

TOWARDS CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING IN EUROPE

EXPLAINER ON CHILD POVERTY IN THE EU



EAPN AND EUROCHILD

TOWARDS CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING IN EUROPE

EXPLAINER ON CHILD POVERTY IN THE EU

EAPN AND EUROCHILD

2013

eurochild

EAPN
EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK



This publication is supported under the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity—PROGRESS (2007–2013).

This programme is managed by the Directorate-General for Employment, social affairs and equal opportunities of the European Commission. It was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals in these fields.

The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

PROGRESS mission is to strengthen the EU contribution in support of Member States' commitment. PROGRESS will be instrumental in:

- providing analysis and policy advice on PROGRESS policy areas;
- monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in PROGRESS policy areas;
- promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and
- relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large.

For more information see: ec.europa.eu/progress

The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

EUROPEAN ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK
RÉSEAU EUROPÉEN DE LUTTE CONTRE LA PAUVRETÉ ET L'EXCLUSION SOCIALE
SQUARE DE MEEÛS, 18 – 1050 BRUSSELS - Tel: +32 (0)2 226 58 50 - team@eapn.eu
www.eapn.eu

EUROCHILD
AVENUE DES ARTS, 1-2 – 1210 BRUSSELS, +32 (0)2 511 70 83 - info@eurochild.org
www.eurochild.org

Introduction

25 million children in the European Union (EU) are at risk of poverty or social exclusion – that is one child in every four. Most of these children grow up in poor families, who are increasingly struggling to provide them with a decent life. This is a social crime in an EU that prides itself on its social model, an attack on fundamental rights and a failure to invest in people and in our future. Can the EU afford the price?

This Explainer on child poverty is jointly produced by EAPN and Eurochild in order to:

- Raise public awareness about what child poverty means in a European context, its causes, and how it impacts on the lives of children and their families.
- Highlight effective solutions that can help to fight child poverty and promote the well-being of all children and families, particularly in times of austerity and public spending cuts.

We hope it will help to mobilize widespread public and political support for intensified action to reduce child poverty and to promote children's well-being, at a timely moment to support the implementation of the European Commission's Recommendation against child poverty.¹

EAPN has already issued a series of 3 explainers on Poverty and Inequality in the EU (2009), on Adequacy of Minimum Income in the EU (2010) and on Wealth, Inequality and Social Polarisation in the EU (2011).

Photo acknowledgments:

Cover page: *Shout, let it all out* @Sérgio Aires*; Mother and kids @ Hungarian Interchurch Aid; Children © UNICEF/SWZ/2011/John McConnico; Family © UNICEF/SWZ/2011/John McConnico.
p.6: Taken in a small home-based Montessori Pre-School in Wicklow (Ireland), which participates in the Universal Free Pre-School Year project. Also a member of Childminding Ireland © Patrick Bolger and supplied by Start Strong; *Kids festival in Saint Gilles, Walking the line 1* @Rebecca Lee, July 2012; *Spieloteek 1 Brussels* © Tram66*-Rebecca Lee, Sept 2011. p.8: Children © UNICEF/SWZ/2011/John McConnico; Pregnant mother and children © UNICEF/SWZ/2011/John McConnico; *Olhares* @Sérgio Aires*. p.10: *Soup kitchen Brussels* © Tram66*-Rebecca Lee, April 2009; *There is a time and an age for playing* © Juul Sels-Brandpunt23*. p.12: Child reading © UNICEF/SWZ/2011/John McConnico. p.14: *Old thing (Benjy)* © Kara Shallenberg, 25 Jan 2008, www.flickr.com/photos/kayray/2218638899/. p.6: Taken in a small home-based Montessori Pre-School in Wicklow (Ireland), which participates in the Universal Free Pre-School Year project. Also a member of Childminding Ireland © Patrick Bolger and supplied by Start Strong. p.17: *Sunday morning* © Jérôme, 07 Dec 2008, www.flickr.com/photos/jblndi/3088470051/. p.18: *Let's play* @Emanuel Batalha; *The strength of the money that grows and destroys beautiful things* @ Sérgio-Aires*, April 2008; *Playground* © Janet Ramsden, 08 Sept 2011 www.flickr.com/photos/ramsd/6126548033/. p.21: *Window childish innocence* © Juul Sels-Brandpunt23*. p.22: Children walking labyrinth with Gabriella the Soundweaver © Petter Akerblom, peace-trails.com/labyrinth/; Mother and kids @ Hungarian Interchurch Aid; Intervention of young people at Eurochild's Annual Conference 2012 in Bulgaria "Promoting the rights of children in alternative care across Europe" #1 © Eurochild, Oct 2012. p.25: *Nascimento de um pensamento* @Sérgio Aires*; Intervention of young people at Eurochild's Annual Conference 2012 in Bulgaria "Promoting the rights of children in alternative care across Europe" #2 © Eurochild, Oct 2012. p.30&32: Roma Children © UNICEF/SWZ/2011/John McConnico. p.33: *Happy 3rd birthday!* © Brittany Randolph, 12 Nov 2008, www.flickr.com/photos/celinesphotographer/3026624756/. p.34: *A vida como ela é # 5* © Sérgio Aires*. p.35: Father in wheel chair and baby © UNICEF/SWZ/2011/John McConnico. p.36: *Please Enjoy Poverty* © Tram66*-Rebecca Lee, March 2011. p.37&38: © UNICEF/SWZ/2011/John McConnico. p.39: *Closed Sign - Santa Monica Blvd. West Hollywood, Calif.* © Jojomelon, 1 Dec 2010, www.flickr.com/photos/jojomelons/5250592392/. p.40: *Kids festival in Saint Gilles, Wondrous science* @Rebecca Lee, July 2012. p.41: *Kids festival in Saint Gilles, Walking the line 2* @Rebecca Lee, July 2012. p.42: *Spieloteek 2 Brussels* © Tram66*-Rebecca Lee, Sept 2011; *Kids festival in Saint Gilles, Creating and fixing* @Rebecca Lee, July 2012; Romachildren.com © UNICEF/SWZ/2011/John McConnico. p.43: Speak Up! project © Eurochild, Nov 2011, www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/Projects/Speak%20Up/SpeakUpreportFINAL.pdf. p.45: Woman at EAPN's General Assembly @ lynn@art-Die Armutskonferenz, Vienna, June 2009. p.47: *Little girl in the lamp parade* @ Rebecca Lee, International day against poverty, Brussels, 17 Oct 2010. p.55: Mother and baby @ lynn@art-Die Armutskonferenz, EAPN General Assembly in Vienna, June 2009. p.55: Croatian children take action against child poverty during Eurochild's 2010 campaign © Eurochild, Oct 2010. p.59: *Les enfants de la révolution* @Rocco Luigi Mangiavillano, 2011. Back cover: *Olhares* @Sérgio Aires*.

* <http://sergioaires.blogs.sapo.pt/> * <http://tram66.jimdo.com/> * www.brandpunt23.com

1. EC Recommendation (20 Feb 2013): Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage.



CONTENTS7

WHAT IS CHILD POVERTY AND WHY IT MATTERS?9

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF CHILD POVERTY?19

WHO ARE THE CHILDREN AFFECTED BY POVERTY AND HOW MANY ARE THEY?23

MYTH BUSTER: CHALLENGING THE STEREOTYPES!31

WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS?43

KEY SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND DATA.....60



WHAT IS CHILD POVERTY AND WHY IT MATTERS?

Child Poverty in a European context

Fighting child poverty in Europe is an integral part of global solidarity

Child poverty is most commonly associated with developing countries and with the consequences of famine and war such as starvation, malnutrition, disease and premature death. However, child poverty, and sometimes extreme poverty, also exists today in the EU. This is the focus of this Explainer. Of course this does not detract from the seriousness of poverty elsewhere. Nonetheless, how we treat children closer to home is inextricably linked with our position as a global player in development and humanitarian aid. We cannot preach what we don't practice. The treatment of children in our own countries must be a priority for our own development but also as our contribution to a global vision of solidarity and more equitable distribution of resources.

Poverty is much more than living on low income

Child poverty is above all about children growing up in families experiencing poverty – that is without an income that is sufficient to prevent material deprivation and to ensure a decent life. However, it is about more than just not having enough money. It is also about not living in decent housing or having access to good-quality education and health care. It is about not having the same opportunities to develop and participate as equals in their own country. It is about children not having their voices heard. It is also about families struggling to provide a decent environment for their children against all the odds.

The lack of income combined with poor access to facilities and services also means that child poverty is about not being able to participate in everyday activities: such as going on school trips; taking swimming lessons; inviting friends over; attending birthday parties and other special occasions; or going on holiday.

1 Defining child poverty

For the purpose of this Explainer on child poverty, the EAPN and Eurochild Task Force agreed the following definition:

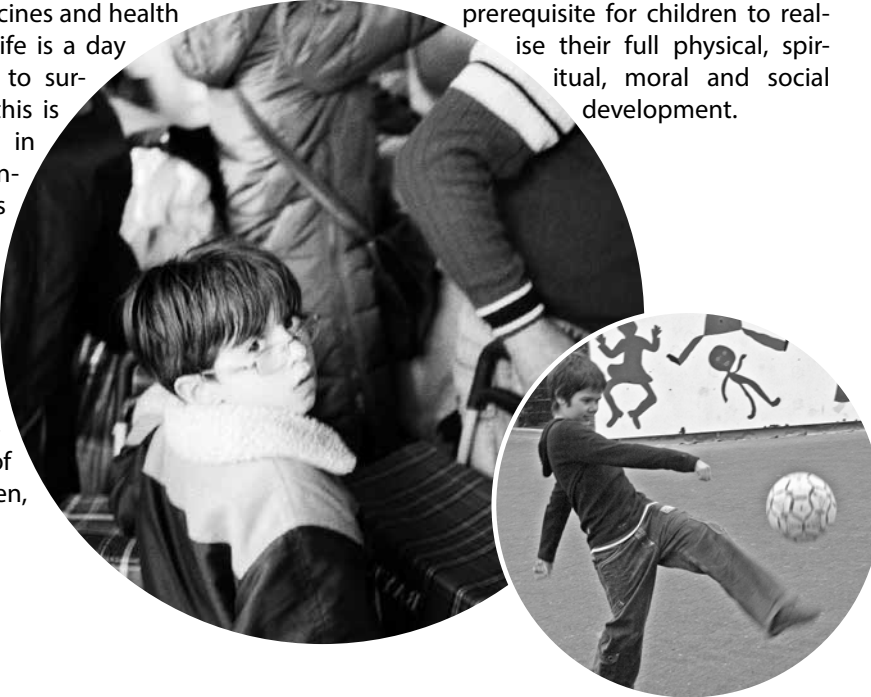
Children are living in poverty if the income and resources available for their upbringing are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living which is considered acceptable in the society in which they live and which is sufficient to ensure their social, emotional and physical well-being and development. Because of growing up in poverty they and their families may experience multiple disadvantages through low income, poor housing and environment, inadequate health care and barriers to education. They are often excluded and marginalised from social, sporting, recreational and cultural activities that are the norm for other children. Their access to their fundamental rights may be restricted, they may experience discrimination and stigmatisation and their voices may not be heard.

Poverty in Europe is primarily a relative concept

In general, child poverty in developed European countries is understood as a **relative** concept. It is when children's way of life is so much worse than the general standard of living in the country or region in which they live, that they struggle to live a normal life and to participate in ordinary economic, social and cultural activities. What this means and how severe the impact is vary significantly from country to country, depending on the standard of living enjoyed by the majority. While not as extreme as absolute poverty, relative poverty is still very serious and harmful. (see EAPN, 2009).

But absolute poverty still exists across Europe

There are still some children in Europe who experience severe deprivation. This is usually called **absolute or extreme poverty**. This occurs when they lack basic necessities such as regular, healthy food, heating, decent housing, clean water, sufficient clothing or medicines and health care and when life is a day to day struggle to survive. Of course this is more common in developing countries. But this is an increasing reality for some children in the EU, for instance Roma/ Traveller children, an increasing number of homeless children,



unaccompanied migrant children, children of undocumented migrants and children in very poor regions and neighbourhoods. As a result they have a much higher risk of bad health and dying young. Extreme poverty can be found in all Member States, but is more common in poorer Member States. Also, in some Member States decent schools, access to basic health services or sporting, recreational and cultural activities is much more limited. Increasing the basic level of provision for all children and families remains an urgent challenge.

Child well-being is more than tackling child poverty

Achieving well-being is a much broader concept than tackling child poverty alone. It involves taking a "whole child perspective" which considers the multi-dimensional nature of children's lives and the importance of their relationships. In other words, it encompasses health, education, family support, protection from harm, and children's ability to fully participate in decisions affecting them. An adequate standard of living is a prerequisite for children to realise their full physical, spiritual, moral and social development.

2 Defining Child Well-being

The Learning for Well Being Consortium of Foundations in Europe has defined child well-being as "realising one's unique potential through physical, emotional, mental and spiritual development ... in relation to self, others and the environment." It is based on a view of society in which all people can develop capacities to realise their potential by growing up and living in environments that cultivate those capacities and allow the uniqueness of each individual to unfold. This is a commitment that requires all parts of society contribute towards children's well-being and consider children's well-being as an important measure of its progress (see Kickbush et al., 2012). One of the key components of the Consortium's work has been the development of measurement, monitoring and evaluation approaches and indicators around children's capacities as well as the support provided by their environments. (www.learningforwellbeing.org)

UNICEF has identified six different aspects of child well-being which are important. These are: material well-being, health and safety, educational well-being, family and peer relationships, behaviours and risks, and subjective well-being (i.e. how children feel about themselves) (see UNICEF, 2010).

