

During the warm season, the children have their meals on the terrace and play and bathe in the garden. They may stay in the open air even when it is raining, as there are covered terraces facing the garden. A breeze of fresh and pure air comes from the Vienna Forest and the sun casts its bright beams on this shining house, the windows and verandahs of which are decorated with flowers and blossoming creepers. In the large garden, however, children, little buds of humanity, are growing and prospering. In time these human flowers will unfold their strength and beauty, to the pride and joy of their native city, Vienna, which can be seen spread out in all its splendour from the roof-terrace of the building.

This Kindergarten has the very making to promote the natural development of the little ones. It is here that they are made healthy and resistant to life's little ills. For "there is a sane mind in a healthy body". — After the time of careless happiness here in the Kindergarten, school, with new and greater claims and strains, awaits the children. But they will not have to take this new step unprepared.

It is due to the crisis of our time that, in many cases, education at home cannot be what it ought to be, and much of what is absolutely necessary for the child, must be left out. Here again, the Kindergarten fills the gap. It gives to the children what they have to go without at home: — Sense of order and community-spirit, independence, pleasure in play and work, and, most important of all, cleanliness and culture. With gay hearts the little ones return home — often enough to a dark and dreary home —, communicative of what they have received, and transmitting to others what has grown into a natural habit with themselves.

Thus the blessing of this most beautiful of gardens is radiant even in poor and scanty homes where joy is unknown. To know our growing youth safe in a place of joy and love like this — at a sad time like ours —, must fill all our hearts with hope and satisfaction. All the greater, therefore, is the merit of the Municipality of Vienna, to have found the courage, the will, and the means, in spite of all difficulties, to create possibilities for the protection of our youth from all the threatening dangers of a large city.

The Vienna Municipal Kindergartens.

The Vienna Municipal Kindergartens (Infant Schools) form part of the welfare activity of the City. They are for children before school age, from three to six years of age. Children of two years of age are only admitted in extremely necessary cases.

The Municipal Youth Welfare Department has been entrusted with the management of the Vienna Kindergartens by the Town Council. It

is one of the Municipal offices which deal with public welfare and social betterment within the City Welfare Scheme, under the management of Professor Dr. Julius Tandler (Vienna University), Alderman for the Municipal Department for Public Welfare and Social Administration.

The Kindergarten inspectors of the Youth Welfare Department are expert pedagogues, whole-time officers on the staff.

From the year 1865, there have been infant schools in Vienna, but they were run exclusively by private associations. Those early institutions hardly proved to be of any help to the children most in need of care and education, viz., the workers' children, as the high fee of one to three Austrian Gulden a month was too much for most parents, and the time from 9 a. m. — 12 o'clock noon and from 2 p. m. — 4 p. m. was insufficient. In the years 1889—1895, the City of Vienna took over 11 infant schools from suburban councils, in the course of the following years a number of Kindergartens run by private associations were taken over, so that, in 1912, the City had 25, and in 1918, 57 Kindergartens in its possession. The institutions themselves remained unchanged, their working time was the same as before, only in some cases the parents' contributions were reduced.

Under the present Municipal Government, the city Kindergarten scheme was enormously extended in the years after the Great War. The 57 infant schools of that time were converted into so called "Volkskindergärten", open from 7 a. m. till 6 p. m. without a break. This extension of attendance hours necessitated supplying the children with mid-day meals. For some months the Kindergartens were supplied by the American Child Relief Scheme, while breakfast was provided by a Dutch Relief Scheme. Since October 1922 the Municipality of Vienna supplies breakfast and mid-day meals itself.

In December 1951 the Municipality of Vienna owned 111 Kindergartens with altogether 514 groups or classes, each group, as a rule, consisting of 30 children, of which usually 27 are present (the subdivisions with two-year old children consist of a maximum of 22 children present). The children are mostly drawn from the working class population. The children needing care are sent to the Kindergartens through District Child Welfare Centres, the necessary connection between Kindergarten and Child Welfare Centre being made by the Public Welfare Worker (health visitor of the Municipality) who also visits the children's homes. Besides the Municipal Kindergartens there are also a number of Kindergartens run by associations of ethical or political distinction. Thus, the educational and school association "Freie Schule — Kinderfreunde", instituted by the Social Democratic Labour Party, runs a number of infant schools with altogether 500 children. There are also Kindergartens in connection with Nunneries (denominational Kindergartens) and a Jewish Kindergarten. The Montessori Society owns an institution called "House of Children — Haus der Kinder", run on Montessori principles. The Federal Government owns two Kindergartens in connection with Teachers' Colleges.

