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Economic Commission for Europe**Conference of European Statisticians****Group of Experts on Gender Statistics****Work Session on Gender Statistics**

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Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Gender equality in the life course**Grandparents make a considerable contribution to childcare
in Switzerland – the challenges facing national statistics on
extra-family childcare****Note by Swiss Federal Statistical Office¹***Summary*

Various circles in the economy, science and politics have repeatedly called for better data as basis for the planning and management of needs-based childcare provision. The Federal Statistical Office (FSO) is responsible for this and faces the challenge of gradually developing national statistics on childcare. The availability of data on the uptake of extra-family childcare can be described as good whereas data on the provision of childcare is incomplete. The general circumstances in a federal country such as Switzerland – cantons are primarily responsible for the provision of childcare – make it more complicated, but preliminary, provisional results are available.

¹ Prepared by Katja Branger.

I. Introduction

1. According to a one-off study carried out by a private research institute and a university, on average in Switzerland, a full-time childcare place is available to only 11% of pre-school children (aged 0-3 years) and 8% of school age children (aged 4-12 years).² One of the main reasons for this situation is that – unlike in many neighbouring countries – there is no legal entitlement to a childcare place in Switzerland.

2. In Switzerland, comprehensive, Swiss-wide childcare data have been requested for a few years, primarily serving authorities and policymakers to estimate provision and uptake, subsequently allowing for the development of needs-based childcare provision. In this context, the data should also help to ensure better political management and coordination between the Confederation, cantons and communes. However, there is still relatively little official data available on childcare in Switzerland. We shall look at the reasons for this below, as well as the challenges associated with improving the general situation. The second part of this paper will examine the preliminary, not yet published results of Swiss statistics on extra-family childcare.

II. Availability of data and challenges

3. As a Federal country, Switzerland has no national legislation in a number of areas or only has national framework conditions. This also applies to extra-family childcare. The Federal Council decided on 22nd February 2012 to refrain, at federal level, from comprehensive regulations concerning extra-family day and full-time childcare. Authority for regulation of extra-family childcare, including the authorisation and supervision obligation, thus lies with the cantons and communes.

4. Firstly, a Federal Law on Financial Support for Childcare has existed since 2003. Extended several times and now limited to January 2015, the impulse programme offers initial funding and should create additional childcare places for children to ensure better balancing of work and family. Around 43,000 childcare places have been supported in eleven years, corresponding to an increase in the estimated number of places of 80%.³ Secondly, the "Intercantonal agreement on the harmonisation of compulsory schooling" (HarmoS agreement) has been in force since 2009. This is a new Swiss schooling agreement which nationally harmonises the duration and the most important aims of the education levels, their transitions, the school starting age and school attendance. Every canton individually decides whether or not to adhere to the agreement. The cantons that have ratified this have a six year transitional period to implement the contents of the agreement which they do not yet fulfil, ending at the start of the 2015/2016 school year. In connection with extra-family childcare, it is mentioned that the adhering cantons shall agree, amongst other things, to introduce a two year, compulsory nursery school, to organise teaching periods at primary school level preferably in blocks and to offer daycare

² Infrac/Swiss Institute for Empirical Economic Research (SEW) of the University of St. Gallen: Gender quality. What is the role of extra-family childcare?, Zurich 2013. See: http://www.nfp60.ch/E/projects/family_private_household/child_care_services_gender_equality/Pages/default.aspx and www.infrac.ch/d/projekte/displayprojectitem.php?id=4081

³ Federal Law www.admin.ch/opc/de/classified-compilation/20020609/index.html
FSIO – Financial Support
<http://www.bsv.admin.ch/praxis/kinderbetreuung/01153/index.html?lang=en>
Evaluation report www.bsv.admin.ch/aktuell/reden/00122/index.html?lang=de&msg-id=51498

structures commensurate with on-site need.⁴ By 26.09.2010, 15 cantons had decided to adhere to HarmoS and 7 had refused.

5. All other matters in relation to the regulation, for example, concerning authorisation and monitoring, financing, costs for parents and guidelines for a pedagogical concept, training and salary of personnel, care ratio, property, security, hygiene and food, opening times as well as admission requirements for the children are up to the cantons and communes.⁵ Consequently, there is a large degree of diversity in cantonal and communal regulations on extra-family and extra-school care.