Nonetheless, the relation between income poverty and well-being is complex. Not all children who are living on a low income necessarily have low well-being, particularly if they live in a loving and safe family environment and if they have access to the same services and opportunities as other children. Likewise, it is possible for a child whose family is income rich to have their well-being threatened by living in an uncaring or unsafe family environment or being excluded from opportunities. However, it is much more likely that children living in families on a low income will find it harder to achieve well-being.

Children's rights require a different approach to tackling child poverty

Poverty denies children's access to their rights as defined in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**. The UNCRC spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere have: the right to survival; to develop to the fullest;

to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. The four core principles of the Convention are non-discrimination; devotion to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child. Application of the UNCRC requires a shift in perception of children away from seeing them as passive recipients of support to active agents who have a powerful influence on their environment and relationships.

All Member States are signatories to the UNCRC which is a legally binding international instrument. Consequently they are committed to upholding children's rights. The UNCRC provides an extremely useful and dynamic tool for promoting and protecting children's rights and well-being, both for central governments and for groups and individuals working with and for children at all levels.

7 Advantages of a rights approach to tackling child poverty & promoting well-being

1. It is key to the **prevention of child poverty**. If all children's rights are respected and enabled then children are unlikely to live in poverty;
2. It puts the needs of the **child at the centre of policy-making**. Addressing children's needs becomes a core political obligation and not just a possible policy choice;
3. It puts the focus on addressing the **specific needs of the child** here and now, as well as improving the position of their families and the communities in which they live;
4. It provides a useful framework for developing a **comprehensive strategy** to prevent and reduce child poverty. This is very evident in countries like Sweden which have a very strong emphasis on children's rights and consequently have been very successful in preventing child poverty and social exclusion;
5. It links the well-being of children with the well-being of **parents and families** and puts support for families at the heart of policies to tackle child poverty. For instance the UNCRC recognises that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding;
6. It puts a focus on the importance of adopting and enforcing strong **anti-discrimination** legislation as an essential element in preventing and reducing poverty and social exclusion;
7. It emphasises the **right of the children to be heard** and to participate in the decisions that affect them.



The reality of child poverty

What does growing up in poverty really mean for children and for their families?

Formal definitions and descriptions do not adequately capture the harsh day-to-day realities for children and how much poverty affects their lives. They do not show the difficulties that ordinary families face when living in poverty and the constant struggle to provide a decent home and life for their children, often against enormous odds and in the face of continuous criticism and stigmatisation. The multi-dimensional aspect of child poverty means that it can affect children in many different ways.

For a child, living in poverty can mean:

- *not having enough to eat or a healthy diet;*
- *not being able to afford new clothes or decent shoes;*
- *not having the equipment that other children take for granted in their country such as books and equipment for school or leisure equipment such as a bicycle or skateboard;*
- *living in poor or overcrowded housing: sharing rooms and living in a cramped space;*
- *living with inadequate heating and in a home suffering from damp;*
- *lacking a quiet place with enough room and light to do homework;*
- *not being able to afford proper health care or high-quality child care or to go to a good school or to get help when needed;*
- *having little chance to play in decent non-vandalised playgrounds, to take part in sports and creative/cultural activities;*
- *having little say in the decisions that affect daily life.*

Not all children in poverty necessarily experience all these disadvantages. In most countries, the majority of children living in poverty do not live in derelict and unsafe neighbourhoods, but in some countries or neighbourhoods they do. **To understand the reality better, we must therefore listen to the voices of children growing up in poverty and of their parents themselves**, as the following testimonies confirm:

4 What does poverty mean – to children?¹

"I close the window every evening, the smell of cooking from other flats makes me more hungry." – Andra, Estonia

"My clothes are clean but old and others are laughing at me." – Kaisa, Hungary

"I hate my birthday, because I never get presents like all the others." – Olev, Sweden

"You may be a bit shy to invite your friends over because when they come in they'll be freezing and they might want to leave early." – Megan, UK

"If I look at my mother, how much she is working, she has 3 jobs, I never want to grow up and become an adult, it is too bad." – Jerzy, Poland

"I do not want to go to a school trip because I do not want to be a burden on my parents." – Demetra, Greece

"Loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted is the most terrible poverty." – Elisabet, Estonia

"There's no point in dreaming because things don't come true anyway." – Dylan, UK

5 What does poverty mean – to families?²

"As an unemployed parent, I always feel the accusing eyes of others that do work. I want to take part in society. I want to send my children to school. I want to fill in the necessary forms. But I don't like to see myself as someone without a function in society. They don't have to blame me that there are barriers that prevent people going into training or finding a job." – John, UK

"As a single parent, it is really difficult to work and to raise your children. Additional difficulties, included a very limited labour market, or the crèche that closes early, this can be a reason why single parents stop working." – Ingrid, Norway

"I come from a Roma family with several problems. Roma are stereotyped and discriminated against. I have 5 children and they risk staying in the poverty trap. A better use of funds could help to solve the situation." – Maria, Slovakia

"If you are a mother, the mother has to work more and more to earn an income and sees less and less of her children. When my contract ends in June I will have no income and may have to leave my home, and may lose my children... A decent income is essential. It is absurd. Children now inherit the debts of their parents." – Kasia, Poland

"I cannot let my kids participate in leisure activities because I have to pay for them." – Grete, Estonia

1. Quotes from children which are used in the Explainer come from: Estonian children and young people engaged in local projects; The Speak Up! project run by Eurochild and eight partner organisations from across Europe: Greece, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK and Ireland; from a consultation project Children in Wales did on fuel poverty in 2010; and a presentation at Eurochild's 2011 Annual Conference in Wales. To preserve anonymity the names of children have been changed.

2. Quotes from parents which are used in the Explainer come from the reports of the 9th EU Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty in 2010 (Starting Point for a New Deal) and the 10th EU Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty in 2011 (Employment, Work and Jobs), coordinated by EAPN. To preserve anonymity, the names of parents have been changed.

What is the impact on children, families and society?

Putting children at risk

Early childhood is the most critical phase in a person's development. There is now substantial and indisputable research evidence demonstrating that this early period of life is when children's cognitive, physical and emotional capacity develops most rapidly. These early experiences have profound influence on lifelong health and well-being.

Poverty in this age can damage children physically, emotionally and psychologically and impact negatively on their well-being now and in the future. It undermines brain development and thus affects cognitive and linguistic abilities.

The longer children are living in poverty, the worse that damage is likely to become and the greater the likelihood of increased deprivation as adults, unless strategies are in place to counter this. Longitudinal studies indicate that, in most countries, the poorest children have fallen well behind the most advantaged in health and development at as young an age as two years.



Of course, with the efforts and support of their parents, some children growing up in poverty do achieve good outcomes. Thus childhood poverty, while greatly increasing the risk, does not necessarily lead to pessimistic adult outcomes.

However, poverty always increases the stress on children and families while they are growing up and diminishes the quality of their lives in the present. There are many ways in which growing up on a low income, in poor living conditions, with poor access to services and opportunities and missing out on normal childhood activities can have negative impacts on children's lives. Research (see for instance Hoelscher, 2004) has shown that it can:

- increase the risk of **poor physical and mental health**: children who grow up in poverty are likely to experience more illness during their lifetimes and die younger than their financially better-off peers; they have a higher risk of dying at birth or in infancy and are more likely to suffer chronic illness during childhood or to have a disability;
- endanger the right to a **secure and nurturing family life**: the day-to-day pressure of coping with poverty and social exclusion can become unbearable for parents and relatives and can lead to increasing isolation and stigmatisation. This undermines family well-being, putting at risk the quality of family life and increasing the risk of family breakdown – whereas most parents do everything they can to protect their children from the worst effects of poverty and to lessen its impact;
- impact on **social life** as it affects children's friendships and social networks, prevents them from participating in activities with other children, increases their chances of being bullied and their fears of being different, leading to stigma, exclusion and isolation;
- limit and undermine opportunities for children's **emotional, social and intellectual development**: the impact on health and cognitive

development is greater the younger children are;

- result in children falling behind at all stages of education and risks leading to **greater educational disadvantage** and dropping out of school early;
- isolate children from their peers, **stigmatise** them and put them and their families under increasing stress;
- have a **long-term effect** on their future well-being and on their future employment prospects;
- reduce **children's expectations** for their own lives. As a result, children can become demotivated and lose any aspirations, hopes and dreams for a better life.

These different dimensions of poverty and social exclusion tend to be interrelated and interdependent. Children growing up in families on a very low income are more likely to be living in overcrowded accommodation in a poor neighbourhood. This may contribute to poor health, low educational attainment and undermine their life chances, increasing the risk of non-intentional accidents and injuries. Of course children do not have to suffer all these deprivations to be experiencing poverty.

Driving families to breaking point

Most poor children grow up in poor families. Parents living in poverty face the daily struggle for survival for their families and are forced to make sacrifices to protect their children from the worst effects of poverty. For instance, they often prioritise food and clothing for their children, desperately trying to find solutions for themselves and their children. Yet parents are often blamed and stigmatised for not caring enough for their children in spite of doing the best they can in the difficult circumstances they find themselves. Parents are usually responsible for the welfare of their children. They are targeted

as the cause of the problem, and are often the subject of the main policy actions – i.e. narrow activation approaches, but are rarely provided with adequate means, consulted or accompanied in finding positive solutions for themselves and their children. It is also a key factor in indebtedness of families as parents struggle to meet the costs of key events such as going back to school, religious festivals and birthdays, or increasingly to cover basic needs with declining income and rising costs of basic goods. Parents are part of the solution and need active support.

Counting the costs for society

Child poverty also has a negative impact on the whole society. Society loses for three reasons:

- **first, child poverty undermines social solidarity and social cohesion.** More than this it is a betrayal of the promises of a European social model that will defend the rights of its most vulnerable citizens. It is difficult to see how Europe can hold its head up high to the world when, as a relatively rich region, it denies its own children the means to flourish;
- **secondly, child poverty results in increased social costs.** Child poverty is inextricably linked to poorer health, leading to long-term health problems. Economically this leads to considerably higher demands and costs for public services such as health and social welfare. Making appropriate investments to prevent child poverty today reduces health-care and social protection costs in the future, while also increasing social equity. As the New Economics Foundation has shown, prevention is better than cure and it is usually less expensive. The costs associated with family breakdown / poor mental or physical health, are much greater than early intervention and prevention (see Coote, 2012);

- **thirdly, society loses because economic productivity is reduced.** As children growing up in poverty often do not reach their full potential, they tend to gain less skills and this undermines their future chances of getting decent jobs, leading active and creative lives and contributing positively to economic development as well as to their local communities. This also means lower revenues from taxes and thus less to invest in social and economic development.

Thus society, as well as children and their families, bears very high long-term costs if investments are not made in tackling and preventing child poverty (see also Griggs and Walker, 2008 and Action for Children, 2009).

6 The Cost of Child Poverty

A 2008 study in Scotland highlighted that, in the longer term, about £13 billion (about €16 billion) might be gained yearly from ending child poverty, through economies linked to the direct costs of services to remedy the consequences of childhood deprivation such as poor health, low educational attainment, crime and anti-social behaviour (Hirsch, 2008).

There are thus very strong economic as well as rights arguments in favour of reducing or eliminating poverty and vulnerability of children. Authors devoted to development theories, such as Prebisch, Sen and Solow, have pointed out the importance of investing in education and health to help the economy to grow and develop. The cost of giving poor adults a second chance is much higher than the costs of appropriate and timely interventions for children. Those with adequate and quality nutrition, immunization, safe water, sanitation and teaching opportunities will be better prepared to benefit from education and social services they receive later, becoming adults with more chances to be healthy and happy, and lead productive and participative lives.



WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF CHILD POVERTY?



If we are to do something about child poverty we first must understand its main causes so that we can stop children becoming poor in the first place.

The causes of child poverty are closely linked to the causes of poverty more generally. Most children who live in poverty live in families which are poor and many live in regions and neighbourhoods where poverty is widespread.

The different levels of child poverty and well-being in different countries reflect both the differing levels of income and wealth in different Member States but also the different ways societies are organised and resources and opportunities are distributed.

Recognizing the structural causes

Inequality in the distribution of resources is the major factor in the creation of child poverty

Overall, Member States with the lowest levels of child poverty such as Sweden and Denmark tend to be those with the lowest levels of general poverty and inequality. This is because they back redistributive policies which ensure that parents have an adequate income, either through accessing decent jobs or through adequate income support. They also redistribute wealth more fairly through effective tax and social protection systems, which ensure access to good-quality services and opportunities to the majority of children

and their families³ (see for example Eurochild, 2010).

Reducing child poverty depends on policy choices

High levels of child poverty and low levels of child well-being are often the result of a political failure to address these structural inequalities in society. They are also the result of a failure of policy makers to sufficiently recognise children's rights and to prioritise the development of policies to support families and children. These policy choices are often linked to an overreliance on the market and economic growth to solve all social problems (trickle-down theory) and also a tendency to adopt short-term policy interventions at the expense of investing in long-term strategic solutions, particularly at a time of economic austerity.

It is easy to blame child poverty on the failure of families or parents to care responsibly for their children. In reality, singling out poor parenting as a cause of child poverty is to ignore deep-seated structural causes of poverty and social exclusion. A culture of blaming parents will also entrench social divisions and the marginalisation of the most vulnerable, to the detriment of children's lives.

