

4. SITUATION ANALYSES

4.1. The Global Context

Poverty in general and that of children in particular is a phenomenon that has many roots in the global context. The impacts and transmission channels of global shocks are briefly summarized e.g. in the UNICEF Social Policy Working Paper of 2009.¹ The transmission channels are complicated but include the effects of global economic, social, ecological and cultural/political changes on families through the effects on family incomes, employment, trends and fluctuations in consumer and producer prices for food, fuel, remittances, government spending etc. Bad times lead to family coping strategies that can be harmful to the children: less is spent on food, the quality of food becomes less adequate, and children are removed from school to augment the labor input of the household on the farm or on the labor market. The sale of family assets or borrowing with high interest rates from informal markets may lead to long-term hardship that can be transmitted to the next generation. Children are also more vulnerable to weather and climate induced shocks. Women and girls are usually more adversely affected by global shocks that transmit down to the household level.

Similarly, trends and fluctuations in development aid are part of these global or international phenomena that may have positive – and negative – impacts on families with children. Were aid to be counter-cyclical in relation to global business cycles, it would level off some of the impacts of global business downturns.

4.1.1. Waves of global development policy dialogues²

Since the beginning of "development aid" there have been periods with their particularly dominant theories, ideologies and approaches. Keys to development have been found in the way of different factors and processes.

Changing perspectives to development. An Indian view.

In the 1960s, Indira Gandhi's ruling Congress Party launched the slogan: "Bread, clothing and shelter!"

¹ UNICEF Policy and Practice, 2009 *Aggregate Shocks, Poor Households and Children: Transmission Channels and Policy Responses*, New York: UNICEF [online] Available at <http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Postscript_Formatted_AGGREGATE_SHOCKS_AND_CHILDREN_3.04.09.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

² This item is a very brief introduction to the issue. Read more e.g. in Timo Voipio's PHD dissertation *From Poverty Economics to Global Social Policy* [online] Available at <http://epublications.uef.fi/pub/urn_isbn_978-952-61-0260-3/urn_isbn_978-952-61-0260-3.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2012] and in Wiman, Voipio and Ylönen, 2007 *Comprehensive social policies for development in a globalizing world* [online] Available at <<http://formin.finland.fi/Public/download.aspx?ID=16057&GUID={042D62F4-A77D-41A3-959C-2DD14D66D30D}>>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

In the 1990s the Congress Party, this time from the opposition, demanded: "Electricity, roads and water!"

Now in the 2010s, the Chair of India's Technology committee, Nandan Nilekani, launched a new slogan: Electronic identity card, bank account and a mobile phone!"

Basic amenities are not enough for the current young generation of India. The basics of life alone do not release them from the intergenerational chain of poverty. What makes a difference is the ID. It makes you a formal citizen who can open a bank account and get a loan. With the mobile phone you can then do business and get out of the poverty. HS 18.08.2011/ Tommi Nieminen

The background to **the recent rise in the human rights approach to development has three main interlocking roots:**

- (1) observations of injustices in global developments,
- (2) changes in the global political climate and
- (3) active involvement by groups that have been experiencing inequalities and violations of their rights. Such movements of civil rights have included e.g. women, American and South African black people, people with disabilities, and indigenous peoples.

The evolution of these background processes is describe briefly below to increase understanding of why and how the rights based paradigm emerged on the scene.

(1) Waves of development policy and rising disparities

The development dialogue of the latter part of the 1970s and 1980s was dominated by a neoliberal approach that emphasized the role of free markets and free trade as drivers of development. The end of 1970s witnessed a turn in economic ideology. The Conservative Party Leader, Margaret Thatcher, became Prime Minister in the UK (1979) and started a radical liberalization of the economy. The new US President, Ronald Reagan(1981-89), found in Thatcher an ideological look-alike and they joined in a mission to send a tide of new liberalism over the world. The classical liberalist belief was that economic growth in a "free" economy would be faster and it would trickle down to the poor (a "growth first" –agenda). Dismantling the role of the public sector and privatizing public services was believed to lead to more efficiency in basic service production. The standard advice by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to developing countries was to dismantle the regulatory roles of governments and to commercialize public services. The structures of developing economies had to be adjusted to make developing countries more competitive in the international market in order to derive export revenues. The Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) were introduced by the International Financing Institutions (IFIs) as the main vehicle for development. **Many developing countries ended up in a vicious circle of borrowing for restructuring and struggling with fluctuating global markets and ended up in deep and growing debts.**

Fig. 4.1.1.a.: Tanzanian critical view of debt by Masood ³

³ *Tanzania Without Poverty. Tanzania Plain Language Guide to Tanzania's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.* [online] Available at <<http://www.hakikazi.org/eng/>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]



From the perspective of social and human development, the actual outcomes of Structural Adjustment Programmes were alarming in many countries in the 1970s and 1980s. The public sector was starved, school fees were introduced⁴ and the development of e.g. emerging social protection programmes stalled. UNICEF pointed out that commercialization of basic services had led to inequality and deprivation of the poorer segments of society – especially poor children. It published the report “Restructuring with a human face” (1987) as an argument for seriously taking into account the human dimension of structural adjustments. At the same time the UNDP was developing an alternative concept and indicator for measuring development in order to provide an alternative to the simplistic GDP per capita approach for measuring development outcomes. The Human Development Index was created and the results were then published in the first volume of the **Human Development Report**- series (HDR 1990). Its “mission” was *“the single goal of putting people back at the center of the development process in terms of economic debate, policy and advocacy...Bringing about development of the people, by the people, and for the people, and emphasizing that the goals of development are choices and freedoms.”* The analysis shows how *“economic growth translates – or fails to translate – into human development.”*⁵ Furthermore the report outlined strategies for the 1990s *“emphasizing the importance of restructuring budgetary expenditures, including military expenditures, and creating an international economic and financial environment conducive to human development.”* This approach provided clearly **an alternative to the growth-first neo-Liberalistic doctrine that talked about “economies” instead of “societies”.**

The developing countries raised the challenge of how indebtedness was depriving them of *the right to development*. The right to development was first tabled in 1981 in the African Charter on

⁴ See e.g. UNICEF & The World Bank, 2009. *Abolishing School Fees in Africa Lessons from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and Mozambique* http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Abolishing_School_Fees_in_Africa.pdf

⁵ UNDP *Human Development Report 1990* [online] Available at <<http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1990/>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

Human and People's Rights.⁶ The drafting was initiated by the Organization of African Unity (OAU, today African Union AU) in the end of the 1970s. In 1986 the UN adopted the Declaration on the Right to Development (GA Res 41/128). The concept has since often sparked heated debates at UN meetings, including the Commission for Social Development around the turn of the Millennium. However, the right to development has since become a standard and accepted wording in social development resolutions.

(2) Breaking of the ideological stalemate

At the end of 1980s new winds started blowing in Eastern Europe and a more honest dialogue on social development became possible between the East and the West. Finland was an active partner and "ideological broker" in this background dialogue.

Until the end part of the 1980s the dialogue on social development had been meager and ritualistic because of the ideological split between the East and the West. This ideological blur had actually resulted in undermining the holistic concept of human rights by splitting it into two dimensions: civil and political rights on the one hand and social, economic and cultural rights on the other. **Social rights were often seen as less on the scale of human rights than civil and political rights.** In intergovernmental dialogue, these two clusters of human rights were often used as pawns in the trade between West and East. **At the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, June 1993), which followed not long after the collapse of the Eastern bloc, the indivisibility of these two dimensions of Human Rights was finally endorsed. Finland has systematically supported this approach.**

"Emphasizing that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which constitutes a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, is the source of inspiration and has been the basis for the United Nations in making advances in standard setting as contained in the existing international human rights instruments, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

*5. All human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated. The international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis. While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms."*⁷

Democracy and human rights were rising strongly on the global agenda and this was also the context of the Children's Summit of 1990. But this Summit was also the first Summit of the UN that focused on "social development", as social development was understood to be the prerequisite for a materialization of the rights of the child. In May 1991, the Ambassador of Chile to the United

⁶ University of Minnesota, Human Rights Library *African [Banjul] Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted June 27, 1981* [online] Available at <<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/z1afchar.htm>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

⁷ United Nations General Assembly, 1993. *Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action* [online] Available at <[http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(symbol\)/a.conf.157.23.en](http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(symbol)/a.conf.157.23.en)> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

Nations, Mr. Juan Somavia proposed, in a statement before the Economic and Social Council,⁸ the convening of a *Summit* on social development. Actually, Chile was one of those countries that experienced all the extreme dark sides of the "growth-first" neoliberal economic agenda of the 1970s and 1980s.

