

Newsletter

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EUROPEAN CITIES
AGAINST CHILD POVERTY



Improving children's health and social care Seminar in Helsinki, 23rd - 24th April 2009

On the 23rd and 24th April 2009, delegates from the five partner cities and representatives from over a dozen regions across Europe came together to discuss effective practical ways to improve life chances for children and breaking cycles of deprivation with a focus on health and social care.



This practical workshop featured presentations of successful projects:

- Starting Together – Amsterdam
- Parental Steps – Solna
- Working for Wellness – London
- Utsikten – Uppsala
- From Consumed to Consumers – Milan
- Health School by Bluepoint – Budapest

Further information on each of these initiatives can be found in our most recent [policy bulletin](#).

Lessons learnt at Helsinki

The following policy recommendations for improving are based on the findings and discussions of representatives from our cities:

- Empower parents to help themselves and their children through a holistic package of support
- Bring parents together to share ideas about better parenting and encourage “self-help” approaches. This helps to remove the stigmas associated with mental health issues or dependence on social welfare benefits
- Encourage children and young people to take control of their own health
- Improve health and reduce poverty through improving access to employment for parents. Strong links with specialist services and other referral organisations are vital

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Mutual Learning on Social Protection and Social Inclusion



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Next meeting of the network: 15th – 16th June 2009: Policy workshop - Amsterdam

Integrated approaches to tackling child poverty in European cities

The fifth meeting of the network will be held in Amsterdam on 15th – 16th June 2009. Following four successful events, each of which focussed on a key issue associated with child poverty, this final two-day event will be an opportunity to draw some useful conclusions about how good practice on the ground can be supported by integrated policies and services in our cities.

The event will be hosted by the City of Amsterdam and will be attended by roughly 50 - 60 representatives of multiple disciplines and local or regional government from the cities of London, Milan, Amsterdam, Helsinki, Budapest, Solna, Sollentuna, Uppsala, Vasteras and Copenhagen.

Child poverty events in Europe – June and July 2009

o **Poverty, Social Exclusion and Children without Parental Care: Making the Links** Prague, Czech Republic, 23rd and 24th June

This Members' Exchange Seminar is being held to exchange knowledge and experience and to facilitate debate and on specific aspects of child poverty and social exclusion. It will feed into Eurochild's Thematic Working Groups, set up to strengthen Eurochild's position as a repository of expertise on effective, evidence-based approaches to tackling child poverty and social exclusion.

o **Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural areas** Budapest, Hungary, 11th and 12th June

Rural poverty is a significant aspect of European poverty - in some Member States

the poverty risk in rural areas is twice that of urban areas.

This conference aims to highlight the need for increased cooperation between different stakeholders in the field of social policies, agricultural development, regional policy and statistics to fight poverty and social exclusion in rural areas.

With the support of the Hungarian Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, this conference is organised by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities in cooperation with the Directorates-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, Regional Policy and Eurostat.

Past events on child poverty in Europe: January – June 2009

o **50th Committee on the Rights of the Child** Geneva, Switzerland, 12th - 30th January

This conference is hosted by the [Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights at the United Nations](#)

The Committee examined reports from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Republic of Moldova, Netherlands and Republic of Chad on their implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It concluded that although these states had come a long way in the implementation of the

convention, there was still a little work left to be done to preserve the sanctity of the right of children. Particularly, it highlighted the recent roll-backs made to the rights of immigrant/refugee children in the Netherlands, and also highlighted the plight of child-soldiers in the Congo, Chad and Malawi.

o **Child-centred approaches to HIV/AIDS: A Child-to-Child Approach** United Kingdom, 2nd February

This course, hosted by the [Consortium for Street Children](#) focused on applying child-to-child methodologies to HIV/AIDS programming.

o Children and online sexual violence

Stockholm, Sweden, 12th – 13th February

The conference agreed to the development and implementation of best practices in the on-line security of children. 'Alexandra Man' was discussed as a case-study where an Iraqi-refugee to Sweden, named Altheer-Al-Suhairy, pretended to be a woman named *Alexandra* and brutally raped over 50 girls as young as 12. This case-study formed the basis of the conference.

o Child-Friendly Europe Conference

Prague, Czech Republic, 6th-7th April.