3. However, even in these countries undocumented migrant children are excluded from social security and therefore risk extreme deprivation and exclusion. Even access to basic health care services are extremely problematic. e.g. UNICEF (2012) "Access to Civil, Economic and Social Rights for Children in the Context of Irregular Migration", Submission to the UN CRC Day of General Discussion on "The rights of all children in the context of international migration", 28 September 2012, p.22-23 (available online: www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/discussion2012/SubmissionsDGMigration/UNICEF_1.doc)

Other risk factors

Key factors that increase the risk of poverty for children include:

→ *parents being unemployed or employed in “poor” jobs*

If one or both parents are unemployed or are in low paid, insecure and often part-time employment then the risk of child poverty increases. In 2010, 9% of children in the EU lived in households with very low work intensity. In 2010, 10.7% of the working population, living in a household with dependent children, had an income below the national poverty risk threshold as against 8.5% of the overall working population. In the EU-27, lone parents have the highest in-work at-risk-of-poverty rates (21.6 % in 2010) (see Social Protection Committee, 2012). These risks can be further exacerbated by the limited availability or high cost of child care and other care services and by the lack of family-friendly working environments.

→ *inadequate income support systems*

Social transfers play a key role in reducing child poverty levels in the EU but whereas in some Member States they reduce child poverty levels by around 60% (e.g. Austria, Finland, Ireland, Sweden and UK) in others (e.g. Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Spain) they are much less effective and do so by around 20% or less (see Social Protection Committee, 2012).

→ *poor access to essential services*

Where health and social services are unevenly developed and affordable access is not guaranteed to all children, where early childhood care and education is underdeveloped or expensive, where good quality schools

are inaccessible and not evenly spread, where schools do not sufficiently take into account the social and cultural background of children living in poverty, where services are delivered in a fragmented, bureaucratic or stigmatising fashion, then the development and well-being of children is put at risk.

→ *lack of good-quality and affordable social and other housing*

The limited availability of affordable and good-quality housing and in particular social (public) housing and inadequate regulation of private housing can force families on low incomes into poor-quality housing and into ghetto situations.

→ *lack of play, recreation, sporting and cultural facilities*

Where there is inadequate provision of good-quality play, recreation, sporting and cultural facilities or where access is expensive then children and their families from low-income backgrounds are likely to be excluded from opportunities to participate.

→ *living in poor areas or districts*

Children growing up in areas with very high concentrations of poverty and disadvantage, such as decaying areas of industrial cities or isolated rural communities, are likely to have poorer access to services and facilities and may be more at risk of violence and abuse.

→ *coming from an ethnic minority and/or migrant background*

Children (and their parents) coming from an ethnic minority (especially Roma and Traveller children) or migrants are more likely to experience discrimination and racism and to be at higher risk of experiencing poverty. They also may have difficulties getting equal access to services and facilities because their social and cultural needs are not sufficiently taken into account; or due to practical and administrative barriers or legal and structural discrimination on the basis of residence status.

→ *having a disability*

Children with a disability or whose parents have a disability have a particularly high risk of growing up in poverty because of obstacles to accessing decent work and inadequate income support when they are faced with higher costs.

→ *being detached from their family and support networks*

There are many young people living in poverty who do not live with their families and are not able to do so. For some young people who have fled due to violence and/or abuse, the family home is an unsafe environment. The alternative for some is a childhood of poverty, homelessness and insecurity;

→ *loss of income in the early years*

Child poverty is particularly acute in children's earliest years which are vital to their



development. Many families suffer at least a temporary reduction in income due to the loss of maternal income, particularly lone parents; for families depending on welfare benefits the costs of purchasing equipment needed to ensure that a baby has a safe and nurturing start in life can be prohibitive. When mothers return to work, the absence of affordable childcare in many countries means that maternal income can be largely consumed by childcare costs; many countries provide free pre-school education but this is rarely available for children under three making childcare costs for the youngest children also the most expensive.

Passing on poverty from one generation to the next

The link between family and parental poverty and child poverty means that poverty often recurs from one generation to the next. This is reinforced by the low and declining level of social mobility in some countries. As we have seen, children born in poor households often face specific disadvantages to achieve their potential level of human capital and are also more likely to remain in poverty in their adult lives, unless concrete targeted actions are taken to level their life chances. This can be characterised as a pattern which is called the “intergenerational transmission of poverty and inequality”.



WHO ARE THE CHILDREN AFFECTED BY POVERTY AND HOW MANY ARE THEY? ⁴

How are child poverty and well-being measured?

Who are the children living in poverty? How best can we measure their numbers and assess their well-being?

Agreeing on appropriate indicators and ensuring that suitable data are collected regularly is vital to understanding which children are affected by poverty and how many of them there are. Measuring the extent and depth of child poverty and well-being has been the source of much study and debate

in recent years. In the past, there was a tendency to focus mainly on income measures. However, it is increasingly recognised by policy makers that, to capture the multi-dimensional and complex nature of child poverty and child well-being, it is vital to develop a broad range of indicators.⁵



▣ Europe 2020 Poverty and Social Exclusion Indicators

As part of the Europe 2020 Strategy, agreed by the EU's Heads of State and Government in June 2010, an "at risk of poverty or social exclusion" (AROPE) indicator has been adopted for measuring progress on poverty and social exclusion across the EU. This is a combination of three indicators:

- the **standard EU "at-risk-of-poverty" indicator**, i.e. a relative measure of low income: people at risk of poverty are people living in a household whose total equivalised income was below 60 % of the median national equivalised household income during the income reference period (i.e. generally the calendar year prior to the survey);
- an **indicator of "severe material deprivation"**: people are severely deprived if they live in a household experiencing at least four out of a list of nine deprivations;
- an **indicator of "very low household work intensity"**: people in very low household work intensity are people aged 0-59 living in jobless or quasi-jobless households – i.e. in households in which, on average, adult members aged 18-59 worked less than 20% of their total work potential during the income reference period.



4. The exact numbers of children at risk of poverty and social exclusion in the EU vary somewhat from year to year. To find the most up-to-date figures go to the Eurostat web site at: epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/income_social_inclusion_living_conditions/introduction.

5. Much work has been done by academics and research institutes as well as the Indicators Sub-Group of the EU Social Protection Committee and other key international institutions such as UNICEF and the OECD to develop a much more comprehensive and child specific set of indicators. (see last chapter for references).

The Europe 2020 indicator for measuring poverty and social exclusion can be broken down to show the overall number of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion. However, while this is a useful way of giving an overall indication of the scale of the child poverty and social exclusion, it is not sufficient to capture all the dimensions of child poverty and social exclusion and of child well-being. A wider range of indicators is necessary, reflecting the different aspects of child well-being⁶ and including a focus on children's healthy development and learning, as well as breakdowns by age of children and household status. It is also important to capture the depth and intensity of poverty, changes over time and the extent to which children are long-term or persistently poor. Much of this information is now available and the 2012 SPC Advisory Report to the European Commission on tackling and preventing child poverty, promoting child well-being (Social Protection Committee, 2012) provides a useful synthesis of the indicators that can be used to monitor child poverty and well-being across the EU.

The major EU statistical data source for measuring and monitoring children's poverty and well-being is the **EU Statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC)** which, in most countries, is a 4-year rotational longitudinal survey (i.e. persons are followed over time for a period of four years). An important problem with EU-SILC data is their poor timeliness, even if major efforts are being made in the European Statistical System to improve the situation. Another problem is the lack of information in EU-SILC that specifically addresses the living conditions of children. A module on child material deprivation was included in the 2009 wave of EU-SILC, which

6. For instance, extent and depth of relative income poverty, employment status of parents, extent of deprivation (i.e. lack of necessities), housing situation, access to child care, health status, educational status, participation in sporting, recreational and cultural activities, etc.

collected such information. This module proved extremely useful and it is essential that such child-specific questions be regularly added to future waves of EU-SILC.

Important data have also been available from other surveys in areas such as health and education. However, if children's well-being is to be taken seriously what is really needed is an **EU-wide survey monitoring the poverty and social exclusion of children and child well-being** every year or second year. A longitudinal survey of children (i.e. a survey following children over time) could be particularly useful in helping to capture the dynamics of child poverty and well-being. Already such surveys (birth or child cohorts) are undertaken in a number of Member States, for example Ireland. EU-SILC already provides useful (4-year) longitudinal information on the situation of children even if the questions address the situation of households (including households with children) and of adults, and not the specific situation of children. In 2005, a thematic module on the intergenerational dimension of poverty was included in EU-SILC and also provides⁷ useful information. Even if the information available is limited, this makes it possible to explore some dynamic aspects of child poverty.

Improving the overall collection of survey data on children's well-being at national and EU levels is important but, on its own, is not sufficient. It will not capture the situation of **some groups of children who are experiencing severe poverty and social exclusion but who are largely "hidden" or invisible in data collection** (such as children in difficult family situations, homeless and street children, children living in or leaving institutions, children of undocumented migrants or undocumented themselves (PICUM

7. These indicators are for 2011, except for the child deprivation indicator which is based on a thematic module on material deprivation collected in 2009.

2009 and UNICEF 2012), or children from an ethnic minority background such as Roma or Traveller children). **Specific additional studies are urgently needed to capture and monitor the situations of these children.** Making better use of administrative data can be helpful in this regard. Both statistical and qualitative data is also important to develop a comprehensive picture.

Finally, as it is important to make sure that the indicators are really capturing the key issues, poor families and children must be part of the process. This means developing more participative methodologies which engage with children as well as parents on what factors should be considered when developing

indicators, as well as reviewing together the effectiveness of the indicators and data in capturing their reality. One area that needs to be further developed in most countries is capturing the views of children experiencing poverty and not just to depend on the views of parents.



How many children are living in poverty?

How serious is the problem of child poverty really? How does the situation of children compare with that of adults? Are some groups of children at particular risk?

Poverty, and child poverty in particular, have for long been a very serious problem in the EU and, in many countries, they are becoming more widespread and severe with the current economic and financial crisis.

Some key facts

- currently around **25 million children**, i.e. over **1 in 4 children**, are at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion (AROE – see Box 7);
- AROE rates are much higher in some countries than others (17% or less in Denmark, Finland, Slovenia and Sweden compared to 40% or more in Hungary, Latvia, Romania and Bulgaria);
- in some countries, children living in poverty are mainly from particular groups of children at high risk such as children from a migrant background, while in others, child poverty is much more widespread amongst children generally;
- children are more at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion than adults in most (19) Member States (on average, across the EU, the gap is around 3 percentage points);
- the severity of child poverty and social exclusion and the extent of child deprivation vary greatly between Member States. For instance, one study has shown that countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, Finland and Luxembourg have deprivation rates of under 10%, whereas Portugal, Latvia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania have rates ranging from 40% to nearly 80% (see Guio, Gordon and Marlier, 2012).⁸

8. It is important to note that these wide differences in levels of deprivation are, in part, because deprivation aims at measuring the differences in actual standard of living on the basis of an EU standard whereas income poverty is a relative measure using a national threshold.

Are some children at greater risk?

Children facing the highest risk of poverty are those growing up with a **lone parent** or in a **large household** consisting of two adults and at least three dependent children (see Social Protection Committee, 2012).

The majority of lone parents at risk of poverty are **women**. This does not mean that being a single parent or large family is in itself a problem but it highlights the reality that many such families have more difficulties in acquiring sufficient income through work and/or benefits to cover their household costs.

The above overall figures for child poverty only give part of the picture as there are often additional factors that make some children even more at risk, as mentioned in the first part of this chapter.

Then, there are particular groups of “hidden” children who experience particularly severe poverty and social exclusion and who are invisible. This is because either they do not live in private households covered by general living conditions surveys or their numbers in such surveys are too small for reliable analysis.

These include:

- children in **difficult family situations** such as those subject to *maltreatment, neglect, sexual abuse, drugs and alcohol abuse, and mental health problems*;
- those who are at risk from **crime, violence or trafficking**;
- those **not living in families** such as:
 - unaccompanied children;
 - children in alternative care settings such as institutions and young people leaving care arrangements;
 - children living in temporary accommodation;
 - children with parents working abroad;
- children of undocumented migrants;
- homeless and street children;
- and children living in bad housing (homes with cramped and overcrowded conditions, homes that are affected by damp and/or condensation);
- children who lose their home due to their family being evicted;
- and those living in **areas with a high concentration of poverty and social exclusion** such as:
 - urban areas with high levels of deprivation;
 - isolated rural communities.

At-risk-of-poverty rates

Children growing up with a lone parent: **40,2%**

Children living in a large household consisting of two adults and at least three dependent children: **26,5%**

Children in households with two adults and two children: **14,5%**

What is the impact of recession and austerity?

The economic recession and the introduction of austerity measures are worsening child poverty and social exclusion in many Member States (see for instance Ruxton, 2012). Between 2008 and 2011 the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) rate for children increased in 17 Member States and went down in just 4. There is a rise in children becoming homeless either because their family has been left homeless or because of a breakdown of family relationships due to the strain resulting from the crisis (see Fondville and Ward, 2011). As the economic crisis lasts, youth **homelessness** is also increasing in many EU member states. This rise is generally underestimated as many homeless young people spend months or years sofa surfing with friends or relatives, or living in overcrowded or unfit housing. The most significant increase in youth homelessness was in Denmark where 1,002 homeless people were aged between 18 and 24 in 2011⁹. This represents an increase of 58% compared to 2009 (FEANTSA, 2012). Family homelessness is also increasing in several EU contexts. In 2012, 6 out of 21 Member States reported an increase in family homelessness in the past 4 years (Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Slovenia). This partly reflects societal changes such as the rising rates of divorce and family breakup. However,

9. The Danish National Centre for Social Research *Homelessness in Denmark 2011*.

increasing **vulnerability of families with children to evictions** and repossessions in the context of the crisis is also a factor (FEANTSA, 2013).