The preparatory process of **the World Summit on Social Development of 1995** made it possible to introduce new perspectives on the social dimension of development. In his Statement at the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen 1995, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros Ghali (1992–1996), made a definite connection between social development and human rights:

*“The underlying purpose of this Summit is the protection of the individual member of society. It seems important to me that at the very outset of our deliberations **we should not lose sight of the indissoluble link between the promotion of social development and the protection of human rights.**”*

In 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights explicitly expressed the social dimension of human rights. This dimension would be reaffirmed even more emphatically in the International Covenants of 1966, especially the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, whose importance I wish to here underscore. And it was in that context that several years later the fundamental concept of the right to development began to emerge.”⁹

The President of Finland, Martti Ahtisaari, in turn, in his address to the Summit advocated for the Nordic Welfare State model as “a society for all” that is anchored on equal rights of all and of solidarity.

*“Serious doubts have recently been expressed about the viability of the welfare state model. In view of the economic difficulties facing us today, it may well be that the model requires adjustments, even far-reaching changes. **But I am convinced that the basis of the welfare state ideology is sound - a society for all, regardless of wealth and status; solidarity with the weakest and most vulnerable.** This is the hard core of the Nordic experience that we are proud to share with other nations. It is gratifying to note that this spirit permeates the final documents of this Summit.”¹⁰*

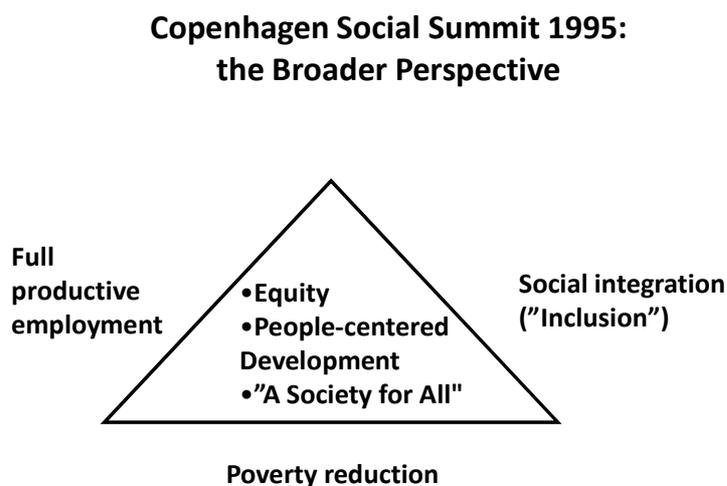
⁸ United Nations Press Release, 1998 *Juan Somavia (Chile) elected president of Economic and Social Council 22 Jan 1998* [online] Available at <<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/1998/19980122.BIO3131.htm>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]. Somavia became the S-G of ILO. He was the father of the "Decent Work Agenda and an architect of many other initiatives for fairer globalization.

⁹ United Nations *Statement by Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. B.B. Ghali (5 March 1995)* [online] Available at <<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/conf166/una/950306054234.htm>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

¹⁰ United Nations *Statement by the President of the Republic of Finland Mr Martti Ahtisaari 11 March 1995* [online] Available at <<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/conf166/gov/950311131541.htm>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

The Summit's framework can be described as follows: at the centre are human beings, active agents of their lives, with equal rights and equal responsibilities. **A just society for all, which enables all people to achieve well-being, is based on three broad policy goals: full employment, poverty reduction and social integration, and an *enabling environment* that facilitates and supports peoples' striving to create well-being for their families, communities and for themselves and the Nation. "Well-being for All" was the long-term vision of the Summit resolution.**¹¹

Fig. 4.1.1.b.: The World Social Summit Perspective¹²



The phrase "A Society for All" was originally a *demand* by the Nordic disabled people's organizations in the early part of the 1970s. They demanded their rights to be equal members of society. The essence of this slogan was pointed out also by the Secretary General of the United Nations as he wrote in his Report to the 49th General Assembly that "***The concept of A Society for All encompassing human diversity and development of all human potential, can be said to embody, in a single phrase, the human rights instruments of the United Nations....***"¹³

(3) The rise of advocacy groups

The demand for equality and non-discrimination has long roots in the women's movement and the civil rights movement of black Americans. Also in the beginning of the 1970s the parents of children with intellectual disabilities demanded "inclusion" of their children in mainstream schools

¹¹ This idea was actually introduced already during the Interregional Consultations on Developmental Social Welfare Policies in 1988. See: Ronald Wiman, 1987. *From the Welfare State to A Welfare Society* Helsinki: National Board for Social Welfare.

¹² Illustration by Timo Voipio, Senior Advisor on Global Social Policy, Ministry for Foreign Affairs Finland

¹³ Ronald Wiman (ed), 2003. *Disability Dimension in Development Action Manual on Inclusive Planning*. Saarijärvi: Stakes for and on behalf of the United Nations. [online] Available at http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/toolaction/FF-DisabilityDim0103_b1.pdf [Accessed 12 January 2012]

and the community in general. At the end of the 1960s the International League of Societies for Mental Handicap (ILSMH) started lobbying for the rights of people with intellectual disabilities and the process led to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons, which was adopted in 1971. The establishment of Disabled Peoples International (DPI) in 1981 as a human rights movement of persons with disabilities themselves was a decisive step towards the materialization of the demand: "Nothing about us without us". In the end of this process, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006 endorsed the understanding that disability issues are human rights issues. This was the first Convention in the drafting of which the "target group" had an equal and direct opportunity to be involved in the drafting process at the United Nations.

Children's rights, in turn, also have their roots in civil society activities when Save the Children lobbied in the League of Nations through the first global milestone, the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child in 1924. After WWII, a strong advocacy movement around the United Nations resulted in the *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* in 1959. UNICEF had originally been a relief organization since 1946. In the 1960s the focus turned to improving the health of all children through investments in water and sanitation. In the seventies a broader "Basic Needs Approach" and community development was introduced by ILO, with UNICEF following suit. The International Year of the Child (1979) sparked new interest in the issue of the most vulnerable children, such as street children, children in slums and children with disabilities. The children's rights agenda further matured during the next decade and finally the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* was adopted on the 20th November, 1989 at the UN General Assembly. **The Convention defined children not only as beneficiaries or targets of care but as rights holders with a legitimate right to active participation in matters affecting them.**

4.1.2. Global consensus on the smallest common development denominators

During the latter part of the 1990s, the equality-focused, more-institutional approach to social development became diluted, with the World Bank introducing an economic orientation to social development and strongly intensifying its involvement in poverty reduction and the social sector development. In those days, the Bank's social development professional network was only in an emerging state – though rapidly crystallizing.¹⁴ Actually, there was demand for social development leadership, as the UN, with its meager and scattered field resources, was not able to maintain its mandated international lead role as the standards-setting organization. The economic and income-based "money-metric" approach continued to dominate discussions and development programmes. This was also the mainstream approach of **Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers: economics dominated the contents and policies.**

Poverty reduction became the focus of development debate and most of the donors aligned their strategies towards this overarching objective. The OECD strategy for the 21st century¹⁵ introduced

¹⁴ Gloria Davis, 2004. *A History of the Social Development Network in The World Bank, 1973 - 2002* [online] Available at <<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTRANETSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/214578-1111735201184/20502396/History+of+SD+in+WB.pdf>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

¹⁵ OECD Development Assistance Committee, 1996 *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation* [online] Available at <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/23/35/2508761.pdf>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

three sets of measurable quantifiable goals on desired outcomes of development to help developing countries to focus on the reduction poverty and the misery it brings with it. These clusters were 1. *Economic well-being*, 2. *Social Development* 3) *Environmental sustainability and regeneration*. The specific goals representing these clusters served as a stepping stone for the development of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The MDGs introduced an 8-dimensional set of goals and indicators for measuring development. The subsequent dialogue largely missed the institutional dimension that had been originally baked into the Millennium Declaration. Also **the OECD –DAC Guidelines (2001) included more qualitative perspectives towards “more stable, safe, participatory and just societies” which they considered essential to the attainment of these measurable goals.** These qualitative facilitators included *“capacity development, for effective, democratic, and accountable governance, the protection of human rights and respect for the rule of law.”*¹⁶