That the Kindergarten system is continuously spreading in Vienna can be clearly seen by the fact that a whole series of private Kindergartens have been established especially for children for the middle class population. The parents' contributions in these institutions amounts to 20—50 Austrian Schillings a month, the hours are from 9—11 a. m. and from 2—4 p. m. Such private infant schools may only be run if the owner proves to be in possession of a licence granted by the City Board of Education, which can only be obtained after passing a course of instruction at the Vienna College for Kindergarten Teachers, as well as a 2-year practical instruction at a public Kindergarten.

Of the 111 Municipal Kindergartens, 27 are situated in their own buildings, 48 in Municipal Dwelling Blocks, 29 in schools, and 7 in private houses.

Each Kindergarten is divided into several groups or classes. The

two largest Kindergartens have 7 groups each with altogether 210 children. Then there are 4 Kindergartens with 6 groups, 7 with 5, 18 with 4, 22 with 3, 75 with 2 and 13 with 1 group each.

Nearly all of the recently opened infant schools consist of 2—4 groups. Such smaller Kindergartens are found to be better than the large, barrack-like institutions, in which the danger of infection is always greater.

Special care has been devoted to the equipment and furnishing of the rooms. The class- or group rooms, with their light furniture in proportion to the size of the child, resemble big nurseries. Each infant school has a garden, a terrace, or a courtyard for playing games in the open air.

As mentioned before, most Vienna Kindergartens are "Volkskindergärten", open from 7 a. m. till 6 p. m., on Saturdays from 7 a. m. till 1 p. m. Only in some cases where this type of Kindergarten was not required, the so-called "Standard Kindergartens" have remained. They are open from 8 a. m. — 12 o'clock and from 2—4 p. m., on Saturdays, from 8 a. m. — 1 p. m., and the children, therefore, do not get mid-day meals there.

All Kindergartens are open all the year through, only a few which are less frequented in summer are closed for that seasons, the staff being employed for assistance in other Kindergartens.

The children are sent by the Youth Welfare Centre of the District, as said before. The Kindergarten superintendent has the right to fill vacancies. The superintendent may suggest that a child be expelled, the final decision, however, lies with the Youth Welfare Department (Inspectorate).

All Kindergarten groups are co-educational.

For some years, the little ones have been grouped together in so-called family groups, irrespective of their age. This new type of grouping represents the most up-to-date stage of Kindergarten development, in contradistinction to the system of grouping the children according to their age, as it was customary and considered especially helpful before.

The duration of educational work and attendance in the Kindergarten is fixed by a special regulation: — From 7—8.30 a. m. (in Standard type Kindergartens, from 8—9 a. m.), the children are collected. Then the children are occupied according to certain plans. This lasts till 11 o'clock a. m. with an interval of half an hour for taking some refreshment. At 11 o'clock, preparations are made for dinner (washing hands, laying the cloth, etc.). Then dinner is taken. From 12—2 p. m. (in subdivisions sometimes longer, if required) there is resting time. After 2 o'clock the children occupy themselves with what they like. In the afternoon, "tea" is given to the children. From 4.50 p. m. on, they can be fetched by their parents. From 4.50—6 p. m. those children whose parents are still employed at that time, are kept together at the institution.

This division of time which is common for all "Volkskindergärten" brings educational and attendance work into proper relation to each other, although it must be stressed that these two components of Kindergarten work are not to be divided.

At any rate, this regulation proves in no way an obstacle to the pedagogical work of the Kindergarten Teachers. It is the noblest task of the Vienna Kindergartens to provide a home, a place of merry communal life for the children. These institutions aim at ideal development: physical independence of the children, independence in dressing and undressing, in taking their meals, in occupation, in doing and creating things as well as in the ability to live within a community.

The equipment and furnishing of the rooms, to their smallest detail, meet the size and strength of the child and enable it to reach physical independence. The leading work of the Kindergarten teacher completes the harmonious development also mentally. Starting from the knowledge that only experiences made by the child itself are of value to it, this leading work is not confined to merely transmitting knowledge, but makes

the creation of experiences its chief task, as a source of impressions for the child. The experience, e. g., a common birthday celebration, is the so-called "working concentration" round which play and occupation are centred, in close relation to the experience.

The Kindergarten teachers prepare their work in writing. But it is not a rigid and fixed plan they make, for the children have a right to decide as well. The teachers' work is supported by materials for occupation, such as building-sets, little boards, etc. (Froebel's system), the rest of the means meets the child's independence (plasticine, gaily-coloured crayons, etc.). The parents' associations existing at each Kindergarten support and assist the teachers' work. Such practical assistance is especially required at Christmas, Carnival time, or Easter. In the case of large Kindergartens where it is difficult to get hold of the parents, the Kindergarten teachers have regular discussion evenings with the parents of the children of their group only. In some cases, working communities have been founded, in which the parents make cheap and practical toys under the instruction of the teachers (especially before Christmas).