In many poorer regions, parents are forced to leave their countries in search of work, sometimes leaving their children behind with grandparents or other family members, or in institutions where they have don't have enough money to provide for them in the worst cases.

The crisis is sucking new families into poverty – often those who have never been at risk before. The shock of suddenly becoming poor can have a **strong emotional impact** on these children who can find it hard to adjust to their new situation and the changes it brings to their daily lives. Secondly, **austerity is deepening the severity and depth of poverty**, particularly for groups already at high risk such as children from an ethnic minority or migrant background, and particularly children of undocumented migrants. In part the worsening situation arises from increasing unemployment, especially long-term unemployment, and worsening employment conditions, with cuts in wage levels or reductions in hours. However, it is also linked to restrictions in income-support

systems, including specific cuts to child-income support, and a drop in disposable income coupled with rising prices of basic food, energy and services. Cut-backs in essential services, provided by the public sector and NGOs, particularly hit families on low incomes. A symptom of the impact of the crisis is the **increasing demands for food aid and other emergency services.**



8 Case study on the growth in food banks in Wales

The Office of National Statistics figures from 2009/10 to 2010/11 say average UK weekly income fell from £373 to £359, with average household income in Wales 12% lower than the country as a whole. At the same time over the past year, the number given food parcels in Wales has reached a record 23,000.

New food banks have been opening to help people in poverty, says a charity. The Trussell Trust, which runs some food banks, says nearly one in four of the families it assists have some money coming in, but not enough. Flintshire Food Bank, which opened in Mold in May, has already helped 400 people, giving them three meals a day on three days a week. Food banks are now opening in Wrexham, Denbigh, Caernarfon and Pwllheli, while in south Wales three have recently opened in Abergavenny, Chepstow and the Vale of Glamorgan. There are now 23 in total across Wales.

Source: Report for BBC Wales by Sarah Dickins, BBC Wales economics correspondent, 2nd October 2012.
www.bbc.co.uk/uk-wales-19785134



Myth Buster: Challenging the stereotypes!

This 'Myth Buster' sets out to provide some answers to challenge typical myths and stereotypes about child poverty in Europe today.

Myth 1 There is no child poverty in affluent Europe; real poverty only exists in Africa



→ While there is more extreme poverty in Africa and other developing countries with more children dying from hunger, bad health and violence, there are still many children in every nation in Europe living in poverty who experience hunger and food insecurity, poor health outcomes and reduced life expectancy, who live in bad housing and dangerous environments, who suffer from educational disadvantage, who experience discrimination, stigmatisation and exclusion, and who miss out on things other children take for granted. **Over 1 in 4 children across the EU are at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion. 1 in 5 (21%) are materially deprived** (see Guio, Gordon and Marlier, 2012).

"Last night I was very sad, my little sister was very sick, but mother had no money to buy medicine. There are still 3 days until the child benefit payment, I am really worried." - Anu, Estonia

"They could lower the price (of fuel) because if people can't afford it they could die of coldness and then that would be because of the people who set the prices."
- Gareth, UK

Myth 2 Irresponsible parents are the main cause of child poverty. It's the family's own fault that they are poor



- It is **too easy** to blame children's parents and families for their situation. No one wants to be poor and it is not a lifestyle anyone chooses.
- **Poverty has multiple root causes**, and very often parents experiencing poverty themselves grew up in deprived situations which inhibited their chances of full development during childhood.
- **Stigmatising and judging** struggling families only serves to further exclude them and expand the social divide.
- **Most parents who are poor do their very best** to protect their children from poverty and struggle to find a way out. They often sacrifice themselves to provide for their children. For instance they often skip meals to ensure that there is enough food on the table for their children. Their

poverty is primarily the result of structural factors such as unequal access to rights, resources and services – for example to adequate income, decent employment, essential services or decent housing.

- **All parents have some behaviour patterns that impact negatively on their children.** Parents who are struggling to make ends meet, or who are coping with their own painful childhood experiences may be less emotionally available to provide necessary support for their children.
- **A small minority may resort to substance abuse**, placing their children at risk of abuse or neglect.
- **The best way to support the children in these families is not to punish the parents** but to ensure the family has all the necessary material support as well as appropriate social interventions that enable parents to fully embrace their responsibilities towards their children.

“Services have to be accessible, not just childcare, but also wider such as health services, so that people can work.”
– Rosalia, Spain

“If you are a Roma woman once you have children, it is impossible to find work.”
– Mara, Hungary

Myth 3 Children can't be poor when they have all the latest gadgets and material goods



- will have an **impact on how children can participate in school & in social media.**
 - New clothes, access to leisure, sports, cultural activities and equipment are not a question of survival, but they are **fundamental to children's development and self-confidence.**
 - There is **enormous social pressure** on families to be able to provide the necessary material goods for their children – birthday parties, school equipment, new clothes – so their kids will feel included. To be able to do this parents often will cut back on or go without essentials like heating or food or may borrow money and get into debt.
- “Poverty is when I do not have any money for toys.”* – Joaquin, Spain
- “Does Santa know that we are poor?”*
– Anton, Estonia
- “I have been criticised by some neighbours who consider they know better what my priorities should be, for buying my children the same toys as their school friends have. It's really tough, but I much prefer that to seeing my kids excluded by their friends at school, if not bullied. Who doesn't want to make one's children happy?”* – Alain, France
- **Children living in poverty usually do not** have the equipment and gadgets that are “normal” for other children. However, some do.
 - This depends a lot on what is considered “normal” in a particular country or region. **This is not because parents are irresponsible but rather they may feel that their children will feel different or left out or be bullied or excluded** if they don't have the same things as their peers.
 - **Having access to a computer at home** may not be considered a basic need but

Myth 4 Most poor parents are lazy and don't want to work



- For most parents the opposite is the case. Most parents want to work. In most countries many children in low income households have at least one parent in work.
- The **in-work at-risk-of-poverty rate** for households with dependent children in the EU is nearly 11% compared to just over 7% for households without dependent children. For single parents with dependent children it rises to 19.5% on average and in some countries (Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, Romania and Luxembourg) to over 24%.
- The **problem is not one of laziness but of low wages and job insecurity**, sometimes enforced part-time work and the lack of available well-paid jobs which would lift them and their families out of poverty.
- In fact **many parents are juggling several low-paid jobs** just to make ends meet which leaves no time for any family activities and supporting their children to thrive and develop.

- For many other parents who want to work the lack of decent jobs means that **unemployment is a real problem**.
- Additional factors, such as **lack of affordable quality childcare support** for families, **lack of family-friendly work arrangements** that allow parents to spend quality time with their children and **lack of affordable transport between home and work**, make the situation worse.

“In Slovenia, about 300 people we know have lost their jobs in my city and all the families are affected. The children can see that their parents can't afford things. People are too ashamed to go to seek social assistance which involve signing lots of forms. According to the legislation, if people receive social assistance they have to sign their houses over to the state. Instead of doing this many people continue to accumulate debts and pass these onto their children. My children can see they have not got what other children have. Parents cannot afford the expense of their children as students.. when you see an official they say – what can I do for you? – and you say – I do not have enough money to survive.” - Martina, Slovenia

“In the Netherlands, our self-organized single parents' organization lobbied hard for a law that gives single parents the opportunity to work only for 25 hours, but receive a full salary. The law is adopted, but the politicians didn't implement it.” – Lisa, Netherlands

Myth 5 Increasing the employment of parents is the solution to child poverty



- The best way to prevent child poverty and exclusion is to **guarantee access to rights, resources and quality services for the child and family**.
- Ensuring **adequate minimum income** for families who cannot work or find a decent job which covers the real cost of living is vital along with child income support, social assistance for families with children and a **tax system** that is supportive of families with children.
- Children's well-being also depends on **access to good-quality services** and **if these are not available and accessible their well-being is endangered** even if their parents are working.
- Increasing access to employment of parents is a very important means of lifting families out of poverty. However, it is **only part of the solution** and, indeed, is not always a solution.
- **Not all jobs** provide an adequate income and are family friendly (see Myth 4).
- **Poor quality jobs** do not lift families out of poverty. Often not enough quality jobs exist to meet the needs of parents, particularly in the local area where they live.
- More importantly, **not all parents are able to work**, perhaps due to disability or illness, or lack of training/skills or because of their caring responsibilities.
- The **lack of affordable quality childcare** nearby is often a major barrier.
- So is the **lack of affordable and efficient public transport**. Parents may lack the financial means to travel to jobs or travel options may not be available.

“In Austria, if a child becomes sick a parent has a right to 10 days paid leave, but the number of days is the same even if there are five children. Employers do not want to recruit these women because of this...” – Monika, Austria

“Work, work, work, you hear nothing else.... “This will solve your problems” the minister says, in the Netherlands. For single parents this is not so evident. The hours that your children go to school are not adapted to working hours. If your child is sick, you feel guilty and you feel judged. Everything is put on your shoulders when you start working. People aren't aware of this.” - Marieke, Netherlands

Myth 6 Living on benefits is a lifestyle choice: benefits are too generous



- If benefits are so generous **then why are so many people so poor?**
- In most EU Member States, the **level of benefits falls well below what is necessary to live** with dignity and in some countries far below (see Frazer and Marlier, 2009). Work on budget standards in many countries (e.g. UK and Ireland) has highlighted the gap between benefit levels and real family costs (see MacMahon et al, 2012).
- Living on benefits is no panacea. It is a **constant struggle to make ends meet** on very low amounts. Families have to manage their funds very carefully, prioritizing the essentials such as clothing, fuel and rent – there is little or nothing left for anything else or for any crisis situation. As a result, debt is a real problem for many families.
- **Parents depend on benefits because they have no other choice** and because, for a whole range of reasons, they **cannot**

access adequately paid and flexible employment that will both give them sufficient income to lift them out of poverty and allow them to fulfil their caring responsibilities for their children.

- Also, **many households move in and out of the benefit system** and access benefits for a short time. However, the longer that families depend on benefits, particularly when they are very low, the more persistent and deeper their level of poverty is likely to become.
- **Paying decent benefit levels is not a disincentive to work – quite the contrary.** Countries that pay the best benefit levels also have the highest activity and employment rates. Decent benefit levels provide a firm foundation for parents to plan their lives, look for work and continue to keep their children out of poverty, and they prevent the increasing social, economic and health costs of deepening poverty.

“My room, the roofs damp and then, if I just look right from the bed the whole entire walls covered in damp, and I’m there in bed freezing cold.” – Gwen, UK

“I was working in construction but lost my job, now my unemployment benefit has run out and I don’t know how I’m going to support my family. I just feel desperate.” – Juan, Spain

Myth 7 Education is the only way out of poverty



- **Good quality education** is one of the keys to breaking the intergenerational recurrence of poverty. In particular, early learning is critical to children’s cognitive development and thus to their educational attainment.
- However, **reducing educational disadvantage is not just a question of improving access to schools or kindergartens.** Education systems need to focus on the full development of the child’s personality (see UNCRC article 28 on education). Soft skills such as empathy and communication are as important in today’s society as knowledge. Schools and professionals need to respond to learning differences and promote diversity. Efforts to eradicate discrimination, racism and bullying in all education settings are urgently needed.
- But even with good schools, other things are important for educational success. **Education needs to be free.** Many poor parents struggle to meet the extra costs associated with their child’s education.
- **Informal and non-formal education,**

provided by the community and local organisations such as through youth groups, provide an important complement to formal education systems.

- **To do well at school, children need to have a safe and warm home** with enough space to study and sufficient access to books and learning materials.
- They also need to have a **decent diet and appropriate clothing.**
- **Parents need to have sufficient time and resources to provide crucial back up and help.**
- The provision of **free or low-cost nutritious school meals, is often a vital support** in poorer regions.
- Also, **at the present time, education is no guarantee of a decent income.** With many graduates becoming unemployed and falling into poverty, even a good education does not prevent some families with children being in poverty.

“Young people need support which will get them off the street and which will help them to work out what they want to do. Their talents are lost for all to society. We need to support young people who fail at school as early as possible, to give them an early change” (...) “Support for schools entails not only free access to meals, school trips, libraries, holidays, music, theatre, school and training but also culture, to help people make their vocational choice.”
– Stefan, Austria

Myth 8 Providing universal services is throwing money away to children and parents who don't need them



- **Not true.** Providing universal access to key services of good quality such as child care, education, health and social services and to recreational, sporting and cultural activities is the **best and most efficient way of promoting the well-being of all children, preventing poverty and avoiding stigmatisation and exclusion of some children.** Better-off parents already pay more for such services through the tax system and this entitles them to benefit from such services. This ensures commitment to quality services for all.
- It is also the best way of **preventing children from poor backgrounds falling into poverty and social exclusion.**

- Universal provision sends out the message that **the State values all children and supports parents in their role of bringing up children.**
- It is also an acceptance and symbol of **the State's responsibility to guarantee that all children can access their fundamental rights.**
- Finally it is a way of promoting **greater social solidarity and cohesion.**

“I have a daughter with disabilities – and she is now finishing basic education, but she doesn't have any chance to be included. I have to adapt my life completely to her needs. When she's 10 she will get disability benefit. But she's locked up at home – we don't have enough money – we can't afford to go out, to cafes.. We want our daughter to be integrated, but it just seems impossible.” – Zuzana, Slovakia

Myth 9 There is plenty of help available for families and children



- This is **not true in all Member States.** The level of services and supports for children and families varies widely across the EU and indeed from region to region or district to district. For example, some countries offer minimal public services, leaving reliance on under-funded voluntary or NGO services.
- In **many countries where services do exist they are overstretched and unevenly spread** and, with the impact of austerity, many services are being cut severely.
- Also, **some services are only available for certain sections of the “poor” and some groups** such as children with a disability and children from a migrant background may not have access, thus reinforcing the deserving and undeserving divide.