The eight MDGs dominated the discussion and policies but their more qualitative aspects and prerequisites, their interrelationships and the distributive aspects of these goals were given less adequate attention until only recently. It was realized that the MDGs cannot be achieved if the poorest and most vulnerable population groups at the margins are left behind. Therefore, **during the second half of the first decade of this millennium many organizations turned their attention to the issue of inequality as part of the poverty problem – and equality as a part of the solution.**

4.1.3. Has a focus on poverty narrowed the development agenda?

The OECD-DAC Poverty Reduction Guidelines of 2001 presented to the donor community a coherent strategic approach to development cooperation under the overarching goal of poverty reduction. The justification for the poverty focus was the wide potential impact of poverty on the futures of societies:

- ***“social ills associated with poverty: disease, illicit migration, environmental degradation, crime, political instability, armed conflict and terrorism***
- ***PLUS pressures of population growth***
- ***eradicating poverty is thus essential for global security and prosperity and for reducing environmental stresses.***
- ***Poverty eradication is an international public good of the first order, serving the interests of all.”***

Since then the donor community has been faithfully focusing on poverty reduction. In theory poverty reduction has been addressed in the multidimensional manner as guided by the OECD guidelines but, in practice, broadening the focus from economic growth took much more time and effort in order to root more social insight and terminology into the OECD-DAC approaches. The background work was done through the preparatory bodies, such as POVNET and its Task Teams where Finland’s experts played an active role.¹⁷

¹⁶ OECD, 2001. *The DAC Guidelines for Poverty Reduction* p. 16 [online] Available at <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/47/14/2672735.pdf>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

¹⁷ See e.g. Wiman, Voipio, Ylönen (2007) & Voipio’s dissertation 2011

There is much vagueness in understanding what the international community actually has agreed upon regarding poverty. On various occasions, reference is made to *reduction* of poverty, *eradication* of poverty and eradication of *absolute* poverty. Often the goal is diluted even to "poverty *alleviation*". The original World Summit for Social Development agreement was:

"We commit ourselves to the goal of eradicating poverty in the world, through decisive national actions and international cooperation, as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind.

To this end, at the national level, in partnership with all actors of civil society and in the context of a multidimensional and integrated approach, we will:

(a) Formulate or strengthen, as a matter of urgency, and preferably by the year 1996, the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, national policies and strategies geared to substantially reducing overall poverty in the shortest possible time, reducing inequalities and eradicating absolute poverty by a target date to be specified by each country in its national context;"...

The agreement was to *reduce* overall poverty and to *eradicate* absolute poverty. These were to be reached through *national-level* strategies with the help of international collaboration.

In the Millennium Declaration¹⁸, development was put in its right place - ahead of poverty eradication - as a process that creates an enabling environment for the elimination of poverty:

"Development and poverty eradication

- 11. We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected. We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want.*
- 12. We resolve therefore to create an environment – at the national and global levels alike – which is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty."*

At the 2005 World Summit, the Heads of State reaffirmed confusingly "*our commitment to eradicate poverty and promote sustained economic growth, sustainable development and global prosperity for all.*"¹⁹ Again, poverty eradication emerged as an "independent variable" rather than as an outcome of growth and equitable development.

It is rather fair to say, that poverty reduction has become a mantra, a label justifying practically any development intervention. Too seldom has there been credible explanation of how, and

¹⁸ UN, 1995 *World Summit for Social Development* [online] Available at <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/conf166/aconf166-9.htm> > [Accessed 12 January 2012]

¹⁹ <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/487/60/PDF/N0548760.pdf?OpenElement>

through which transmission mechanism or processes, the intervention would actually reduce poverty. Even more seldom has there been a follow-up study to show whether poverty was really reduced as a consequence of the project/programme. This was the conclusion of a recent evaluation of Finland's development projects and programmes:

“Worst of all, the key aim of all these activities, poverty reduction, is vague, indistinctly measurable and little measured, so it is often assumed to be delivered even when it may not be, or when it occurs for other reasons.”²⁰

The focus on poverty, as such, created tendencies that narrowed the approach to development. Also the MDGs did the same by focusing on goals and targets that would be indicators of outcomes of broader development but did not give attention to the “process indicators”. For instance, reduction of child mortality or maternal mortality require broad development that facilitates equal access to safe water, adequate food, clean environment, housing conditions, service structures etc., changes that are seldom achievable through projects targeting child mortality and maternal mortality as such.

From the human rights perspective, the quality of the process is important: does it ensure and promote human dignity, universality, equality, non-discrimination, solidarity, freedom, justice and the rule of law. All these quality criteria imply a broader institutional approach that aims at ensuring societal changes conducive to the reaching of those goals *equitably* by all.

In practice, the focus on poverty reduction has overemphasized the economic growth aspects. Economic growth as such does not help a great deal those poorest who are not connected with the growth sectors. Another weakness in this approach is that the traditional economic growth through “business as usual” is reaching its ecological and social limits.

A narrow economic and static poverty focus has delayed a broadening of mainstream poverty reduction strategies. Initially there was little room for social and institutional factors. Understanding the **multidimensional nature of poverty called for a broader, more comprehensive societal and institutional approach to tackling poverty as a structural social phenomenon.**

Already in 2001. The OECD's guideline on poverty reduction provided a more comprehensive framework that would consist of several coherent policy components, such as the following:²¹

1. Pro-poor economic growth: pace and quality that favor the poor
2. Empowerment, rights and pro-poor governance

²⁰ . Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Evaluation report, 2010. *The Sustainability Dimension in Addressing Poverty Reduction: Synthesis of Evaluations* p.24 [online] Available at <<http://www.formin.fi/public/download.aspx?ID=67634&GUID={AB9C196E-F915-41E3-AE99-726129B492F5}>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

See also: *Poor Poverty, 2011. The impoverishment of analysis, measurement and policy* [online] Available at <<http://www.bloomsburyacademic.com/view/Poor-Poverty/book-ba-9781849664530.xml?mode=book&page=1&pageSize=8&q=poor+poverty&result=1&resultPage=%2Fsearch&sortBy=ft%3Ascore%28%24doc%29>>

²¹ OECD (2001) Guidelines on Poverty Reduction, p 44

3. Basic social services for human development
4. Human security: reducing vulnerability and managing shocks
5. Mainstreaming and enhancing gender equality
6. Mainstreaming environmental sustainability using sustainable livelihoods approaches

It took, however, some time for the OECD to cover this whole agenda. For example, only towards the latter half of the last decade did the role of social protection (social security and basic services) become more widely recognized as one effective way to address the dynamics of risk, vulnerability and poverty.²²

Still, the poverty focus even if enriched by a more comprehensive approach, dwarfs the concept of development. In Amartya Sen's language "development is widening of choices", development is freedom. The poor will benefit if societal development opens opportunities for them and if appropriate risk management mechanisms ensure that they can take advantage from more productive opportunities without risking their livelihoods in cases of sudden shocks.

Poverty reduction is a justified goal of its own right but sustainable reduction of poverty does not follow from narrow poverty focused projects. In the same way, child poverty and deprivation have multidimensional root causes that are related to social, economic, environmental and cultural factors. **The first prerequisite for a successful and sustainable reduction of child poverty and deprivation is an understanding of these background factors or "root causes" and the channels through which these factors influence the opportunities for and obstacles to the well-being of children.**

Such systemic change that opens opportunities to education for all, health for all, decent work for all, social security for all calls for fundamental social change that is possible only if the rich and middle classes buy into such changes. Once this happens – and only if this happens – will extreme poverty become history.

4.1.4. Increasingly challenging foreign policy environments

The international operating environment of Finland has changed rapidly since the early 1990s. These include e.g. the transition in neighboring areas (the former European Socialist Countries), Finland's joining the European Union, serious economic recessions, the change in power relations globally and globalization in general. **New global risks are emerging**, such as climate change, crises related to finances, food and fuel, conflicts related to natural resources including land and water, persistent poverty, global epidemics, fragile and even failing states, discrimination and oppression of women and girls by some cultures, and extremist movements and terrorism, to name a few. All these pose serious challenges to securing and promoting human rights. Children are in the most vulnerable situation while facing these risks and their voice is unheard in the forums where relevant decisions are made.