An example of good practice: Law on extra-family childcare in the canton of Vaud

The canton of Vaud has had a law on childcare since 2006.⁶ The law includes a legal entitlement to external childcare places and a fund to set-up external childcare institutions. The childcare foundation which was established at the end of 2006 is financed by the state and the economy. In 2013, the Vaud parliament increased financial support once again. Between 2006 and 2012, the foundation created more than 6100 childcare places.⁷

6. This starting point complicates the conditions for setting-up national childcare statistics that cover both sides, the uptake as well as the provision. To develop such regularly updated statistics, the FSO has to tackle some challenges that involve a high degree of expense and for which there are currently insufficient resources. On the uptake side, data come from Swiss-wide surveys of persons and households which provide information on the use of formal and informal childcare by households with children. Formal childcare refers to institutions such as daycare centres/day nurseries, out-of-school centres, supervised lunches, day families, full-time schools/nursery schools. Informal childcare includes grandparents, relatives, acquaintances and neighbours as well as babysitters and household help. Detailed analysis of these data is under way and the preliminary, provisional results are presented below.

7. On the provision side, however, the data available at the FSO are insufficient. In most cantons, data on provision are also incomplete and vary greatly between cantons. Ten of the 26 cantons regularly publish relatively detailed statistical data on the provision of daycare centres for pre-school children (as at 1st September 2012: BE, BS, GL, GR, JU, SZ, TG, TI, ZG, ZH). Seven cantons (AG, GE, FR, NE, UR, VD, VS) only offer aggregated data for the entire canton, but not for the individual communes. It is, however, conceivable that the responsible authorities are in possession of detailed data. In the other cantons, the data are irregular, incomplete or not available at all.⁸ For extra-family childcare in the school sector, only 5 of the 26 cantons regularly publish relatively comprehensive data on the provision of out-of-school centres, full-time schools and supervised lunches (as at 1st September 2012: JU, OW, TG, ZG, ZH). Three cantons (AG, NE, VS) regularly offer only aggregated data for the entire canton, but not for the individual communes. No or only

⁴ HarmoS agreement <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/11659.php>

⁵ A helpful overview is provided by the information platform "Vereinbarkeit Beruf und Familie – Massnahmen der Kantone und Gemeinden" (Available in French/German/Italian) by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Federal Social Insurance Office (FSIO) <http://www.berufundfamilie.admin.ch/informationsplattform/index.html?lang=de> and an evaluation of the data from this information platform by the Confederation in the scope of the 2013 SODK report "Familienergänzende Kinderbetreuung im Frühbereich – Stand in den Kantonen 2012", from 1st September 2012, <http://sodk.ch/fachbereiche/familien-und-gesellschaft/familienerganzende-betreuung-im-fruehbereich/>

⁶ Law www.faje-vd.ch/Documentation/documentation.htm > Textes législatifs

⁷ www.faje-vd.ch

⁸ See footnote 4, SODK report, pp. 9-13.

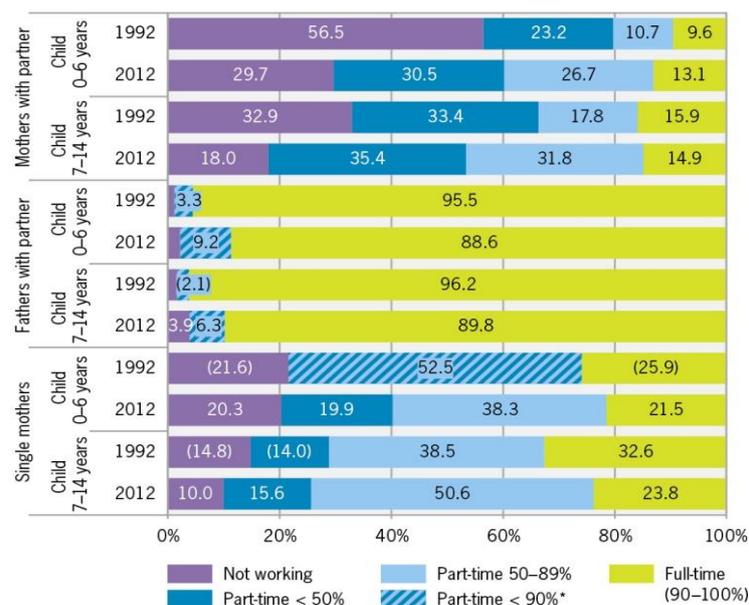
incomplete data are available for the remaining cantons.⁹ The availability of data on day families is far worse. In most of the cantons, no data are available at canton or commune level or only lists of agencies without, for example further details of the children cared for. Only 2 of the 26 cantons have regularly comprehensive public data on day family provision per commune.