- **Benefit systems are often limited, overcomplicated** and people do not always get or know what they are entitled to and some groups, such as migrants, may not be entitled to access any State benefits.
- In addition, **many families are reluctant to seek help, for fear of stigma.**
- Also, **many people are trapped in poor and overcrowded housing.**
- One **example** of the wide variation in the availability of services is early childhood education and care. At the 2002 Barcelona European Council, Member States agreed by 2010 to provide full-day places in formal childcare arrangements to at least 90% of children aged between three and compulsory school age, and to at least 33% of children under three. Progress has been uneven. For 0-3 year olds, five countries have exceeded the 33% target, and five others are approaching it, but the majority is falling behind, with eight achieving only 10% or less. For the over 3-year olds, eight countries have exceeded the 90% target and three others are approaching it, but coverage is below 70% in close to one third of the Member States (see European Commission, 2011).

“One woman was told to put her children into an orphanage, because she did not have enough money to look after them. It's absurd. She had four children. It would have been much more expensive to have the children looked after in an orphanage.” – Pavel, Czech Republic

Myth 10 Preventing and tackling child poverty is too expensive. We can't afford to tackle poverty at present: once the economy is grown all will be well



- The number of children experiencing poverty or social exclusion was **already a major problem in the EU in the boom years, with high employment, before the current recession and austerity programmes began.** In 2007, it was 26.3% and in 2011 it is 26.9%. So just waiting for renewed economic growth is not a solution.
- What is important is **putting in place the right policies to prevent as well as to reduce child poverty and to enhance children's well-being.** The fact that some Member States (e.g. Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Slovenia) have been much more successful than others in achieving low levels of child poverty or social exclusion shows that policies do make a difference and progress is possible.
- Indeed, the real argument is that not preventing and tackling child poverty is too expensive. **Investing in the well-being of children, as well as being important in the present, is an investment**

in their well-becoming in the future. Children who grow up in poverty do less well as adults, are likely to contribute less to future economic growth and development and cost the State more to support.

- Given the ageing European population, it is **more vital than ever that all young people are enabled to reach their full potential and contribute fully in the future.** To cut investment in children and especially in tackling child poverty at a time of austerity is a short-term action which has long-term negative costs and consequences. The very high costs for individuals, society and the economy that result from child poverty and the positive outcomes that come from investing in children highlight that societies cannot afford not to invest in preventing and tackling child poverty (see Griggs and Walker, 2008 and Action for Children, 2009).

“All children need a warm bed, a roof and to eat healthily to be well.” – Maria, Spain

“Children are considered to be half persons, not citizens (they don't vote), but they are our future!” – Balazs, Hungary

“Children, as children, and as tomorrow's adults, need to be a key focus of social policies. If you meet the needs of children, you meet the needs of all human beings. Child well-being and the social inclusion of children need to be considered in all its multidimensionality.” – Dirk, Germany



WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS?



Some countries and some regions are much more successful in fighting child poverty and social exclusion, as well as promoting well-being. This proves that putting in place the right policy matters. It is vital to draw on these positive examples to identify what needs to be done.

Prerequisites for effective action

- Evidence from across the EU shows that there are number of things that need to be in place if effective policies and programmes are to be developed and sustained over time, (see Devlin and Frazer, 2011). In particular:
- governments need to make a strong political commitment to promoting the well-being of all children, to preventing and tackling child poverty and social exclusion and to fostering children's rights. This can be reinforced by appointing a Minister and/or a cabinet committee for child well-being and children's rights;
- a commitment to ensuring a fair distribution of income and resources and low levels of inequality through a progressive taxation system is important to prevent poverty and social exclusion arising and promote well-being across society;
- a comprehensive, multidimensional and integrated approach or strategy needs to be developed for preventing and tackling child poverty and promoting child well-being which addresses all the different aspects of child well-being in a holistic and coordinated manner across a range of policy areas. In other words, a multi-level and multi-sectoral approach is necessary;
- a commitment to prevention and the provision of universal services which are available to all children and their families is important to ensure all children's well-being from the outset and thus reduce the chances of falling into poverty;
- as part of a strategic approach clear objectives and quantified targets and timetables for action need to be established for reducing child poverty and social exclusion and promoting child well-being;
- to ensure a comprehensive approach, formal institutional arrangements need to be put in place for mainstreaming a concern for children into all areas of policy making and for coordinating the planning and delivery of policies both horizontally (i.e. across different government departments) and vertically (i.e. between different levels of government) so that they are mutually reinforcing;
- tackling child poverty and social exclusion needs to be part of a broader national strategy to prevent and tackle poverty and social exclusion and inequality;
- effective policies must be put in place to support families, but family support alone will not be enough to promote child well-being;
- policies to tackle child poverty need to be set in the broader context of policies to promote child well-being (see box 9). There is a need to combine both universal policies and actions aimed at promoting the well-being of all children and preventing poverty with targeted policies aimed at alleviating poverty and social exclusion;



📌 Key issue: Why put tackling child poverty into the broader context of child well-being?

There are four main reasons why tackling child poverty and social exclusion should be set in the broader context of promoting child well-being:

First, to achieve progress in the long-term it is important to focus on prevention as well as on alleviation of child poverty and social exclusion. This means putting in place the policies and programmes that will, as far as possible, promote the well-being of all children and prevent them and their families from falling into poverty and social exclusion in the first place. It thus also puts the focus on early intervention to prevent problems arising.

Secondly, a focus on well-being puts children's rights and needs at the centre of policy making. It recognises that children are rights' holders in their own right and that protecting and ensuring children's rights is the best way of ensuring children's well-being and thus preventing child poverty. It also ensures that policies are developed whose first priority is to meet the needs of children here and now as well as ensuring their future well-becoming.

Thirdly, an emphasis on well-being ensures a holistic approach which recognises that preventing and tackling child poverty and social exclusion is much more than just a question of income but also must cover areas such as education, health, housing and environment, recreation, sport and culture.

Fourthly, a focus on well-being ensures that any strategy remains firmly child-centred and leads to a focus on the development of the child and thus to an emphasis on the participation and empowerment of children.

- a whole-sector or partnership approach should be fostered which combines the efforts of national, regional and local governments with those of parents and children, local communities, NGOs and employers. For instance employers, through adopting a living wage, have a key role to play as does the private/profit-making sector in terms of their corporate responsibility to the community. NGOs play a critical role in supporting parents and children and providing many essential services and in working with local communities and public authorities to develop integrated solutions;
- the key role played by NGOs in supporting children at risk and in safeguarding their rights, as well as their crucial advocacy role, needs to be recognised, supported and resourced. They need to be fully involved in the development and implementation of integrated strategies at national, regional and local levels;
- arrangements should be in place for involving and listening to ALL children, including those experiencing poverty in a non-stigmatising way, and their parents in the development, implementation and monitoring of policies and services that affect them;
- the development of policies should be evidence based, thus arrangements need to be in place to ensure the availability of good data and analysis and regular monitoring and reporting on the impact of policies.

10 What needs to be done – the views of parents

"Children are a vulnerable, unprotected group in our society. They cannot do anything to break out of poverty. It's important to detect problems early. Education is an urgent matter – in Estonia, many students drop out of school. We should detect very early the children who need help. There are sensitive periods in every child's development. No talent should be overlooked, nor any child left behind!" - Laura, Estonia

"In the rural areas, schools are closing because the population is leaving – so it's really usual to have, at primary school, single classes with children between 6 and 10 altogether. The private schools are increasing and the public school is without means. We urgently need an education at a good level for everybody." – Andreea, Romania

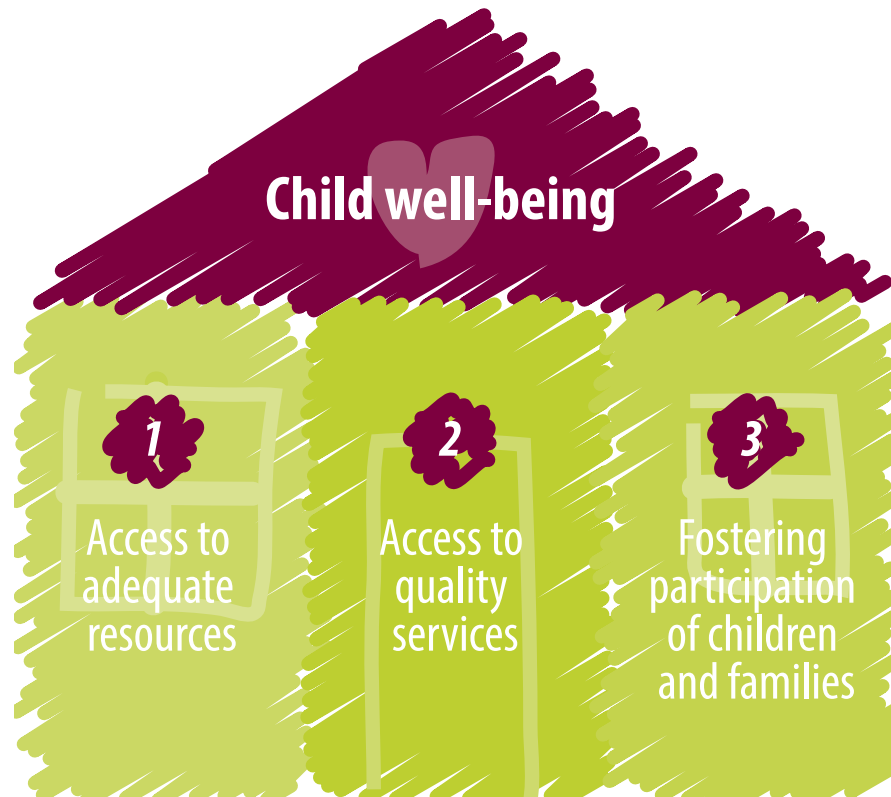
"Many people leave their sons, daughters or whole families alone to find work in Western Europe. These children live with this big loss and grow up alone without the right support. This also causes mental problems. The EU has to support families, because family poverty is driving child poverty." – Andrius, Lithuania

"For single-parent families, there are not enough kindergartens and for those with older children, the mothers find it difficult if schools cannot look after the children in the afternoon. Looking for a job becomes even more difficult." – Lisa, Austria



A three-pillar approach

Work on the issue of child poverty and social exclusion and child well-being in the European Union has increasingly emphasised the need for a three-pillar approach: ensuring access to adequate resources; access to quality services; and promoting participation of children and of their parents (see, for instance, Belgium Presidency of the European Union, 2010 and EC Recommendation: Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage, 2013).



1 Access to adequate resources

It is unacceptable that children should have to grow up in families who have too low an income to live life with dignity and have to spend all their time and energy trying to survive. There are two key aspects to ensuring an adequate income: **adequate income support systems and access to employment for parents and families.**

Ensuring **adequate income support** to families with children implies a coherent and efficient combination of benefits whilst maintaining an appropriate balance between cash benefits (including tax reliefs or credit as well as social assistance) and in-kind benefits in key areas including health, education, housing and childcare as well as between universal and targeted benefits. Social transfers (excluding pensions) play a vital role in reducing child-poverty levels in most Member States.

Reducing or making benefits to parents more restrictive and conditional can be counter-productive, especially where suitable jobs are not available, as it can **increase child poverty and impact directly on their well-being.** The existence of universal child benefits is also an important acknowledgement of the extra costs that all families with children face and is also recognition that children are wanted and welcomed by the State.

Increasing **access of parents with children to the labour market** and ensuring that income from work is sufficient to lift families out of poverty involves first and foremost ensuring that **good-quality jobs** are available. However, it also involves, amongst other things:

- *developing employment support and activation policies which help parents to acquire the skills to access good-quality jobs;*
- *designing and integrating tax and benefit systems and developing minimum-wage policies which help to ease the transition from unemployment into work, which ensure that work provides an adequate income and which do not force parents into inadequately paid jobs;*
- *enhancing access to high-quality, affordable childcare and after-school care for all families;*
- *ensuring that the distance-to-work and travel-to-work costs are not a barrier to taking up employment;*
- *promoting policies to better reconcile work and family life such as enabling flexible working arrangements and reducing working hours.*



1.1 Key issue: Achieving a Balance between Universal and Targeted Policies

A key issue is the extent to which Member States should develop universal policies to promote the well-being of all children or should target scarce resources on the most disadvantaged families and children. In practice, most countries seem to combine both universal policies aimed at promoting the well-being of all children and preventing child poverty and social exclusion arising, with more targeted policies aimed at alleviating poverty and social exclusion. While the balance between the two approaches depends on the situation and tradition in different countries, the most successful Member States in reducing poverty seem to be those that adopt a predominantly universal approach, based on a strong belief that it is more efficient and effective to prevent problems arising and to ensure equal opportunities for all children. Within this broader universal approach, they target those children facing particular difficulties and provide additional help to enable them to overcome barriers to accessing mainstream services and opportunities – a sort of tailored universalism.

While universal services, which provide facilities and/or opportunities for all children and young people, should be prioritized, an element of targeted support for those who are most vulnerable will always be required. However, the key issue in targeted provision is to ensure that it is delivered in a non-stigmatising way which ensures that take-up is maximized and that children and their families feel supported and integrated and not further differentiated and cut off from their peers. Targeting, which is aimed at whole regions or particular age groups, tends to avoid problems of labelling and stigmatisation. However, too often, means-tested provision (e.g. of school meals) is wholly inadequate, as it often misses out many families in poverty and leads to labelling and stigmatisation and

can result in low take-up or contribute to trapping children and families in poverty.