One of the challenges that has not been given much attention is population development: population growth, population structure and migrations. However, for any policies, plans and programs, whether on global, regional or local levels, population and its relationship to resources should be included in the baseline set of facts. On the global scale, population passed the 7 billion

²² See e.g. OECD DAC/ POVNET, 2009. Promoting *pro-poor growth*. *Social Protection* [online] Available at <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/63/10/43514563.pdf>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

mark at the end of October 2011. While the population growth rate has come down, another two to three billion will be added to the World population by 2050 – the time when today’s children are at the prime of their working and family lives. That will make for a more crowded world. Population growth is fastest in the poorest countries and countries with weak state institutions (“fragile states”). For instance the population of Afghanistan with a population growth rate of around 4% will double in about 15 years. The child population in most developing countries continues to grow due to past high fertility. Another reality is that at the same time the number and proportion of older people will grow rapidly. The challenge is much bigger in developing countries than in the high-income countries: in the less developed regions the number of older people will quadruple by 2050 while in the high income countries it will grow only some 70%, on average. The challenges to fragile or non-existent social security as well as the social and health service systems will be unprecedented in developing countries, with countries facing increases of the dependent age groups at both ends of the age pyramid simultaneously.

Furthermore, during the next decade over one billion young people will enter the labor market.

It has been estimated by ILO that only 300 million jobs will emerge if more effective interventions are not made. This is a serious challenge for the young people concerned, but also an issue for civil peace and sustainable development. The Nobel Laureate, former President of Finland, Martti Ahtisaari put it this way: *“Where will the rest, a billion young people, find meaningful activity? Shall we just leave them to become recruits for terrorist movements.”*²³

The change in the global division of labor and power, the increasing influence of the private sector and the civil society in global public policy create challenges – and opportunities – for the coherent application of Human Rights standards and principles, for which Governments are the treaty partners and ultimate duty bearers. The fragmentation of the global scene into new less formal and less comprehensive coalitions tends to weaken the position and authority of intergovernmental organizations and particularly of the UN, which is the only global parliamentary body and thus the most legitimate organ for standard setting.²⁴ One of the challenges for Finland is, however, that the EU’s role as the central channel for foreign policy influence has been increasing and much of the international work must be done through the agencies of the EU. The resources and factual competencies of the new “Foreign Office” of the EU European External Action Service (EEAS) remain to be seen.

The **rise of middle income countries** brings to the fore new issues and challenges as well as opportunities. The number of countries in this group is increasing and an increasing number of people will live in these countries. Inequality is a typical feature of these countries. The volume of overall poverty is shifting to this group of countries. The causes of poverty in middle income countries are different than those in lowest income settings. In middle income countries the issue is not total wealth but the uneven distribution of wealth and opportunities. In the majority of low income countries, the poor live in fragile settings where the challenges are a lack of resources, of adequate institutions, of “political will” and of expertise.

²³ This has been one of the global concerns by the Finnish Nobel Laureate Martti Ahtisaari. See Katri Merikallio and Tapani Ruokanen (eds.)2011, *Matkalla. Martti Ahtisaaren tarina.* (On the Journey. The story of Martti Ahtisaari) Otava, p. 608, e.g.

²⁴ See also Ulkoasiainministeriö, 2010. *Tulevaisuuskatsaus 2010: Ulkopoliittikka 2020* [online] Available at <<http://formin.finland.fi/public/download.aspx?ID=63033&GUID={C9C0E4FC-4F29-4A14-AD9D-D583B201AF5E}>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

Climate change and ecosystem degradation tend to impact harder on children.²⁵ The children of the poor are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, because they live in inadequate housing and will be more susceptible to infections and vector borne diseases.

Increasing natural disasters and escalating conflicts and humanitarian crises hit women and children hardest through insecurity and the lack of protection and services. Even after conflict, the collapse of social and economic infrastructure and displacement affect women and children disproportionately.

The financial crises in high income countries threatens social investments, social security and services in those countries – again obviously affecting more severely those services needed by women and children. At the same time, popular pressure to cut ODA may rise. For instance Europe focuses on its own financial crisis and the bailing out of the banks with massive financial commitments.

4.1. 5. The global challenge of poverty – a changing picture

The World Bank has been following poverty rates for 30 years using “absolute poverty line” indicators expressed in USD/ day adjusted by purchasing power. The current poverty line is USD 1.25/per person per day. It is an average of national poverty lines, the minimum acceptable basket of consumption, of the world’s poorest countries.

Fig. 4.1.5.a: Income poverty trends 1990 - 2010

Region	Percentage of population living on less than 1.25 USD/day				Number of people living on less than 1.25USD/day (millions)			
	1990	2005	2015	2020	1990	2005	2015	2020
East Asia and Pacific	54.7	16.9	5.9	4.0	87.3	317	120	83
China	60.2	15.9	5.1	4.0	683	208	70	56
Europe and Central Asia	2.0	3.7	1.7	1.2	9	16	7	5
Latin America and the Caribbean	11.3	8.2	5.0	4.3	50	45	30	27
Middle East and North Africa	4.3	3.6	1.8	1.5	10	11	6	6
South Asia	51.7	40.3	22.8	19.4	579	595	388	352
India	51.3	41.6	23.6	20.3	435	456	295	268
Sub-Saharan Africa	57.6	50.9	38.0	32.8	296	387	366	352
Total	41.7	25.2	15.0	12.8	1,817	1,371	918	826

Source: World Bank staff calculations <http://go.worldbank.org/OEPRRQIEU0>

²⁵ E.g. UNICEF, 2011. *Child outlook: A policy briefing on global trends and their implications for children* [online] Available at http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Child_Outlook_29_July_2011_1.pdf > [Accessed 12 January 2012]

The Global monitoring Report of the World Bank (2010)²⁶ shows the decline of poverty by region from 1990 to 2005. The most dramatic drop has been in the East Asia and Pacific Region, down from 54.7% to 16.9%. Much of this decline can be attributed to the decline of poverty in China and also in India to lesser extent. On the contrary, in Sub-Saharan Africa the drop has been very modest from 57.6 % to 50.9 %. Because of population growth the absolute numbers of poor people in Sub-Saharan Africa have increased up to now. In Europe and Central Asia, the poverty rate and the number of poor people increased between 1990 and 2005. This increase was largely due to instabilities in the economy and society and the breakdown of the previous social security systems. This change has been affecting most dramatically children and the elderly. A better future is anticipated also for this region by the Bank.

The Child Poverty Insights pages of the UNICEF ²⁷ blog by Laurence Chandy and Geoffry Gertz present estimates from recent survey data showing that since 2005 the total number of poor people has fallen by nearly a billion people to 900 million between 2005 and 2010. There are optimistic scenarios for some countries with large populations such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Vietnam, Indonesia and Brazil. Also in Nigeria, South Africa, Mozambique Ghana and Tanzania, the UNICEF sees promising signs.

If the current crises on food, fuel and finance do not change the trend very dramatically, the goal set in 1995 of halving extreme poverty by 2015 will be achieved – on average. Actually it was probably already achieved in 2008 before the crisis hit, according ot Chandy and Gertz' estimates.

Laurence Chandy and Geoffry Gertz see major changes in the global and regional poverty situation. These **call for a rethinking of today's policies:**

In the near future, up to 2015,

- The majority of the poor will live in Africa, and there, the number of poor children will remain high.
- Poverty will be concentrated in fragile and conflict-affected countries and environments. This is the case for both low- and middle-income countries.
- Until 2005, a majority of the world's poor lived in stable low-income countries. In the future, a majority of the poor will live in less stable political and social environments.
- *The standard financial and technical assistance tailored to poor countries must be rethought: a) in emerging economies financial constraints are not as dominant and, b) on the other hand in fragile situations the challenges are more political than technical or purely financial.*
- In the emerging economies there is a promising opportunity to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. This calls for effective social protection measures to prevent households

²⁶ The World Bank, 2010. *The MDGs after the Crisis Global Monitoring Report* [online] Available at <<http://go.worldbank.org/8NMBGII280>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

²⁷ Laurence Chandy and Geoffry Gertz, 2011. *Poverty in Numbers: The Changing State of Global Poverty from 2005 to 2015* [online] Available at <http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2011/01_global_poverty_chandy.aspx> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

from falling into poverty. Another challenge is to address inequalities based on ethnic or regional factors.