8. For a Swiss-wide statistic on childcare provision either a complete survey or full recording of the data at national level ought to take place or, if only partial statistics of the available cantonal and communal data are envisaged as a first step, the data available in the cantons ought to be harmonised and made comparable. At present the FSO is in the process of clarifying the procedure for setting up the provision side of childcare statistics.

III. Changes to the employment situation of mothers and fathers in Switzerland

9. Today mothers are increasingly economically active: The economic activity rate of mothers with children under 15 is now the same as that of women without children (2012: 77% each; 1991: 60% compared to 71%). However, they mainly work part-time and if there are young children living in the household, tend to have shorter working hours (less than 50%).

Professional situation of mothers and fathers by age of youngest child, 1992 and 2012 G 16



* Due to the small number of cases in the sample it is not possible to differentiate between less than 50% part-time and 50-89% part-time.
 (Figure): The result is based on fewer than 50 observations in the sample and should therefore be interpreted with great caution.

Source: Federal Statistical Office, SLFS

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⁹ 2013 EDK report "Familienergänzende Kinderbetreuung im Schulbereich (inkl. Kindergarten oder eine Form der Eingangsstufe) – Stand in den Kantonen" (available in French/German), an evaluation of the data of the Confederation's information platform "Vereinbarkeit Beruf und Familie – Massnahmen der Kantone und Gemeinden", of 1st September 2012, <http://sodk.ch/fachbereiche/familien-und-gesellschaft/familienergaezende-betreuung-im-fruehbereich/>

10. The age of the youngest child and the family situation have a strong influence on the employment situation of the mother. If they have a child under 7 they are considerably less likely to work than with a youngest child aged between 7 and 14. Single mothers are not only more likely to be professionally active than mothers with a partner, but they also tend to have a higher work-time percentage.

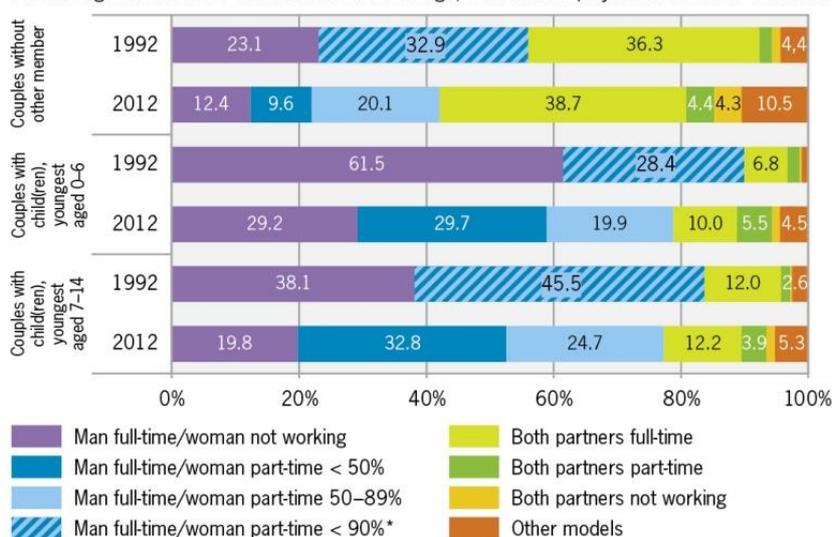
11. Men adjust their employment situation differently to their family situation than women: If they have children under 15, they are more likely to work full-time than men without children under the age of 15. In contrast, women with children under 15 are much more likely to work part-time than women without children under the age of 15. The proportion of full-time employed fathers has, however, fallen since 1991; the proportion of fathers in part-time employment with work-time percentages of between 50% and 89% has accordingly risen.

12. What is the distribution of employment in couple households? Usually, the woman reduces her working hours or gives up (temporarily) her job completely when children live in the household. In couple households with children, the employment model with full-time employed father and part-time employed mother is the most frequent. As the children grow older, a drop is seen in the number of households with economically inactive mothers and a corresponding increase in households with part-time or full-time working mothers. In only 4-5% of couple households do both partners work part-time; no noticeable differences can be observed as to the presence and age of children.