Means-testing can also only relieve poverty **after** the event. In other words, to claim means-tested provision, it is necessary to fall into poverty first, to lodge a claim on the basis of one's needs and means, and then to prove one's poverty to the satisfaction of the relevant authorities, before payment can be made. Universal provision can prevent poverty **before** it strikes. It has the advantage of making families feel secure and gives a message of social solidarity, that families and children are wanted and have an equal right to a better life.

Particularly at a time of austerity, there is a growing tendency for many Member States to focus more on alleviation and targeting, and to cut back on more universal approaches. This is a short-term solution which has negative long-term impacts. Because of their structural nature, child poverty and social exclusion should be combatted urgently, under a more preventative approach as well, essential to avoid long-term costs.

Thus, if, during a period of crisis, it is necessary for the wealthier to make a greater contribution to bearing the burden of balancing budgets, then it is fairer and makes more sense in the long-term to apply this to all those with higher incomes (for instance by increasing taxes), rather than limiting the burden to wealthier people with children by cutting back access to universal services for children and for those who happen to be responsible for bringing them up. In this way services can be preserved and the burden shared across the entire wealthier population.

1.2 Balanced universal and targeted services and benefits for children

Ireland's Universal Free Pre-school Year

A programme of early childhood care and education also known as the Free Pre-School Year (FPSY) was introduced in 2010. Over 60,000 children take part, at a cost of €166m per year. In general, all children are eligible for the FPSY scheme if they are aged between 3 years 2 months and 4 years 7 months on 1 September of the year that they will be starting. The provision amounts to 3 hours per day, 5 days a week over a 38-week year for children enrolled in participating playschools. Children enrolled in childcare services receive 2 hours and 15 minutes per day over a 50-week period. In addition some more targeted initiatives are in place:

- *The Early Start pre-school project, in 40 primary schools in designated areas of urban disadvantage involves an educational programme to enhance overall development, help prevent school failure and offset the effects of social disadvantage;*
- *The Rutland Street project is a pre-school attached to the Rutland Street primary school in Dublin. Although not part of Early Start, it was used to pilot many of the approaches later incorporated in the Early Start project;*
- *The Community Childcare Subvention supports providers who care for children from certain targeted low-income families.*

(Find out more at: www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/housesoftheoireachtas/libraryresearch/spotlights/spotEarlyEd180412.pdf)

Netherlands Centres of Youth and Family

Local authorities provide universal, comprehensive and free family and parenting support. The centres are called Centres of Youth and Family, and provide the following services: child and youth healthcare,

parenting support (information and guidance, identification of problems, guidance to help, minor pedagogical help, coordination of care), a link to the Youth Care Agency and a link to School Care and Advice Teams. The Centres for Youth and Family will provide universal services and will refer families to specialized, targeted services.

(Find out more at: www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/ThematicPriorities/FPS/Eurochild/COMPACT_FPS_Round_Table_report_2011_-_The_role_of_local_authorities_in_parenting_support.pdf)

Belgium's Flemish Community's Parenting Shops

They offer the following services free of charge and for everybody interested: information, instrumental and emotional support, advice or counseling, competence training, enhancing social contacts and stimulating self-reliance, early detection and referral. The staff refers families needing more targeted support to other service-providers.

(Find out more at: www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/Communications/09_Policy%20Papers/policy%20positions/EurochildCompendiumFPS.pdf)

2 Access to quality services

Developing access to high-quality and inclusive services is very important for all children's well-being. **Universal early childhood, health, education and housing services** need to be developed and delivered in ways which make **them easy to access, non-bureaucratic, flexible, respectful of their clients' different cultural, social and religious backgrounds, and able to tap into a wider network of family and services.** Services should promote personal development and empowerment of children and support resilience in crisis situations. They should also be delivered in ways that are **sensitive to the needs of children and families** experiencing poverty with staff that is adequately trained to listen to and put the needs of children and their parents at the centre of everything they do. Key areas include:

- ensuring that all children, whether or not their parents are in work, have access to high-quality **early childhood education and care services.** This is crucial for the development of the child and his/her successful future in the education system. It is widely recognised as a means of compensating for economic disadvantage and effectively paving the way for a child's future successful development;
- developing effective **early-childhood intervention and support services** which can ensure early identification of children and families facing problems and can help them to support families and remove obstacles which hamper a child's future development. Very often, early intervention has a positive impact on the rest of a child's life. Such services can include the development of family centres in disadvantaged communities or ensuring pre- and post-natal visits by nurses and/or social workers to all mothers;

13 Early-childhood and family support in Belgium and Spain

Families in Poverty Programmes (Spanish Red Cross and Caritas)

Red Cross and Caritas helped more than 500.000 children living in poverty in 2011 in Spain. Both participate actively in the Spanish Children's Rights Coalition (www.plataformadeinfancia.org)

Spanish Red Cross: helped 325,181 families in poverty and social exclusion with 207,403 children as part of the 'fight against poverty' programme. 87% of the families have children, with 27% in large families with 3 children or more. 71% of the parents or guardians are unemployed, 7% are homeless and 83% are migrants – mostly from Morocco, Romania, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia and Bulgaria. The main projects are integrated support through: food aid, social support, prevention of school exclusion, monetary allowances to cover basic needs, family counseling, social emergency mobile units and emergency social services including homeless day shelters/day centres, and integrated social inclusion projects in deprived areas. The "Children in Social Difficulties" programme helped 67,878 children at social risk through child protection, leisure and social animation for hospitalized children, specific support for immigrant children (including unaccompanied minors) and community work with young offenders.

Spanish Caritas – supports 30,452 children in poverty as part of the Caritas child programme providing comprehensive actions coordinated with other social programmes for families, women and migrants – key activities include: educational and social support by teams of

social workers and counselors, acting as liaison with authorities as intercultural mediators with migrant/Roma children, training work teams in children's rights and approaches; outreach for children who do not attend school, day centres, and nursery schools and child care, accompaniment of young offenders, specific activities to assist children in special situations of exclusion, defense of unaccompanied minors rights, etc.

La Maison Ouverte [The Open House], (Marchienne-au-Pont, Belgium)

This is a reception centre for young children, addressing families with a special attention to families experiencing poverty. It focuses on parents' relationship to work, supporting them and involving parents in the children's activities, arranging group-exchanges, and working to create trust between different services and the child and parents, with the aim of improving the family's well-being. The project was awarded the Belgian federal prize for fighting poverty in 2009.

The childcare project (0-3 years): Mic-Ados (Marche-en-Famenne, Belgium) offers valued support to families experiencing poverty

Mic-Ados, a service for young people (0-18 years) (Aide en milieu ouvert, AMO) mainly centred on adolescents, opened a childcare service in response to an unmet need in this rural area. They aimed to help parents experiencing poverty to find low-cost baby sitters so that they can go to work, to an appointment or simply have a break, without making a long-term commitment or going through a complicated administrative procedure. Despite being in high demand, the project was unable to continue due to the lack of public funding. The Department of Youth Work of the Walloon-Brussels Federation authorised the project, and the public authorities praised its work, but no subsidies were offered, as each body claimed it "fell outside their competences" as the project relates to both the labour and child sectors. On the other hand, the service was increasingly in demand for people in poverty and working, obliged to take precarious work (shift work, part-time work, work-suspension & night-work). The project has struggled to meet demand, due to a lack of financing which also meant a reliance on students and retired people as providers of child care. The project coordinators have tried to encourage engagement of people on unemployment benefit or on minimum income, arguing that this is an important means of social and professional training and integration, public authorities however never responded to it. The whole project raises not only the problem of access to flexible services, but also the impact of precarious work on family life. Web-site: www.micados.be

- developing high-quality and **inclusive education policies** which prevent and overcome educational disadvantage, offer equal educational opportunities for all children regardless of their background and ensure no child is left behind. This also includes:
 - ↳ reducing financial barriers to ensure that poor children are able to participate fully in the education system;
 - ↳ helping children with difficulties to integrate into schools and developing policies to reduce early school drop-outs – "no child left behind" approaches;
 - ↳ integrating minorities, particularly children with disabilities, and those from an ethnic minority (e.g.

Roma/Traveller) or migrant background, into mainstream schools;

- ↳ ensuring that school learning environments are welcoming and inclusive and take into account the individuality of children;
- ↳ avoiding segregation and discrimination, ensuring the same quality of education for all;
- ↳ developing effective active policies to counter bullying, exclusion and stigmatisation;
- ↳ ensuring that children don't start school hungry and are thus unable to concentrate by providing free school meals during the learning cycle;

Some schools in Estonia have started with morning porridge, every child who wants, can have it – no stigmatisation and it's good for all

- ↳ developing better integration of schools into neighbourhoods;
 - ↳ involving parents, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, in the education of their children, providing parental support and linking children's learning to that of their parents.
- recognising and strengthening the key role played by **non-formal and informal education** in children and young people's development: children are different and need to be supported in different ways. Formal education is not the only support mechanism – non-formal and informal support is also crucial, and provides other ways of building children's confidence, and supporting development. Non-formal and informal learning, reflecting the lifelong learning process, significantly contributes to a child's development overall, including their social inclusion;
 - developing inclusive policies that ensure that children from disadvantaged backgrounds have the same opportunities to play, relax and participate in a wide range of **leisure, sporting, recreational, cultural and civic activities** as their peers and receive the necessary support and encouragement to help them to do so. This is an essential part of ensuring their personal development and their active inclusion in society. It helps children to build their skills and

self-confidence, enhance their self-esteem and identity, promote respect for cultural diversity and counter discrimination;

- improving access of all children to high-quality **health care (including mental-health support)**. In particular, as children born into low-income families are more likely to have poorer access to health services and may suffer unhealthy lifestyles, it is essential to develop policies and outreach services which aim to overcome health inequalities and remove barriers to access through addressing obstacles such as cost or lack of information;
- ensuring all families with children have access to **decent and affordable housing** and living environment. Among other things this involves:
 - ↳ preventing and tackling concentrations of poverty in particular areas;
 - ↳ ensuring an adequate provision of public (social) housing;
 - ↳ developing measures to prevent the eviction of children from their homes;
 - ↳ ensuring adequate regulation of rents and housing standards in rented housing;
 - ↳ reducing the number of families with children in temporary accommodation but also providing temporary shelters for families with children who have lost their homes;
- developing high-quality **social services and child-protection services**. These should:
 - ↳ do everything possible to support and value parents and to keep families together as the quality of family relationships, together with friendships and safe neighbourhoods, is a key factor in mitigating the impact of disadvantage on children's well-being and ensuring emotional development;
 - ↳ ensure high levels of social protection for vulnerable children based on the child's best interest;
 - ↳ when care outside the family is necessary, foster, as far as is possible, care in the community and in family settings with good access to mainstream services;

↳ develop programmes for reducing the number of children in institutions and provide coordinated and integrated support and access to services for children and young people when they leave institutions;

- developing **integrated support services for parents**. As most poor children live in poor families, the family needs to be a principle focus of action - not to add to the difficulties, but helping parents to provide a good standard of living and quality of life for all their children and to support their children's development and well-being. This means having a focus on wrap around and integrated parent support – helping them to access adequate resources, quality jobs, get access to decent childcare, housing, social and health services but also to understand better their role as parents and how they can provide positive support to their children, even in very difficult circumstances.

As this summary has shown, there are a wide range of services of importance to the well-being of children and their families. However, children's and parents' needs do not fit into neat boxes. They are complex and interconnected. The delivery of services needs to respect this. As far as possible, services should be delivered in a holistic, coordinated, flexible, accessible and timely way at a local level. They also must be delivered in ways that are responsive to each child's and parent's needs.

3 Fostering participation of children and parents

Empowering children

First, children have a **right to be heard and to participate in decisions** which affect them, both as individuals and as a collective, and it is essential to develop pro-active policies and programmes that will foster their participation.

1.4 The right of children to be heard

Article 12 of the UNCRC highlights the role of the child as an active participant in the promotion, protection and monitoring of his or her rights. This means that all States who are signatories to the UNCRC (i.e. all Member States) are obliged to promote the right of children to be heard and have their views taken seriously in all matters affecting them, whether in the family, at school, or in the wider community. Importantly, public policy and legislation are not excluded.

Children living in poverty know best what the reality is like for them and what would make a real difference to their well-being. This knowledge is vital if policies are to be improved and if services are to be delivered in better ways. Thirdly, participation is key to building a child's self confidence and self-esteem and thus to their overall development.

Although there are barriers to participation for all children, these are multiplied for children who are disadvantaged (and especially for those in the younger age groups). They often feel stigmatised and discriminated against, and it is likely that traditional approaches to consultation will fail to engage with them.

Nevertheless, children from marginalized groups (e.g. migrants, Roma children, street children, disabled children) have important views and experiences to contribute. They are well-placed to identify many of the barriers and challenges they face. They will also come forward with many good solutions, some of which adults may not like or necessary agree with. Thus it is important the children and young people have opportunities to be part of the debate and their views are actively sought in an appropriate and non-stigmatizing way. There is now much good practice available on involving children in ways that are appropriate to their age and situation (see Eurochild, 2010).