- In the poorest countries *“the need for large scale, simple to deliver and long-term programs aimed at entire populations will still be strong in order to secure provisions to cater for the basic needs of children in education, nutrition, water and sanitation, housing and social protection. “*

The article concludes that the technical and financial means for expanding social protection to bring each person over the 1.25 USD/day globally are there. Making such transfers conditional would create an incentive for families to keep children at school and to arrange regular health care for them.

Social protection has been an underused tool for development and child protection. In the last 5 years or so, it has risen promisingly on the agenda. The nature of Social Protection as an investment into the future, especially that of children, has been increasingly understood. Also, analyses and empirical evidence have shown that appropriate social protection is affordable also in low-income settings. The affordability calculus should not only include the direct cost but also the human and social capital benefits of social protection.²⁸

4.2. Child poverty – a global picture

This chapter summarizes the recent evidence on child poverty from the global perspective followed by some observations on the high income OECD countries and Europe. More detailed case studies on Finland, Great Britain, Nepal and Zambia are included.

Special attention is given also to the Central and Eastern European transition countries because child poverty in these countries has particular features and Europe should address the issue in the European and global context. Finland also shares a border with Russia and has worked extensively in assisting the reform of social policy and legislative frameworks in Russia and its former “Republics”.

4.2.1. MDGs and the challenge of child poverty

The twenty years since the adoption of the UN CRC has witnessed many achievements in the area of child survival and development, child protection and the empowering of children to participate in their own development and protection, states UNICEF.²⁹ However, many challenges remain.

The international community has agreed the MDGs as the umbrella framework for policies and progress measurement. A cross-cutting attention to the needs of children has not, however, been included in the original intellectual framework underpinning the MDGs, although all of the MDGs

²⁸ OECD DAC/ POVNET, 2009. Promoting *pro-poor growth*. *Social Protection* [online] Available at <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/63/10/43514563.pdf>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

²⁹ UNICEF, 2010. *Progress for Children. Achieving the MDGs with Equity*. [online] Available at <http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_55740.html> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

are relevant to children's well-being and the prevention of various dimensions of child poverty. Progress in MDGs depend much on how well children's needs for essential societal services are addressed. For instance, **UNICEF estimates that almost every second child worldwide (= about 1 billion children and adolescents below the age of 18, out of a total of 2.2 billion) is still not guaranteed access to basic social services such as food, drinking water, shelter, health and education**^{30,31}

This item provides some highlights and more qualitative food for thought. Figures on MDGs and examples of differences between rural and urban children and disparities between poor and richer children are available from UNICEF (2010): *Progress for Children. Achieving the MDGs with Equity.*³²

MDG1: Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger

Great progress has been made especially in Asia and Latin America. China has halved its under 1.25 dollars a day poverty rate. In India the poverty rate has not fallen. Over half of countries have succeeded in decreasing hunger. However, in Africa, while 28 countries succeeded in reducing hunger, it increased in 24 countries. Globally the target will probably be met – on average – despite the current crises. For children, an indicator of chronic under-nutrition is stunting, low height for age. It starts below the age of 2 and is irreversible. In developing countries, rural children are 50% more likely to be stunted than urban children. For children in the poorest fifth of households, stunting is twice as common as those living in the richest 20% of households. Underweight is twice as common in rural areas than in urban areas.

*According to the World Bank, 43% of Indian children are underweight. This is the highest proportion in the world and has stayed the same for last 20 years. In China only 7% of children are underweight. In Sub-Saharan Africa the figure is 28%.*³³ In India, there are thousands of programs against malnutrition. The challenge is their inefficiency, due to poor logistics, poor infrastructure, monsoons, poor storage and corruption. Additionally, subsidies on food and food aid itself may push food prices upwards.

³⁰ Quote from Austrian Development Aid, 2008. *Child poverty – Millennium Development Goals – Rights of the Child* [online] Available at <http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/Child_poverty_and_MDG.PDF> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

³¹ UNICEF Publications [online] Available at <www.unicef.org/publications/index.html> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

³² UNICEF, 2010. *Progress for Children: Achieving the MDGs with Equity (No. 9)* [online] Available at <http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_55740.html> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

³³ The Guardian *Indian children still underweight – after 20 years of interventions*, 14 September 2010 [online] Available at <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2010/sep/14/mdg1-hunger-poverty-india>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

Food at school improves learning - and more.

School feeding programs have had many positive side effects in addition to the improvement of nutrition of school children. One of these has been improved school attendance, benefiting particularly girls.



MDG 2: Universal primary education

Great advances have been evident in school enrollment. About 84% of children of primary school age have attended school. However, about 100 million children are not in school. This is most common in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and South Asia. Nevertheless, countries in SSA have exhibited the fastest progress: Ethiopia recorded the highest absolute increase in enrollment. The challenge is the high dropout rate and the actual quality of education. Also there are groups of children that are particularly disadvantaged, such as some ethnic minorities and children with disabilities. In the richest fifth, 90% of children attend primary school, in the poorest fifth, only 64% go to school. The gender gap has narrowed rapidly but still, enrollment levels for girls are lower than that of boys. This is the case both in rural and urban areas and in both rich and poor families.

Introduction of school fees in primary education were a bad policy choice that deprived many children from their right to education.

High school fees have been a major challenges i.e. barrier for education of the poorest. Abolishing school fees has made a major difference: for instance in Tanzania, enrolment has increased from 59% in 2000 to 95.4% today.



http://www.hakikazi.org/eng/chapter_3b.htm#Education

However, only half make it to secondary school. The worldwide figure is 56% of secondary school age children. A large number of girls drop out because of pregnancy. While the gender gap is

generally unfavorable for girls, in Latin America and the Caribbean, boys are less likely to get secondary schooling than girls.

There is also a quality challenge: Classes can may consist of 1 00 pupils. Teacher training has also been lagging behind the need, while the use of unqualified teaching staff is common. There are context-specific challenges: for instance, NGOs in Argentina are concerned about the trend of an increasing number of poor families sending their children to private schools - though they can only afford poor quality private schools. The reason for this trend is that public schools are unreliable: teachers of public schools are on strike very frequently. They are privileged civil servants with strong unions and leaders who concentrate on defending the privileges of its members rather than considering the public good.

MDG 3: Gender equality in enrollment

Practically all nations in the world are making progress in the parity of boys and girls in primary education. Sub-Saharan Africa is making rapid progress. China has achieved gender parity in primary education. A gender gap still remains in primary education and is still wide in secondary education. The equality goal will not achieved by 2015 if progress does not accelerate.

Bangladesh is a regional success story as it eliminated primary school gender disparity already in 2005. In higher education, the disproportionate participation still remains.

MDG 4: Reduce child mortality

The global estimate for under-five mortality dropped from 100 deaths per 1000 births in 1990 to 72 in 2008, i.e. 28 digits. The most promising progress has been made in the poorest countries. However, progress is too slow to achieve the MDG4 by 2015. [The Countdown initiative](#)³⁴ is monitoring progress in the 68 countries where more than 95% of all maternal and child deaths occur. The 2010 report gives good news:

“19 of the 68 Countdown countries are on track to achieve Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 4. 17 countries have reduced child mortality by at least half. 47 countries have accelerated their progress on child mortality since 2000.

However, “much work remains: 49 Countdown countries are not on track to achieve MDG4. 12 countries (including some currently on track) have seen their progress slow since 2000.

“Globally 8.8 million children a year die before their fifth birthday, more than 40% of them during their first four weeks of life. At least two-thirds of all child deaths are preventable. Pneumonia and diarrhea remain the largest killers of children after the newborn period. Under-nutrition contributes to more than 1 in 3 child deaths.”

³⁴ *Countdown to 2015 - Decade report (2000–2010): Taking stock of maternal, newborn and child survival* [online] Available at <<http://www.countdown2015mnch.org/documents/2010report/CountdownReportPagesi-10.pdf>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

Brazil is an example of one of those countries that have made spectacular progress. During the first decade of the Millennium, it adopted a systematic approach to developing universal social protection systems to tackle poverty. This has proven effective as millions of poor Brazilian families have risen from poverty during the decade. The Bolsa Familia Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program provides poor families with a regular social allowance provided that children attend school and participate in the basic vaccination program.

There are wide disparities even in countries that have achieved rapid drops in national averages of child mortality. However, targeting action to those at the margins can make a great difference.