13. The traditional breadwinner model – full-time employed man and economically inactive woman – has been on the decline since 1992: The number of couple households following this model has been practically halved. In couple households with children under 7 it has fallen from 61% to 29% in the past 20 years. The both partners part-time employed model and other models are more common these days than in the past. Over the years there has been no great change to the percentage of both partners full-time employed model, with the exception of a slight increase among couple households with children under the age of 7.

Employment models in couples, 1992 and 2012 **G 18**

Persons aged between 25 and normal retirement age, without unemployed based on ILO definition



* In 1992, the difference between part-time work of < 50% and part-time work of 50-89% was not made for all household members.

Source: Federal Statistical Office, SLFS

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14. The economic activity rate of mothers which has considerably increased in Switzerland in the last few years brings with it a greater need for balancing work and family. The latter is a central element on the way to gender equality and is a challenge which concerns the whole family. Whether out of financial necessity or because increasingly fewer women want to give up their professional life for the family, it is a widespread reality that both parents work. The question as how to best reconcile family and career has far-reaching consequences for both sexes: Because the main responsibility for bringing up and looking after children continues to be borne by women, they are less flexible with regard to their employment. Men who would like to work part-time, for example in order to devote more time to their family, still find it difficult to be accepted in the work place. The limited career opportunities of a part-time job are still a reality today for men and women. Satisfactory compatibility between work and family life has thus not yet been achieved – neither for mothers nor fathers.

IV. Uptake of extra-family childcare

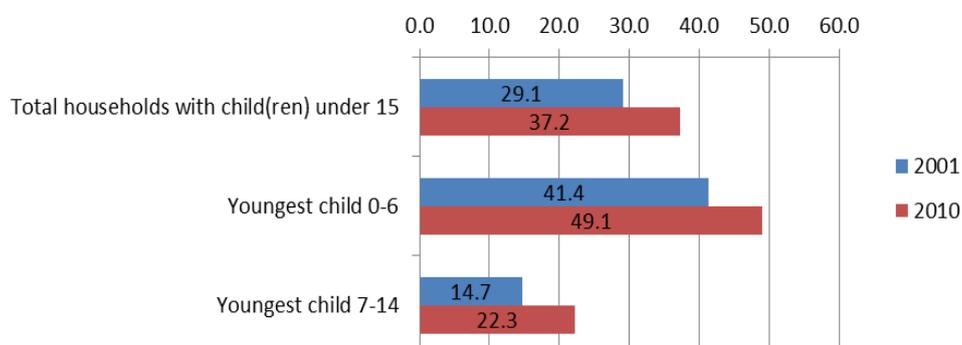
15. Comprehensive childcare provision is a key element of balancing work and family for parents. As mentioned at the start, however, Switzerland exhibits a comparatively low level of formal childcare provision. This includes, for example, daycare centres, day nurseries, educational daycare structures, full-time schools or supervised lunches. The results of the study mentioned above show that on average one full-time childcare place is available for 11% of pre-school children and 8% of school age children. In light of the EU objectives ("2002 Barcelona objectives") which recommend a quota of 33% in the pre-school sector and 90% in the school sector, Switzerland is still far off the mark. There are also considerable inadequacies in provision levels in most regions compared to potential demand among the population.¹⁰ Furthermore, there are substantial regional differences in Switzerland in terms of childcare provision.

16. FSO's officially available data concern the uptake of extra-family childcare by households. Data come from an additional module of the Swiss Labour Force Survey that is carried out every 3 to 4 years. The reprocessed data for the purpose of childcare statistics provide initial results which enable interesting conclusions to be drawn. Firstly, it was found that half (49%) of households with at least one child aged under 7 use extra-family childcare. For children aged 7 to 14, more than one fifth (22%) of households make use of childcare provision. These percentages rose considerably in the ten year period between 2001 and 2010: In 2001, these figures were 41% and 15% respectively. This can be attributed to the fact that it is increasingly common for both parents to be employed and that childcare provision in Switzerland has grown in the past few years.

¹⁰ Cf. Papers on demand potential: Stern S., Banfi S., Tassinari S. (Publ. 2006): Day nurseries and day families in Switzerland – Current and future demand potential, Haupt, Bern; Stern S., Banfi S., Tassinari S. (2008): Daycare structures for school children in North West Switzerland, current and future demand potential, on behalf of the Education Area North West Switzerland (Cantons AG, BL, BS, SO).