15 Child and Youth Participation

Cypriot Children's Parliament, Cyprus

The Cypriot Children's Parliament was created to promote children's rights in Cyprus. The themes discussed by the Children's Parliament come out of plenary discussions, from current issues at stake in Cyprus, or specific events. For instance, as a result of a marathon organized to raise awareness on the rights of disabled people, the Children's Parliament organized a special session on disabled children, focusing among other things on the rights of disabled children at school.

The Cypriot Children's Parliament is divided into five districts, in the same way as the national adult parliament. Each district is presented with a topic agreed on in a plenary session. The Children's Parliament meets once every two months, and the districts meet once or twice per month. The children members are elected every two years, and the majority of them are elected in schools. There are 56 Cypriot members, and three ethnic minority representatives. There are also substitute members to replace permanent ones if they are unable to attend.

Children gather the relevant information on the subject they want to discuss, and they can contact the Government, universities or NGOs, or use surveys. Each district has two youth workers to facilitate the meetings and support the children. The resolutions adopted by the children go to the national Parliament, and the most important ones go to the agenda. The children have had some important successes: creating a children ombudsperson, provoking a change in the Cypriot policy towards punishment in schools, etc.

Children have a say in staff recruitment and selection, Action for Children, UK

Action for Children, UK, routinely involves

children and young people in the recruitment and selection process. The degree of participation will depend on the type of vacancy, the nature of the project that is recruiting, and the interest, ability and understanding of the children and young people involved. Young people take part in "adult" interview panels, meet and greet sessions and group discussions. Children with learning disabilities also participate in the process of selecting the staff persons that are going to be directly involved with them with the help of their supporting staff. The tools used to enable children to share their opinion on the selection are always adapted to the age, ability and interest of the children and young people.

Source: Valuing children's potential: how children's participation contributes to fighting poverty and social exclusion (Eurochild, 2010).

Promoting Children's participation and voice – Spanish Red Cross

Spanish Red Cross has a specific line of work promoting child participation, self expression and child rights advocacy, including public awareness and civil dialogue with policy makers. (www.cruzroja.es)

Website En Ligne Directe [online direct], Belgium

This is a copyright-free digital collection of debates, testimonials, reports, meetings and photographs, made by the Department of Children's rights of the Walloon-Brussels Federation. The content is put online by associations, public authorities and individuals (mostly young people). The site aims at diffusing the contents as widely as possible, stimulating debates, and offers tools to question and promote the situation of children in direct relation to children's rights. (www.enlignedirecte.be)

Supporting the participation of parents

Children's participation is crucial, but so is involving their parents. Only by talking to parents living in poverty can the real obstacles and challenges on how to improve living conditions be understood and more effective solutions be developed. Parents should be involved directly in the decisions that are made over their lives and in developing their own solutions – through personalized, tailored support approaches and integrated services, but also as a collective in shaping the principal policy solutions. There is now much experience and good examples of how best to ensure participation of those experiencing poverty in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes (see European Anti-Poverty network, 2012).

16 Key issue: Tackling child poverty cannot be reduced to family poverty alone

Children have the right to grow up in a secure and nurturing family environment. As most poor children grow up in poor families, policies to support families are a vital pre-requisite to preventing and tackling child poverty and in ensuring child well-being. However, child poverty cannot be reduced to family poverty alone. Children are independent rights bearers. It is the duty of States to ensure that they are able to access their rights (e.g. to health, education, housing, sport and recreation) whatever their family or individual situation.



What the EU can do

There is much to build on at EU level. **Between 2001 and 2010, a consensus has been built over the importance of child poverty and social exclusion in the EU's efforts to tackle poverty and social exclusion** (see Frazer, Marlier and Nicaise, 2010). Many important policy statements, reports and studies were produced on the issue as part of the Social Open Method of Coordination.

2007 was declared a special thematic year on child poverty and well-being.

In their 2008-2010 National Strategy Reports for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 19 out of 27 Member States identified tackling child poverty and social exclusion as one of their key priorities. The issue was also highlighted during the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

In 2010, the Spanish and Belgian Presidencies of the EU and then the Hungarian EU Presidency in the first part of 2011 made it a key issue. At the close of a conference organised by the Belgium Presidency, the EU Presidency "Trio" (i.e., Spain, Belgium and Hungary) signed a joint declaration calling on Member States and the European Council, in close collaboration with the Commission, to make the reduction of child poverty and the promotion of child well-being a central part of the Europe 2020 strategy efforts to reduce poverty by at least 20 million by 2020 (see Frazer, 2010).

Since 2008, **the EU has a strong legal basis** for playing a much more active role in the struggle against poverty and social exclusion generally and child poverty in particular. The Lisbon Treaty made combating social exclusion and discrimination, the promotion of social justice and protection, equality between men and women, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child,

core objectives of the Union (Article 3.3. of the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union). Furthermore, a "Horizontal Social Clause" (Article 9 of the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) was also added which requires that "In defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union shall take into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion, and a high level of education, training and protection of human health." Thus, while responsibility for preventing and tackling child poverty and social exclusion primarily rests with national and sub-national governments, there is no excuse for the EU failing to play an active and vital role. It must mainstream the well-being of children and their families at the heart of its entire policy making.

The new decisions being taken as part of the EU's economic governance frame (Fiscal Compact, Six Pack and Two Pack) also increasingly justify intervention by the EU in Member States' social budgets, in particular social protection and assistance systems. This raises the issue of how far subsidiarity only on social issues remains feasible or desirable.

Some positive first steps have been taken by the EU with the adoption of the EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child in 2011 and the issuing of the EC Recommendation on Child Poverty in 2013: Investing in Children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage (20 Feb 2013).

The Heads of State and Government of the EU have also made strong statements on the importance of the fight against child poverty in successive European Council meetings and this has also been reflected in the work of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) and the Social Protection Committee and in a succession of EU reports.

But more needs to be done

All this is only a start and much more needs to be done by the EU. For instance it can:

- provide **stronger political leadership** by ensuring that progress on child poverty and child well-being is regularly reported on and discussed at meetings of the European Council of Heads of State and Government and at meetings of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO);
- ensure that child poverty and well-being is made a central issue in the **Europe 2020 Strategy**. In particular it can ensure that it:
 - ↳ is built into the implementation of the Strategy, especially into Member States' National Reform Programmes (NRP) and National Social Reports (NSR);
 - ↳ becomes a rigorous and robust part of the monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy and that this is reflected in Country Specific Recommendations to Member States that are failing to make sufficient progress;
- agree overall **quantified sub-target(s)** for the reduction of child poverty and social exclusion and ensure that national targets are ambitious and sufficient to achieve the agreed overall EU targets;
- **mainstream** the issue of child poverty and well-being into the development of all EU policies;
- deepen work on child well-being and mainstream as part of discussions on **indicators to better express progress** in a way which goes beyond GDP;
- ensure that the issue of child poverty and well-being is put at the heart of austerity policies and bail out packages and that **ex-ante social impact assessments** are used when developing and implementing relevant policies (including economic policies) so that children are protected from the worst effects;
- actively promote and monitor **the involvement of children, their parents** and the organisations that work with them in the development, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes to achieve Europe's poverty and social exclusion target at EU and national levels (including NRPs and NSRs);
- increase the resources available from **EU Structural Funds** to support Member States' efforts to tackle child poverty and promote child well-being, by ensuring 25% of Structural Funds is spent on person-focused projects through European Social Fund (ESF) and that 20% of ESF resources are used to tackle poverty and social exclusion;
- provide resources and support for improved and more **timely data** collection and analysis, development of agreed indicators so as to ensure consistent approach to measurement across the EU and help to build statistical capacity in Member States;
- facilitate enhanced **exchange of learning** and good practice on tackling child poverty and promoting child well-being and in doing so ensure the participation of children and their families;
- strengthen its approach to promoting **children's rights** so that more attention is given to the issue of poverty and well-being and promote the idea of agreeing minimum standards in key areas affecting children's well-being (e.g. in relation to adequate income, access to child care, access to health and other services);
- ensure that its on-going efforts to **counter discrimination** and racism and to promote greater gender equality give particular attention to the situation of children and their families;
- agree guidelines for **stakeholder participation** in EU policy development, particularly in the NRPs and NSRs, ensuring the meaningful engagement of social NGOs, parents and children.

The basis for EU action is there. The challenge now is to make it happen.

What national governments can do

Governments have a clear responsibility to put in place the structures and mechanisms (see 6.1), to develop the appropriate policy frameworks (see 6.2) to implement the 3-pillar approach and to provide the necessary resources to prevent child poverty arising and to address it when it already exists. This requires mainstreaming a concern for children's well-being at the heart of the policy-making process, setting clear objectives for the reduction of child poverty and social exclusion and monitoring and reporting regularly on progress towards these objectives. In the context of setting a national poverty-reduction target as a contribution to achieving the overall Europe-2020 target, Member States should first set ambitious overall poverty targets and a national anti-poverty strategy backed by adequate budgets, which effectively contribute to achieving the EU target and then set specific sub-targets for the reduction of child poverty and social exclusion.

What regional and local authorities can do

Developing the right policies and programmes at national level is one thing: delivering and resourcing them effectively on the ground is another. The gap between policies and delivery is often too big. Effective arrangements need to be put in place at local level to ensure the effective and coordinated delivery of services and the early identification of and support for children and families facing particular difficulties. **Regional and local governments have a key role to play** in this regard. They should:

- ensure **vertical coordination** which effectively

links central and sub-national levels of government: this is greatly helped by involving local (and regional) governments in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of national plans and policies from the outset. It is also important to define the roles and responsibilities of the different levels of governance clearly and ensure that they are mutually reinforcing and to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for delivery at local level;

- develop a **coordinated and integrated approach** at local level: *this means developing local partnerships which bring together actors across a range of sectors and combine the efforts of government services with those of NGOs and the for-profit sector in a coordinated way. This helps in better identifying problems, ensuring early intervention and developing holistic responses;*
- ensure **flexible and tailored responses**: *services need to be delivered in ways that respond to the needs of each child and his or her family. Thus they need to be flexible and delivered in a way that is tailored to meet their particular needs. This can only be done at local level;*
- foster a **community-development approach**: *this means promoting the participation and empowerment of children and families and supporting and resourcing the resilience of children, parents and local communities who are finding their own survival strategies and who are not just passive victims. A community development approach to services for children and their families means developing services based on respect and dignity which are delivered in ways which empower people and avoid stigmatising them. Children and their families should be actively involved in the development and delivery of services;*
- put in place regular **reporting and monitoring** of the local situation: *it is vital that the well-being of children is regularly monitored at local level and that local services report on and are held accountable for meeting the needs of all children.*

What everybody can do

CALL TO ACTION

Governments have the responsibility to choose the right policies, as well as finding adequate financing. Local and regional authorities have to ensure that those policies are delivered on the ground. But ultimately everybody in society carries some responsibility to build more inclusive societies where all children are able to realise their full potential.

It is essential to respect and listen to parents and children who are experiencing poverty. They know what their needs are and, given the right support, they are an important part of the solution. At local level it is important to work together, and to hold local decision-makers to account to ensure public funding is being spent effectively. Increasing public pressure for results depends on building alliances in local communities for example by working with sympathetic employers, trade unions as well as civil society and research organisations.

TOGETHER, IT IS POSSIBLE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

- ✓ Use this book to raise awareness about the reality of child poverty and the urgent need for action and to back integrated, multidimensional strategies that work.
- ✓ Work in partnership with your local communities and authorities to develop innovative approaches which integrate the 3 pillar approach.
- ✓ Press to participate in the decision-making process as active partners – in finding and delivering the right policy solutions and helping to monitor the results.
- ✓ Work in alliances to campaign for political commitment for change – to build more equal, prosperous and sustainable societies where the right to a decent life is ensured.



KEY SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND DATA

Outlined below are some of the key documents where further information can be found on the main issues raised in this explainer. These are just a starting point and many of the documents listed contain much more detailed bibliographies. Also listed are key websites where the latest data on child poverty and child well-being can be found and where information and comments on the developments in the EU's efforts to tackle child poverty and promote child well-being are available.

Background texts on child poverty and well-being in the European Union

Belgian Presidency of the European Union, in collaboration with UNICEF, Eurochild and the European Commission (2010), Call for an EU Recommendation on Child Poverty and Child Well-Being, A background paper to the EU Presidency Conference: Child Poverty and Child Well-Being, Brussels: Belgian Public Planning Service on Social Integration. Available at: www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/Events/2010/09%20BE%20Presidency%20Child%20Poverty/Background%20Paper%20to%20the%20EU%20Presidency%20Conference_EN.pdf

Council of the European Union (2011), Opinion of the Social Protection Committee on reinvigorating the Social OMC in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy, Opinion endorsed by the Council on 17 June 2011, Brussels: Council of the European Union. Available at: register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/11/st10/st10405.en11.pdf.

Council of the European Union (2012), Preventing and tackling child poverty and social exclusion and promoting children's well-being, Council conclusions 12368/1/12 (adopted on 4 October 2012), Brussels: Council of the European Union.

Devlin, M. and Frazer, H. (2011), Lessons from the EU Social Inclusion Process, in "An Assessment of Ireland's Approach to Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion among Children from European and Local Perspectives", Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency. Available at: combatpoverty.ie/publications/working-papers.htm.

European Commission, Recommendation against child poverty: Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage (2013). Available at ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=9762&langId=en.

Frazer, H. (2010), Who cares? Roadmap for a Recommendation to fight child poverty, Report on the Belgian EU Presidency Conference 2-3 September 2010, Brussels: Belgian Public Planning Service on Social Integration and King Baudouin Foundation.