MDG 5: Improve maternal health

Targets for sexual and reproductive health in general and prevention of maternal deaths in particular have been hard to meet. The cluster of causes is related to access to reproductive health services and health care systems in general and the availability of skilled health personnel, in particular. There are also cultural, logistical and economic barriers to access and the use of contraceptives.

Since 1990 there has been great progress in maternity services. In the developing world, 80% of pregnant women have received at least one antenatal visit/service and about two thirds of deliveries are attended by skilled health personnel. However, regional disparities are still wide: in SSA and South Asia, less than 50% of deliveries were attended by skilled personnel and less than half of deliveries took place in a health facility. Again the difference is related to income levels and place of residence.

MDG 6: Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other serious diseases

The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate has fallen globally but progress has been slow. Some 33.4 million people were living with HIV in 2008. Girls and young women are more likely to be infected. In 26% of countries, prevalence rates have been declining, while in 41% there has been no change at all. The highest prevalence rates are found in Sub-Saharan Africa, although in about 50% of SSA countries (21), a drop has been achieved.

On the global scale, some 2 million children live with HIV. HIV treatment is reaching around 38% of children in need of antiretroviral therapy. In 2005 the proportion was only 10%.

In 2008 about 17.5 million children were orphaned by AIDS. 14.1 million of them lived in the SSA region.

Programs such as the elimination of school fees and targeted educational assistance have been useful tools to enable these children to go to school, with their enrollment rate being about the same as that of non-orphans. Moreover, the high number of child-headed households in several countries is an unprecedented challenge for social policy.

Cheap and effective anti-malaria action such as the distribution of insecticide treated mosquito nets (ITNs) have been shown to decrease child mortality by about 20%. Only half of the needed 380 million nets were distributed in African countries between 2007–2009.

In the Finland context, the situation in the nearby regions of Russia is very relevant especially in view of the HIV/AIDS problem being closely connected to the drug problem.

MDG7: Environmental sustainability

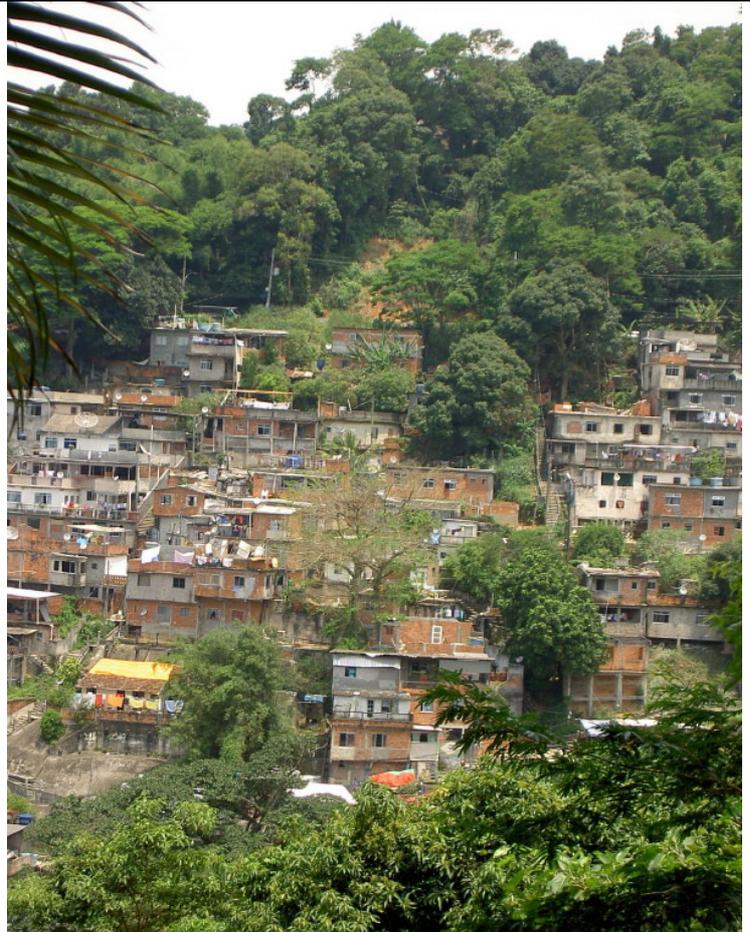
Environmental targets tend to escape from the hands of humankind. The problems of deforestation, CO2 emissions, diminishing biodiversity, the number of slum dwellers etc. tend to increase. This means that the current generation consumes the environmental capital of today's children.

Halving the number of people who have no access to clean water is the only environmental target likely to be met by 2015. Access to clean water has risen from 77% in 1990 to 87% in 2008. India and China have already met the target. Wide disparities still exist between the World's regions. Only 60% of people in SSA have access to clean water. Urban-rural differences and differences between the poor and rich remain large. The same holds true for sanitation facilities. Rapid urbanization brings with it expanding slums and increasing numbers of people left outside the essential water and sanitation infrastructure. Environmental degradation in general and climate change in particular increase the vulnerability of the poorest households and their children.

Overuse of resources, shrinking of natural space for many essential productive activities due to climate change are creating increasing obstacles for rapid achievement of any development goals. Conflicts are the most devastating human-induced disasters impacting children's lives directly and indirectly through the impact on environments. Children are also the first ones to suffer from situations where governments are either unable or unwilling to secure the materialization of basic rights and access to basic societal services. One challenge in this equation is often forgotten: the very countries that are in the most fragile state are also those hosting the highest population growth figures. For instance, Afghanistan has a growth rate of 4.8% per year. This implies a doubling of the population of Afghanistan in about 15 years. Thus a doubling is also required every 15 years in the provisions of basic services and infrastructure amenities that people need for producing their well-being just to maintain the status quo.

For a child the road out of the slum is long - if there is any way out.

Rapid urbanization is accompanied by lack of proper housing, water and sanitation. While there has been progress in access to clean water, the share of population without access to improved sanitation has grown from 26% in 1990 to 36% in 2006.



Favela. Rio de Janeiro 2010 © RW

MDG 8: Global partnerships for development

MDG 8 is actually the only goal that tackles institutional aspects i.e. the instruments of development. It refers to reducing the debt of poorer countries, fairness of trade and financial systems, access to pharmaceuticals, and new technology.

As of now, some 40 countries are eligible for debt relief. The pledges of wealthy nations on ODA do not seem to get honored. Europe, the largest donor, is facing a challenge of its own and is directing more money to its own weaker members. In regard to information technology, about a quarter of the world's population has access to the internet.³⁵ For children and young people, the internet is a strong vehicle for learning and connecting with the global environment. Lack of access, in turn, is a strong marginalizer.

³⁵ "Demand grows for information and communications technology" in United Nations, 2010. *Millennium Goals Development Report* [online] Available at <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202010%20En%20r15%20-low%20res%2020100615%20-.pdf#page=73> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

The digital divide is a challenge both globally and nationally. In the developing country context, access to IT will be limited to “first world citizens” and families as long as the costs of access are kept too high so as to exclude the poor. It has been recommended that developing country governments should intervene in their markets by supporting private sector internet provisions and supporting NGOs so as to enable them to create access channels for the poorer segment of the population.³⁶

While the MDGs have provided a joint set of targets and a joint agenda to the global community, the MDGs have also had the effect of narrowing the development agenda. The MDG’s focus has been on outcomes, with lesser attention given to the institutions and processes needed to achieve those targets. The interdependence of all the 8 objectives is thus also under-recognized. The MDGs do not give much attention to distributive aspects: easily marginalized groups have not been given sufficient attention. Such groups include people with disabilities and children, among others.

Finland has emphasized the interdependence of the MDGs and the need to take a holistic, comprehensive approach to achieving these goals. Finland has also reminded of the necessity to take into account easily marginalized groups, such as children, minorities and people with disabilities. As long as the marginalized groups are being left out, the MDGs cannot be achieved.

4.2.2. The conclusions from a UNICEF review on child poverty and the MDGs

UNICEF admits that considerable progress has been achieved towards the MDG goals, but “reaching the poorest and most marginalized communities is pivotal to the realization of the goals.” Despite rapid economic growth and investment flows and trade, “the 1990s and 2000s failed to narrow disparities between nations in children’s development. In some areas, such as child survival, disparities have actually increased.