There is an annual exhibition at each Kindergarten, where the works of the children are shown together with the work of the parents.

By Act of Parliament, only girls who have passed a course of instruction at a College for Kindergarten teachers will be employed. There are two such colleges of the Federal Government, two private ones, and one Municipal College for Kindergarten teachers (Vienna XII, Dörfelstrasse 1).

Applicants must also have had practical training at a public Kindergarten for at least three months and must be 18 years of age, as well as mentally and physically able to fill a teacher's profession.

Provision has been made for the further education of these qualified teachers employed at the Kindergartens. Monthly meetings are held and practical questions discussed in lectures. Classes are held at the Vienna Municipal Institute of Pedagogics. Besides, there are also courses of instruction for guitar-playing, sloyd, gymnastics, etc. Practical education is also given at two special instruction-Kindergartens (X, Waldmüllerpark and XII, Dörfelstrasse 1), each of which has a Montessori-Department. Furthermore, there is an annual conference of Kindergarten teachers which also serves pedagogical work.

The teachers are whole-time employed and come under the general service regulation for Municipal employees. They are united in the Kindergarten Teachers' Association, thus forming their own group within the Union of Municipal employees.

The teachers are divided into three groups, according to their employment: — Superintendents in charge of the management of the Kindergarten, group-leaders in charge of groups or classes, and so called "flyers", assisting in 2—5 groups.

Working-hours are the same for all three categories, i. e. 36 hours a week. Salaries vary according to years of service.

Teachers under 22 years with a service of less than 2 years receive a monthly salary of 190 Austrian Schillings. After 2 years of service, the salary rises to 211 S. The final salary after 35 years of service amounts to 400 S (472 S respectively). The second figure is for teachers of a higher salary group, III, comprising 25% of the teachers.

Annual holidays are granted to an extent as follows: —

Up to 5 years of service	21 days.
" " 10 " " "	24 "
" " 15 " " "	27 " etc.

The maximum is 36 days.

The cleaning is done by one attendant (charwoman) for 2 groups. Applicants must be 18 years old, physically able and capable of assisting

the children if necessary. The beginning wages of an attendant are 176 S, the final wages, 228 S, a month, after 35 years of service. Annual holidays for attendants are as follows: —

Up to	10 years of service	14 days
From	10—15 " " "	16 "
"	15—20 " " "	19 "
"	20 " " " upwards	22 "

The Kindergarten is under the management of a superintendent who, once a teacher, has been entrusted with this duty because of special ability. The superintendent sees to the administration of the Kindergarten and to the official books, such as admission index, the Kindergarten chronicle, accounts of the parents' contributions, stocktaking, a. s. o. For this office-work they are paid 5 hours overtime a month per group of a Volkskindergarten, and 4 hours per group of a Standard type infant-school. The superintendent exercises pedagogical control over the teachers under her and is also responsible for their work. Furtheron, she is obliged to attend to the monthly conference of superintendants, where resolutions of the educational committee are discussed and realised. For such additional work she is entitled to an extra payment of 9 S a month for each above two groups. This extra payment must not, however, exceed 45 S a month.

Medical control is exercised over the children by the physician examining each new child on admission. Should treatment for a longer period be necessary, the doctor will send the child to the respective clinic. The child's state of health — the result of the medical examination — is recorded in its health index.

The total expenditure on Municipal Kindergartens for the year 1951 was 5,189.804 S, of which there were:

Expenditure on staff	5,700.004 S
Expenditure on material	1,408.680 S
Technical improvements	81.150 S

The only revenues are the parents' contributions, amounting to 545.598 S per 1951. These sums are detailed as follows: —

Admission fee	—50 S per week
Parents' Contribution for breakfast and dinner	4.18 S " "

Only a small percentage of parents pay the full admission fee and contribution for meals. At present, there are 4.6% full payers, 5.8% half payers, 10.5% quarter payers, while 74.1% are freed from contribution. 25% of these do not even pay any admission fee.

The Kindergarten has become more indispensable than ever, at this time of bad economic conditions, when either both parents are forced to earn some money, or, which is worse, to be idle and unemployed. This crisis proves most destructive to family life, the formerly exclusive place of education for the child. This, together with the fact that just this early youth is most important and decisive for human life, justifies the efforts of the Vienna Municipal Kindergarten Scheme. To take over all children in need of care to offer them a sunny home and a loving, helping hand, is the aim the City of Vienna had in view when building the many excellent Municipal Kindergartens.