a few months to negotiate a suitable time. Eight weeks before a proposal was made – take it or leave it. Divided the time into parts: part now, part later. Employer demanded that either the employee should be full time working or on a leave, i.e. not working part-time. 80 percent of jobs actually demand the employee to be there, so it is not so easy to be flexible for the employer.

**Hans:** Working as a teacher made it easier to take the leave as it was a protected sector. Practically I could not be fired. Head of school could not say „no“. Had to accept the decision of the father to take the leave. If the employee insists on a right, the employer cannot do anything. The head of school was not very fond of the idea of a teacher taking paternal leave, but it was mostly because he was not used to the idea. Rationally agreed, emotionally not so much.

**Ari:** What do employers gain? It is the key with regard to gender equality. There is no research on the impact of the leave on the working-place. But it is necessary if you want women to be equally employed. More balance needed. Employers` Union is working with both the larger labour market and also concrete working places. They supported the passing of a paternal leave legislation, therefore also had to fulfil it. It was not easy for individual companies to disagree because they would feel left out. Partly the question of political correctness. It is fair that men take 3 months.

**Gisli:** 3 months is pretty short.

**Freddy:** The employee can actually vary. E.g. by taking the annual leave after paternal leave, he will get 4 months.

**Ari:** Usually fathers do not take more than 3 months. He will also divide the time and at some point will take 50 percent working time.

## 3) What are the fears and hinderings and how can we overcome them?

**Freddy:** It is hard for the schools. If teachers take leave for 3 months during the school period. Leave has to be agreed upon well in advance as there have to be negotiations to find mutual understanding.



- Hans:** From a legal point of view this is no problem, there are substitutes for teachers. Many young teachers want to get some experience.
- Jon:** Employees are also entitled to other types of leaves. Very often it is not possible to take new person to substitute the employee during his parental leave, but it is possible that there is one person who is substituting people on leaves.
- Sten:** It must be repeated that it is very important to ask for paternity leave. Otherwise the person will be unhappy but the boss might have been positive about the leave.
- Jon:** In the fire brigade I have noticed that when the time for the paternity leave to be decided be the father himself, usually the employee chooses the time that is also suitable for the company. But when the employer gives very strict ideas about when it is possible for the company to have this employee on a leave, the employee might feel rather unsatisfied.
- Balasz:** One important question to be asked: how to avoid the tension between new fathers who want to take parental leave and old ones who do not need it anymore and then very often have to work more.
- Gisli:** It is a problem for the firm if 2 persons out of 22 leave. A new person joining the company has to be trained.
- Sten:** A healthy company can be family friendly. Companies can make it easier. Flexible working hours, being active, keeping contact with the father on leave. It is the fathers problem. A father who wants to stay in a company has to find a solution.
- Gisli:** You have to choose. Burn-out is also expensive.
- Sten:** It is good to have a friend to talk to. A mentor for instance
- Jon:** Parental Leave is a right. Employees know the system anyway. I hired eight new men, so I am able to have two on leave.
- Gisli:** At first fathers thought they will have time to do repairing work at home when on a paternity leave. But in reality there was no time for that when taking care of a child. As for the possibility that instead of spending time with a child father is golfing during his parental leave – as the money comes from the state, employers should not worry about it.
- Jon:** Parental Leave is a right. It is their decision how they use it. If we control people they will not be willing to take it.
- Hans:** Is there any evidence of this kind of abuse?
- Gisli:** There is a shipping company. Men were taking leave during vacations. Rumours about not taking care of the children.
- Freddy:** They get the money from the state, not from the employer so they do not care, employers only promise that they can come back.
- Ülo:** It is not only a question of the payment. A company is also losing the competence of the employee while he is assumably on a parental leave.
- Ari:** It is useful for a company to be regarded and known as a family friendly company. Benefits for companies: there is a lower turnover of employees, less burn-out, more productiveness. In Iceland we are very flexible. It is easy to fire men but it is also easy to find a job. Unpaid leaves are not popular here.
- Parental leave: why should it be a bigger problem for a father than for a mother? Someone has to take the leave and look after the child. That was one of the ideas behind the devision of parental leave. Then again, there will always be employers who fire people on weird grounds. You will never know whether the actual cause was that the person was taking parental leave.
- There are some areas where the implementation and using of the parental leave legislation will be weaker, e. g. financial sector and others on the higher end of the salary level. Might be caused by the roof that the payment during the parental leave has. Employers' Union supported the introducing of the roof. The hardest task is to fight the masculine culture. Similar to long working-hours-culture.



#### 4) Fatherhood and caring – lessons learned

- Sten:** Fatherhood is more about quantity than quality. Be as much together with your baby as you can. It is hard work actually to take care for a baby at home, paternal leave is not a holiday! There is no information about what fathers actually do when they are on a parental leave. Could be a serious investigation.
- Balasz:** I think that you can do nothing additionally when being with a child. It also took me several months to understand that it is all about relationship with a child. But at the beginning you do not even know how to behave, how to play with a child.
- Freddy:** I sometimes felt guilty for not enjoying parental leave as much as I had thought before. But parental leave is also important for older children. It is important for them to know that a parent is somewhere close. Even if they do not want to spend “quality time” with you. ;-)
- Hans:** Actually it is a linguistic problem, at least in German. We say: Karenzurlaub. Urlaub is vacation. But this gives you a rather wrong idea about the issue of parental leave. It is a leave but you do not have free time.
- Freddy:** When you do the housework nobody notices it has been done. But it is seen when it has not been done.
- Hans:** It requires qualities that are often paid well in other places.
- Freddy:** Reconciling work and family life actually makes life more complicated. What should be your role? Problem that there are many broken families and single parents.
- Sten:** The more men took parental leave the more marriages were kept together because people are forced to speak to each other.
- Gisli:** Even if they split there is a higher involvement of divorced fathers. More joint custody in Iceland.
- Ari:** A lot has changed. Today more fathers than mothers attend children’s sports events. In Iceland nobody is surprised anymore when a man takes parental leave. They would be more surprised if the man did not take it.
- Reka:** It also takes a lot from women to facilitate the change. Fathers role should not be of helping but rather sharing responsibilities. But Hungarian mothers very often do not want to see their sons changing nappies.
- Hans:** Fathers should share responsibilities not only tasks. Fathers being alone with a child during the parental leave would help with regard to this.
- Friðrik:** Use the time when you are at home and try to incorporate your experiences when you are at work again.
- Ülo:** It is possible to do everyday work from home and stay with your baby. I arrange meetings via Internet.
- Gisli:** How do men cope with this situation that all of a sudden they are not important. And why is it that being important is building a home but not building a family? That could be a new field of research.

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