“For a child born In Sub Saharan Africa in 1990, the probability of dying before reaching his/her 5th birthday was 1.5 times higher than in South Asia, 3.5 times higher than in Latin America and the Caribbean and 18.4 times higher than in the industrialized countries. Now, the under-5 mortality in sub-Saharan Africa rate is 1.9 times higher than in South Asia, 6.3 times higher than in Latin America and the Caribbean and 24 times higher than in the industrialized nations.” (p7.)

Inequality has many faces and these often accumulate:

Various dimensions of poverty and gender exclusion often intersect and increase the vulnerabilities and the impact of risks. Regional isolation sustains poverty and can impede access to essential services. It should also be said that minority status and disability are also typical multipliers of the impact of poverty.

³⁶ Claudio Pinhanez *Internet in Developing Countries: The Case of Brazil* [online] Available at <http://www.research.ibm.com/people/p/pinhanez/publications/netbrasil.htm> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

UNICEF recommends a stronger focus on the poorest and most marginalized children. If they are left behind, the MDGs cannot be reached.

Key readings 4.1.- 4.2.

4.1. The Global Context

UN, 2010. *The Millennium Goals Report*

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202010%20En%20r15%20-low%20res%2020100615%20-.pdf#page=73>

Timo Voipio's (2011) *From Poverty Economics to Global Social Policy* [online] Available at

<http://epublications.uef.fi/pub/urn_isbn_978-952-61-0260-3/urn_isbn_978-952-61-0260-3.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2012] PHD dissertation.

Wiman, Voipio and Ylönen, 2007 *Comprehensive social policies for development in a*

globalizing world [online] <http://info.stakes.fi/ssd/EN/comprehensive/index.htm> (Accessed 13. January 2012)

UN, 1995 *World Summit for Social Development* [online] Available at

<<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/conf166/aconf166-9.htm>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

Laurence Chandy and Geoffrey Gertz, 2011. *Poverty in Numbers: The Changing State of Global Poverty from 2005 to 2015* [online] Available at

<http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2011/01_global_poverty_chandy.aspx> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

Changing poverty

http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/ChildPovertyInsights_July2011.pdf

4.2. Child poverty – the global picture

UNICEF, 2010. *Progress for Children: Achieving the MDGs with Equity (No. 9)* [online]

Available at <http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_55740.html> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

UNICEF, 2011. *Child outlook: A policy briefing on global trends and their implications for children* [online] Available at

<http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Child_Outlook_29_July_2011_1.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

4.3. Child Poverty in Europe and the OECD

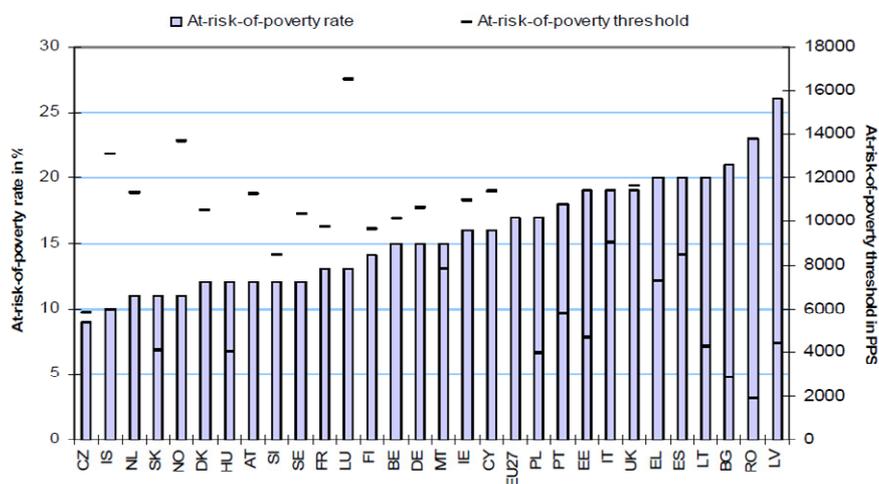
This chapter (4.3.) presents data and analyses on child poverty in the rich countries, that is Europe and the OECD members. The statistical data are mainly from the EUROSTAT and OECD databases. The sources for the Finnish data are shown where referred to. Information from the UNICEF Report Card no 7 (2007) on Child Well-being in Rich Countries is also used, particularly in regard to non-material dimensions of well-being.

4.3.1. Income poverty of children in Europe

In the European Union³⁷ 17% of the population were at risk of poverty in 2008. This translates as some 85 million people. The “at-risk-of-poverty rate” is based on the relative income definition of poverty and counts as poor individuals who are living in households where the equivalised disposable income is below the threshold of 60% of the national equivalised median income.

Fig. 4.3.1.a. At risk poverty rate and at risk poverty threshold in EU 2008

At-risk-of-poverty rate (%) and At-risk of poverty threshold (PPS), 2008, Source: Eurostat (ilc li01, ilc li02)

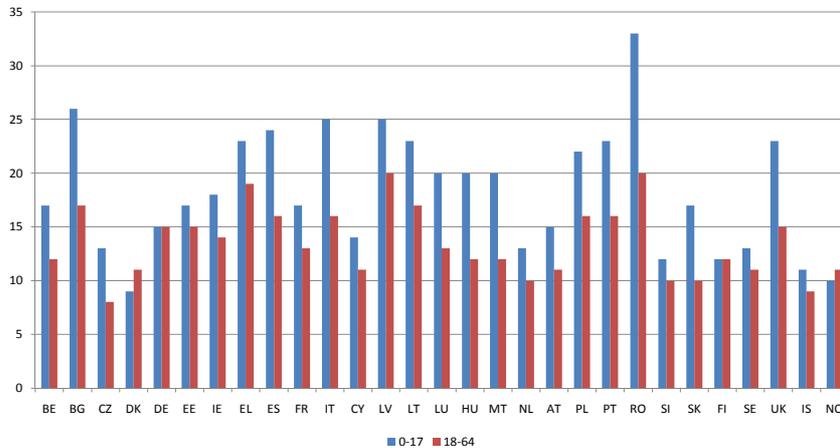


There are large differences between population groups in the average. In the EU, 20% of children were living in families that were at risks of poverty. In Romania the rate was 33% and in Bulgaria 26% while in Denmark it was 9%. In Finland, the at-risk-of-poverty rate of children was 12%.

³⁷ This refers to the EU 27 member countries “EU27”. In the tables and figures there are also data on European countries that are not members of the EU

Fig. 4.3.1.b. 1 At-risk-of-poverty rate by age group %

At-risk-of-poverty rate by age group (%), 2008,
Source: Eurostat (ilc li02)



Particularly lone parents are worse off. The average poverty rate was 33% for lone parents. Also the elderly tend to be worse off, having an average risk of poverty rate of 19% in contrast to 17% for the whole population. The main explanatory factors for the differences in poverty levels are the labor market situation of the parents and the effect of income transfers and enabling services provided by the Government.

As with many other clusters of countries, the EU countries are a rather heterogeneous group. There are wide differences in income levels between EU countries. Therefore the at-risk-of-poverty level of income varies greatly. For instance the annual at-risk-of-poverty threshold income level (standardized for cost of living expressed in purchasing power equivalent in Euros) varied between 1900 in Romania, 2800 in Bulgaria, some 4000 in Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia, to 16 500 in Luxemburg. Nine of the member states plus Norway and Iceland had values over 10 000.

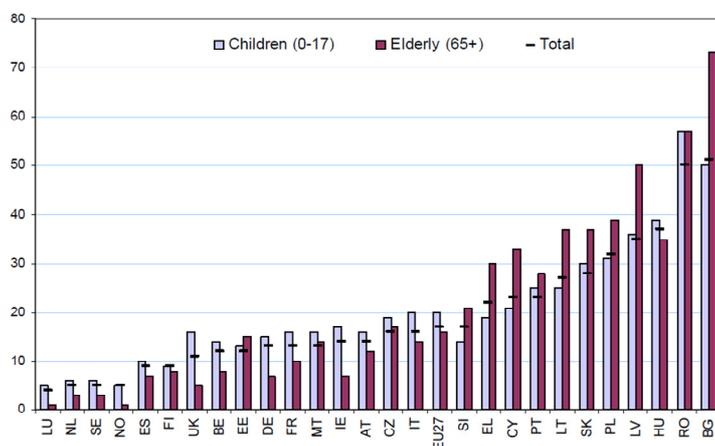
A more specific “material deprivation” index identifies persons who cannot afford at least three of the following nine items:

unexpected expenses, one week of annual holiday away from home, mortgage or utility bills, a meal with meat, chicken or fish every day, keep home adequately warm, a washing machine, a color TV, a telephone or a personal car.

