

4th newsletter. MINT Project



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Eyes open when choosing a career: Classical models often lead women into poverty

"Boys are better at math, girls are better at taking care of others": such statements are still common. Boys are more likely to be sent to a school with a scientific focus, while girls tend to be in the majority in schools with an artistic or social branch. If children are socialised according to classical models, their career choice will not deviate from this in many cases.

As our survey with Nuremberg youth between 14- and 16-year-olds shows, 40% girls indicated that they would like to work in the STEM field (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) later in life. Among boys, only 10% said they could imagine themselves in a profession in the social sector. The results do not yet allow us to expect a near change in the balanced distribution of women and men in the various fields

According to the MINT 2020 Autumn Report of the Institute of the German Economy, women in MINT professions in Germany account for only 15.3%. In contrast, the proportion of women in educational, social and domestic professions exceeds 80% (<https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/167555/umfrage/frauenanteil-in-verschiedenen-berufsgruppen-in-deutschland/>). The problem is that "typical women's jobs" are no less demanding and responsible, but are often less well paid.

If lower incomes are then coupled with part-time employment, the danger of falling into poverty in old age (or even earlier) is large. The probability of this situation becoming a reality is quite high. According to the German Trade Union Federation, in Germany almost every second woman and only every tenth man works part-time. Here, too, the classic patterns of behaviour between men and women are revealed in deciding who will take care of the family and who will earn money for it. Family obligations are often cited as the reason for working part-time. 45.8% of women and only 10.3% of men cited this as a reason for working part-time in 2018 (https://www.was-verdient-die-frau.de/++co++ee3d7472-cb53-11e5-b0d1-52540023ef1a#:~:text=Jede%20zweite%20Frau%2C%2047%2C9,Zehnte%3A%2011%2C%20Prozent.)).

It is therefore not surprising that women receive on average 46% less pension than men. Their risk of poverty increases with age, as the University of Cologne study "The Income of the Very Old in Germany" shows. According to the Bertelsmann Foundation, the number of women dependent on government welfare benefits will increase in the future: while it was 16.2% in 2016, it would affect 27.8% of women in 2036.

Young people should be aware of all these aspects when choosing their career and occupation. However, raising awareness among young people at this stage of their lives will only have limited success. Therefore, it makes more sense for parents and pedagogical professionals (teachers, educators, etc.) to avoid classical gender stereotypes in education from the very beginning and to promote children's abilities as fully as possible.

In the next newsletter, you will learn what role models mean for young people and what role parents play in this.

This information has been developed within the framework of the GeSTAW project, carried out by the association erfolgsfaktor FRAU with the support of the ERASMUS+ Programme. GeSTAW stands for "Dismantling gender stereotypes in young women's career choices in a digital working world". More information about the project and its results is available at <https://erfolgsfaktor-frau.de/engagement/mint/>