The aim of the Child-Friendly Europe conference was to deal with selected aspects of contemporary life which significantly affect the quality of life enjoyed by children and the conditions required for their healthy, harmonious development.

The conference delegates concluded that policy makers in European countries should take into account the best interests of children and ensure respect for their rights. European countries should exchange their experiences of children's issues and establish a children's ombudsman. Awareness of children's rights, positive parenting and the social skills of parents, together with media education of parents and children regarding safe access to modern media (television and the Internet), should be developed in society. Finally, the

delegates recommended close cooperation between the European Union and the Council of Europe in protecting and promoting children's rights and the establishment of policies relating to children.

o Eighth European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty

Brussels, Belgium, 15th-16th May

The [Eighth Meeting](#), organised by the Czech Presidency of the European Union, the European Commission and the European Anti-Poverty Network, had the purpose of listening to people experiencing poverty, and establishing a dialogue with policy and decision-makers in the field of the fight against poverty and social exclusion at the European and national levels.

The meeting addressed the topics of housing, financial inclusion and access to basic services, taking the places where the participants lived as a starting point.

Vladimír Špidla, the Commissioner for employment, social affairs and equal opportunities has asserted that the outcomes of the meeting will help develop solutions, strategies and policies to improve the lives of those most affected by poverty and social exclusion. He also commented that the meeting was particularly helpful in helping prepare the Commission's initiative for next year: the 2010 European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion.

Recent publications on child poverty

Young People's Voices on Child Trafficking: Experiences from South Eastern Europe
UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, December 2008

This report is comprised of interviews with children and young people who were trafficked whilst being under 18 years of age. Interviews were conducted in Albania, Kosovo, Moldova and Romania. Each of the children and young people described their lives before being trafficked, their experiences during exploitation, and how they went about rebuilding their lives once they were free.

Routine Data Collection and Monitoring of Health Services Relating to Early Childhood Development: a Two-Nation Review Study

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, January 2009

This report looks at monitoring processes and the availability of data relating to early childhood development in the cases of Germany and the United Kingdom. The discussion centres on pre-requisites for successful routine data collection: a national framework, a national database and making data available publicly.

Child Poverty in Perspective Report

UNICEF and The Children's Society, February 2009

This report compares children's wellbeing in 21 European and North American nations. According to the report, the UK is the worst industrialised nation for children's wellbeing.

To coincide with the report's launch, The Children's Society has unveiled [My Life](#), a web site allowing children and young people to feed their opinions into the charity's Good Childhood Inquiry. The inquiry aims to investigate the state of childhood in the UK and how to improve it.

Ending Child Poverty in a Changing Economy

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, February 2009

In this report, Donald Hirsch takes into account the implications of the recession and looks at what effect current policies will have on meeting the UK government target of halving child poverty by 2010 and eliminating it by 2020 using the most recent data available.

Handbook for the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, February 2009

The Handbook aims to promote understanding and effective implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. It describes the scope and content of the Protocol, and provides examples of measures taken by State Parties to fulfil their obligations. The handbook is addressed principally to public officials, UN organizations, child rights advocates and others who work with and for children, and whose duties and activities can enhance the protection of children from exploitation, at national and local levels.

Ending Child Poverty: a Manifesto for Success

Child Poverty Action Group, March 2009

The UK's 2010 target to halve child poverty is the bedrock for meeting the 2020 goal of eradicating child poverty. Nevertheless, this target date is fast approaching and, although 600,000 children have been lifted out of poverty, without more effort the UK will not meet the target. This manifesto argues that we should put children first and outlines ten steps that will bring the UK closer to its aim of eliminating child poverty.

Housing for Disabled Children and their Families: an Information Resource

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, May 2009

Judith Cavet gives an overview of information about housing for disabled children and their families, and ideas for improving their circumstances.

Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland

Scottish government, May 2009

This National Statistics publication presents annual estimates for 2007-2008 of the proportion and number of children, working-age adults and pensioners living in low income households in Scotland. It also focuses on the distribution of household income across Scotland. The estimates are used to monitor progress towards UK and Scottish Government targets to reduce poverty and income inequality.