Frazer, H. and Marlier, E. (2007), Tackling child poverty and promoting the social inclusion of children in the EU: Key lessons, Independent overview based on national reports of the national independent experts on social inclusion, Brussels: European Commission. Available at: www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/network-of-independent-experts/reports/firstsemester-2007/synthesis-report-2007-1.

Frazer, H. and Marlier, E. (2012), Current situation in relation to child poverty and child

well-being: EU policy context, key challenges ahead and ways forward, Nicosia: Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Available at: www.cy2012.eu/index.php/en/political-calendar/areas/employment-social-policy-health-consumer-affairs/child-poverty-and-well-being-conference

Frazer, H., Marlier, E. and Nicaise, I. (2010), Child Poverty and Social Exclusion, in: "A social inclusion roadmap for Europe 2020", Antwerp: Garant.

Social Protection Committee (2012), Tackling and preventing poverty, promoting well-being, SPC Advisory Report to the European Commission, Brussels. Available at: ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=758&langId=en.

Costs of child poverty

Action for Children and New Economics Foundation (2009), Backing the Future: why investing in children is good for us all, New Economics Foundation, London. Available at: www.actionforchildren.org.uk/media/94361/action_for_children_backing_the_future.pdf.

Griggs, J. and Walker R. (2008), The costs of child poverty and individuals and society, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York. Available at: www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/2301-child-poverty-costs.pdf.

Hirsch, D. (2008) Estimating the Cost of Child Poverty in Scotland – Approaches and Evidence. Edinburgh: Scottish Government Social Research.

Europe 2020 Strategy

European Council (2010). European Council 17 June 2010: Conclusions, Brussels:

European Council. Available at: www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/115346.pdf.

Eurochild (2012), The 2012 National Reform Programmes (NRP) and the National Social Reports (NSR) from a child poverty and child well-being perspective, Brussels: Eurochild. Available at: www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/ThematicPriorities/Crisis/Eurochild%20updates/Eurochild_NRPs_Analysis_July_2012.pdf.

European Anti-poverty network (2012), An EU worth defending: beyond austerity to social investment and inclusive growth, Brussels: EAPN. Available at: www.eapn.eu/en/news-and-publications/publications/eapn-position-papers-and-reports/eapn-publishes-full-assessment-of-nrps-and-nrsr-an-eu-worth-defending-beyond-austerity-to-social-investment-and-inclusive-growth.

Marlier, E. and Natali, D. (eds.), with Van Dam, R. (2010). Europe 2020: Towards a more Social EU?, Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang.

Social Protection Committee (2011), The Europe 2020 social dimension: delivering on the EU commitment to poverty reduction and inclusion (2011), Opinion of the Social Protection Committee, Brussels. Available at: ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=758&langId=en&moreDocuments=yes.

Measurement

Atkinson, A.B. and Marlier, E. (eds./2010), Income and living conditions in Europe, Luxembourg: Publications office of the European Union, available at: epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-31-10-555/EN/KS-31-10-555-EN.PDF.

Fusco, A., Guio, A.-C. and Marlier, E. (2010), Characterising the income poor and the

materially deprived in European countries, in A.B. Atkinson and E. Marlier, "Income and Living Conditions in Europe", Luxembourg: Publications office of the European Union.

Guio, A.-C. (2009), What can be learned from deprivation indicators in Europe?, Luxembourg: Eurostat. Available at: epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_oFFPUB/KS-rA-09-007/EN/KS-rA-09-007-EN.PDF.

Guio, A.-C., Gordon D. and Marlier E. (2012), Measuring material deprivation in the EU: Indicators for the whole population and child-specific indicators, Eurostat Methodologies and working papers, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities (OPOCE). Available at: epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-RA-12-018/EN/KS-RA-12-018-EN.PDF.

OECD (2009), Doing Better for Children, Paris: OECD. Available from: www.oecd.org/els/social/childwellbeing.

Social Protection Committee (2008), Child poverty and well-being: Current status and way forward, Report prepared by the EU Task-Force on Child Poverty and Child Well-Being, Luxembourg: Office for official Publications of the European Communities. Available from: ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=751&langId=en&pubId=74&type=2&furtherPubs=yes.

Social Protection Committee (2012), Indicators based monitoring framework, Chapter 3 in "SPC Advisory Report to the European Commission on tackling and preventing child poverty, promoting child well-being", Brussels: European Commission. Available at: ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=7849&langId=en.

TARKI (2010), Child Poverty and Child Well-Being in the European Union, Report prepared for the European Commission, Budapest.

Available at: www.tarki.hu/en/research/childpoverty/index.html.

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (2012), Measuring Child Poverty: New league tables of child poverty in the world's rich countries, Innocenti Report Card 10, Florence: UNICEF. Available at: www.unicef-irc.org/publications/660.

Children's rights

Eurochild (2007), A child rights approach to child poverty, Brussels: Eurochild. Available at: www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/user_upload/files/Eurochild_discussion_paper_child_rights_poverty.pdf.

Eurochild (2011), Child poverty and family poverty – are they one and the same? A rights-based approach to fighting child poverty. Available at: www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/ThematicPriorities/FPS/Eurochild/Position_paper_ch_pov_vs_family_pov_designed_FINAL.pdf.

European Commission (2011), An EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child, European Commission, Brussels. Available at: eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52011DC0060:en:NOT.

Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, New York. Available at: www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm.

Impact of the crisis

Eurochild (2012), Tackling child poverty and promoting child well-being in times of crisis. Brussels. Available at: www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/ThematicPriorities/ChildPoverty/Eurochild/Eurochild_statement_to_CY_Presidency_final.pdf.

Fondeville, N. and Ward, T. (2011), Homelessness during the crisis, Research note 8/2011, Social Europe, European Commission. Available at: www.socialsituation.eu/research-notes/SSO%20RN8%20Homelessness_Final.pdf.

Eurochild (2012), How the economic and financial crisis is affecting children & young people in Europe, Eurochild, Brussels. Available at: www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/ThematicPriorities/Crisis/Eurochild%20updates/Eurochild_Crisis_Update_Report_2012.pdf.

Participation

Eurochild (2010), Valuing children's potential: How children's participation contributes to fighting poverty and social exclusion, Brussels. Available at: www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/ThematicPriorities/Participation/Eurochild/ValuingChildren_sPotential.pdf.

Eurochild (2012), Speak up! Giving a voice to European children in vulnerable situations. Available at: www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/Projects/Speak%20Up/SpeakUpreportFINAL.pdf.

European Anti-poverty network (2012), Breaking Barriers – Driving Change - Case studies of building participation of people experiencing poverty, Brussels: EAPN. Available at: www.eapn.eu/en/news-and-publications/publications/eapn-books/breaking-barriers-driving-change-eapns-new-book-on-participation-is-out.

Policies

Coote, A. (2012). The Wisdom of Prevention: Long-term planning, upstream investment and early action to prevent harm, New Economics Foundation, London. Available at: www.neweconomics.org/sites/neweconomics.org/files/Wisdom_of_prevention.pdf.

Eurochild (2010), Family policies that work best for children. Brussels. Available at: www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/Events/2010/04_Study_Visit/FPS%20Study%20Visit%202010_REPORT1%262.pdf.

Eurochild (2011), The role of local authorities in parenting support, Brussels. Available at: www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/ThematicPriorities/FPS/Eurochild/COMPACT_FPS_Round_Table_report_2011_-_The_role_of_local_authorities_in_parenting_support.pdf.

Eurochild (2012), Compendium of inspiring practices on early intervention and prevention in family and parenting support, Brussels. Available at: www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/Communications/09_Policy%20Papers/policy%20positions/EurochildCompendiumFPS.pdf.

European Commission (2011), Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow, Commission Communication COM(2011) 66 final, Brussels. Available at: eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52011DC0066:EN:NOT.

EU Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion (2011), Policy Solutions for Fostering Inclusive Labour Markets and for Combating Child Poverty and Social Exclusion, Brussels: European Commission. Available at ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1025&langId=en&newsId=1430&furtherNews=yes.

FEANTSA (2012), On the way home, Brussels.

Frazer, H. and Marlier, E. (2009), Minimum Income Schemes across EU Member States, Overview based on national reports of the national independent experts on social inclusion, Brussels: European Commission. Available at: ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1025&langId=en&newsId=1416&furtheNews=yes.

Hoelscher, P. (2004), A thematic study using transnational comparisons to analyse and identify what combination of policy responses are most successful in preventing and reducing high levels of child poverty, Brussels: European Commission.

Levy, H., Lietz, C. and Sutherland, H. (2007), A guaranteed income for Europe's children?, in Jenkins, S.P. and Micklewright, J. editors, Inequality and poverty re-examined, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MacMahon, B., Weld, G., Thornton, R. and Collins, M. (2012), The Cost Of A Child: a consensual budget standards study examining the direct cost of a child across childhood, Dublin: Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice. Available at: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/dj8uhb9tblyzgkh/Cost%20of%20A%20Child%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf>.

PICUM (2009) Undocumented Children in Europe: Invisible Victims of Immigration Restrictions, Brussels: PICUM. Available at: picum.org/picum.org/uploads/file/Undocumented_Children_in_Europe_EN.pdf.

PICUM (2011) "Rights of Accompanied Children in an Irregular Situation", paper prepared by PICUM for UNICEF Brussels Office, November 2011. Available at: fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/frc2011/docs/rights-accompanied-children-irregular-situation-PICUM.pdf.

PICUM (2011-2012) "Building Strategies to

Protect Children in an Irregular Migration Situation: Country Briefs" for the UK, Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Italy and Spain. Available at: picum.org/en/publications/conference-and-workshop-reports/.

UNICEF (2012) "Access to Civil, Economic and Social Rights for Children in the Context of Irregular Migration", Submission to the UN CRC Day of General Discussion on "The rights of all children in the context of international migration", 28 September 2012. Available at: www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/discussion2012/SubmissionsDGDMigration/UNICEF_1.doc

UNICEF and the European Social Observatory in collaboration with the Belgian Federal Planning Service (Ministry) for Social Integration (2011), Preventing Social Exclusion through the Europe 2020 Strategy: Early Childhood Development and the Inclusion of Roma Families, Brussels: Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Poverty

European Anti-poverty network (2009), Poverty and Inequality in the EU, Poverty Explainer 1, Brussels: EAPN. Available at: www.eapn.eu/en/what-is-poverty/poverty-in-the-eu-a-very-real-problem.

European Anti-poverty network (2010), Adequacy of Minimum Income in the EU, Poverty Explainer 2, Brussels: EAPN. Available at: www.eapn.eu/en/news-and-publications/news/eapn-news/eapns-adequacy-explainer-has-come-out.

Well-being

Kickbush, I. (2012), Learning for Well-being: Policy Priority for Children and Youth in Europe, Learning for Well Being Consortium of Foundations in Europe. Available at: www.eurochild.org/fileadmin/Events/2012/02_L4WB/L4WB-.

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (2007), Child poverty in perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries, Innocenti Report Card 7, Florence: UNICEF. Available at: www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/rc7_eng.pdf.

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (2010), The Children Left Behind: A league table of inequality in child well-being in the world's rich countries, Innocenti Report Card 9, Florence: UNICEF. Available at: www.unicef-irc.org/publications/619.

Useful websites

European Commission:

European Commission, Social Protection & Social Inclusion: ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=750&langId=en

Data and analysis:

Eurostat, Social Inclusion Indicators: epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/income_social_inclusion_living_conditions/introduction

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and

Development (OECD): www.oecd.org/social/familiesandchildren/n

Peer Review in Social Protection and Social Inclusion and Assessment in Social Inclusion: www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre: www.unicef-irc.org/

European Networks:

ATD Fourth World: www.atd-fourthworld.org/Presentation,104.html.

Caritas Europa: www.caritas-europa.org/code/en/default.asp.

Confederation of Family Organisations in the EU (COFACE): www.coface-eu.org/en/

Eurochild: www.eurochild.org/

Eurodiaconia: www.eurodiaconia.org/

European Anti-poverty network (EAPN): www.eapn.eu/en

European Federation of National Organisations Working With the Homeless (FEANTSA): www.feantsa.org/code/en/hp.asp

European Social Network (ESN): www.esn-eu.org/

Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM): www.picum.org



This explainer has been developed through a joint EAPN and Eurochild Task Force working with an external expert, Hugh Frazer, Adjunct Professor in the Department of Applied Social Studies at the National University of Ireland (Maynooth), who has drafted the report. Members have worked together to pool grass-roots and professional expertise and experience so as to bring home the reality of child poverty and to help to support mobilisation which will achieve concrete progress. Particular thanks are due to the EAPN and Eurochild members of the Task Force: Agata D'Addato (Eurochild, Brussels), Sian Jones (EAPN, Brussels), Ioanna Avloniti (The Smile of the Child, Greece), John McKendrick (Glasgow School for Business and Society, Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland), Sean O'Neill (Children in Wales), Wielislawa Warzywoda-Kruszynska (University of Lodz, Poland), Kärt Mere (Estonia Child Welfare Organisation/EAPN EE), Pierre Doyen (Belgian/Walloon Anti-Poverty Network), Erika Biehn (EAPN DE). Helpful feedback has also been received from the EU Inclusion Strategies group of EAPN, in particular Graciela Malgesini (EAPN ES). FEANTSA and PICUM also contributed, and the Eurochild Policy Steering Group, in particular Marion Macleod.

EUROPEAN ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK and EUROCHILD. Reproduction permitted, provided that appropriate reference is made to the source. March 2013.



The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) is an independent network of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and groups involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion in the Member States of the European Union, established in 1990.



EUROCHILD is a network of organisations and individuals working in and across Europe to improve the quality of life of children and young people. Eurochild's work is underpinned by the principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.