Proportion of households using extra-family childcare by age of youngest child, 2001 and 2010

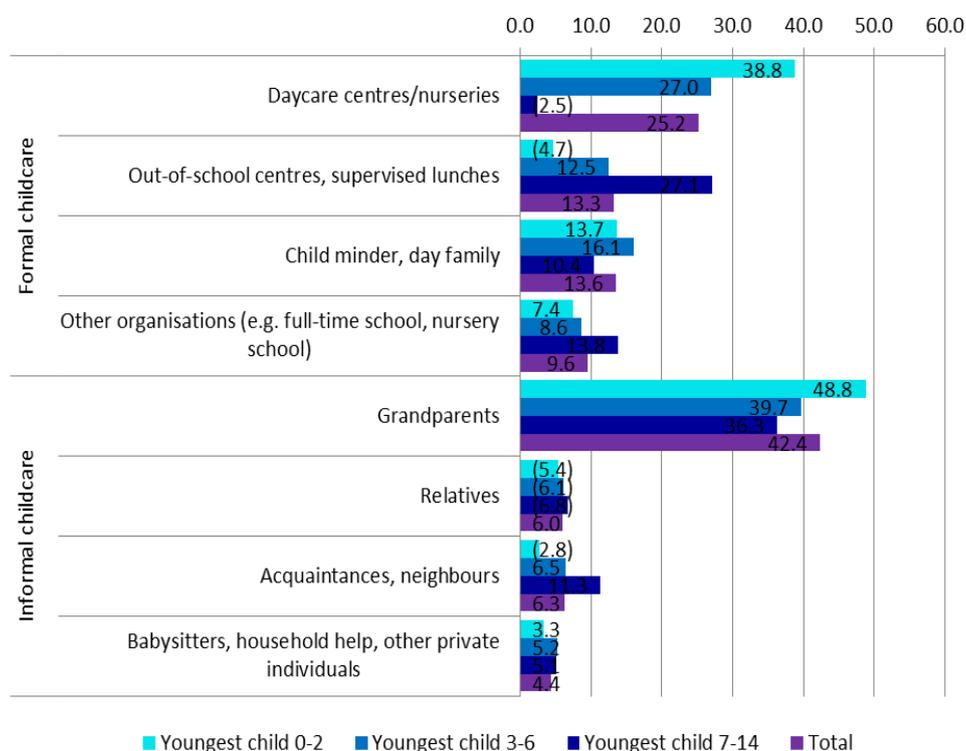
Source: SLFS



17. If considered by type of childcare, it is worth pointing out the following finding: Grandparents are the most commonly used childcare entity by parents for their children, regardless of the latter's age. Four in 10 households (42%) rely on them for childcare support. This is followed by day nurseries and daycare centres for young children under 3 and children aged 3 to 6 (39% and 27%) and extra-school childcare provision such as out-of-school centres and supervised lunches for children aged 7 to 14 (27%). Day families are used by a smaller percentage of households, slightly more for children aged 3 to 6 (16% of households) and the least for 7 to 14 year olds (10%). Other forms of childcare provision play only a minor part, except for full-time school for school age children which is used by approx. 1 in 10 households. Help from neighbours is particularly used for older children: Acquaintances and neighbours are used by 11% of households with children aged 7 to 14 as a form of childcare. This figure is 7% for households with children aged 3 to 6. However, this option is rarely used for very young children. In the case of other types of informal childcare provision, relatives, babysitters, household help and other private persons are far less commonly used.

Proportion of households using extra-family childcare by type of childcare, 2010

Source: SLFS



(Number): The assessment is based on fewer than 50 observations in the sample survey and should therefore be interpreted with great caution.

18. Further analyses need to investigate whether grandparents still provide the greatest share of extra-family childcare when the hours of childcare performed are considered or whether they mainly provide complementary assistance in addition to formal childcare institutions, as shown in other studies.

19. The above-mentioned results on employment models show that both parents are employed in more than 6 in 10 couple households with children aged 0 to 6 years. However, only around 5 in 10 (49%) make use of extra-family childcare. Whether it may be deduced from this that in more than 1 in 10 of these households the parents alternate childcare despite gainful employment without resorting to extra-family help can only be concluded after more extensive analysis.

V. Conclusions and outlook

20. The presented results should be seen as a work in progress. The work required to prepare national statistics on extra-family childcare and analysis of the data available on uptake are still underway. The next step will be to break down these data at household level into the level of children in order to account for the number of children cared for, and, as soon as available, presumably in a few weeks, the corresponding figures will be calculated for 2013. Further investigations are, however, necessary for the preparation of data on the provision side.