Material deprivation of children was higher than that of the rest of the population in most countries. In Finland there is no difference between households with children and the population in general, both being around 10%. The elderly seem to be much worse off compared to the rest of the population, especially in the former socialist countries.

Fig. 4.3.1.c. Material deprivation rate by age group (%) in 2008

Material deprivation rate by age group (%), 2008,
Source: Eurostat (ilc sip8)



The OECD has also conducted comparative studies on the situation of and policies for families and children. The OECD group also includes middle income countries (Turkey and Mexico) as well as Canada, the USA, Japan, New Zealand, and Australia. The indicators vary to some extent from those used by the EU and UNICEF. In the following we use mainly the UNICEF reports, which tend to be most relevantly focusing on children's well-being.

4.3.2. Multidimensional well-being of children in the OECD

The UNICEF study on Child Well-being in Rich Countries (OECD) used six dimensions for measuring the well-being and relative deprivation of children.

These dimensions are:

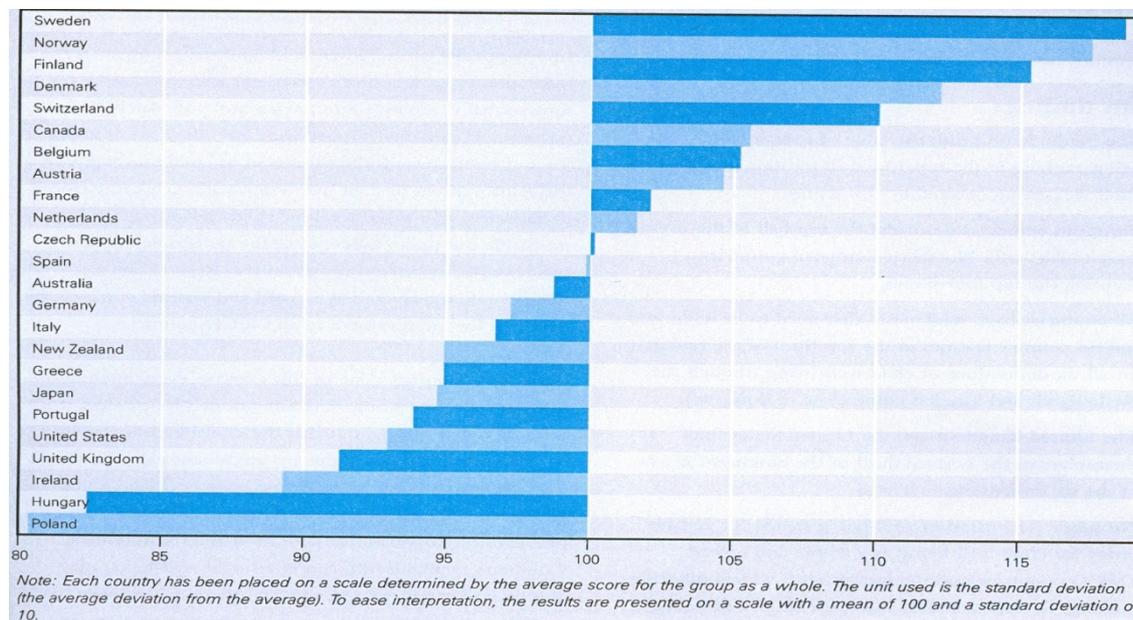
1. Material well-being
2. Health and safety
3. Educational well-being
4. Family and peer relationships
5. Behaviors and risk
6. Subjective well-being

The selected indexes aim to reflect the three-dimensional approach to child well-being i.e. to measure material, social and subjective well-being. However, the validity of the indexes is open to discussion. The report admits that these measurements are just proxies of those dimensions.

As an example, in measuring the material aspects of well-being, the choice of indicators has been determined by the availability of internationally comparable data. The data are for the year 2005 or thereabouts. Each of the indicators was given a score that reflects the distance from the OECD

average score. In cases where more than one indicator/component has been used, the values of the scores of the components have been averaged without weighting.

Fig. 4.3.2.a: The relative material well-being of children in the OECD



Source UNICEF, 2007. *Child poverty in perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries, Innocenti Report Card 7*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre [online] Available at <http://www.unicef.org/media/files/ChildPovertyReport.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

The components of the material well-being index are as follows:

Relative income poverty:

percentage of children living in homes with equivalent incomes below 50% of the national median

Households without a job:

percentage of children in families without an employed adult

Reported deprivation:

percentage of children reporting low family affluence
percentage of children reporting few educational resources
percentage of children reporting fewer than 10 books in the home

Swedish children are the most affluent, followed by those in Norway and Finland. Children in Poland, Hungary, Ireland, the UK, and USA are at the lower end. Czech Republic, Spain, Netherlands and Australia are close to the average.

The report card contains rankings of the OECD countries according to each of the six dimensions.

The purpose has been to table the issue of child well-being and relative deprivation and to facilitate policy dialogue. For this purpose, “league tables” have been displayed. These tables ranked the countries according to various aspects of child well-being. The summary table is given below:

Fig. 4.3.2.b.: Multidimensional well-being of children in 21 OECD countries. A summary table by UNICEF – rankings are from 1-21, except for averaged ranking

Dimensions of child well-being	Average ranking position (for all 6 dimensions)	Dimension 1 Material well-being	Dimension 2 Health and safety	Dimension 3 Educational well-being	Dimension 4 Family and peer relationships	Dimension 5 Behaviours and risks	Dimension 6 Subjective well-being
Netherlands	4.2	10	2	6	3	3	1
Sweden	5.0	1	1	5	15	1	7
Denmark	7.2	4	4	8	9	6	12
Finland	7.5	3	3	4	17	7	11
Spain	8.0	12	6	15	8	5	2
Switzerland	8.3	5	9	14	4	12	6
Norway	8.7	2	8	11	10	13	8
Italy	10.0	14	5	20	1	10	10
Ireland	10.2	19	19	7	7	4	5
Belgium	10.7	7	16	1	5	19	16
Germany	11.2	13	11	10	13	11	9
Canada	11.8	6	13	2	18	17	15
Greece	11.8	15	18	16	11	8	3
Poland	12.3	21	15	3	14	2	19
Czech Republic	12.5	11	10	9	19	9	17
France	13.0	9	7	18	12	14	18
Portugal	13.7	16	14	21	2	15	14
Austria	13.8	8	20	19	16	16	4
Hungary	14.5	20	17	13	6	18	13
United States	18.0	17	21	12	20	20	–
United Kingdom	18.2	18	12	17	21	21	20

OECD countries with insufficient data to be included in the overview: Australia, Iceland, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, New Zealand, the Slovak Republic, South Korea, Turkey.

Source UNICEF, 2007. *Child poverty in perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries, Innocenti Report Card 7*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre [online] Available at <<http://www.unicef.org/media/files/ChildPovertyReport.pdf>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

Main findings in 2005:

- *The Netherlands heads the table in terms of overall child well-being, ranking in the top 10 for all six dimensions of child well-being covered by the report.*
- *Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Spain, Switzerland, Norway are the highest ranked of the 21 countries.*
- *All countries have some weaknesses that need to be addressed and no country features in the top third of the rankings on all six dimensions of child well-being, although the Netherlands and Sweden come close.*

- *The United Kingdom and the United States are in the bottom third of the rankings for five of the six dimensions reviewed.*

The report concludes that there is no obvious relationship between levels of child well-being and GDP per capita. The Czech Republic, for example, achieves a higher overall rank for child well-being than several much wealthier countries, including France, Austria, the United States and the United Kingdom. **Differences in government policy appear to account for most of the variation in child poverty levels between OECD countries.**

The previous reports (2000 and 2005) concluded that public spending on children and child poverty tend to be inversely related:

“Higher government spending on family and social benefits is associated with lower child poverty rates. No OECD country that devoted 10% or more of GDP to social transfers has a child poverty rate higher than 10%. No country that devoted less than 5% of GDP to social transfers has a child poverty rate of less than 15%. Variation in government policy appears to account for most of the variation in child poverty levels between OECD countries.”

This implies that low child poverty has its price tag – that governments have been ready to pay. One can also read that higher child poverty is a policy choice.

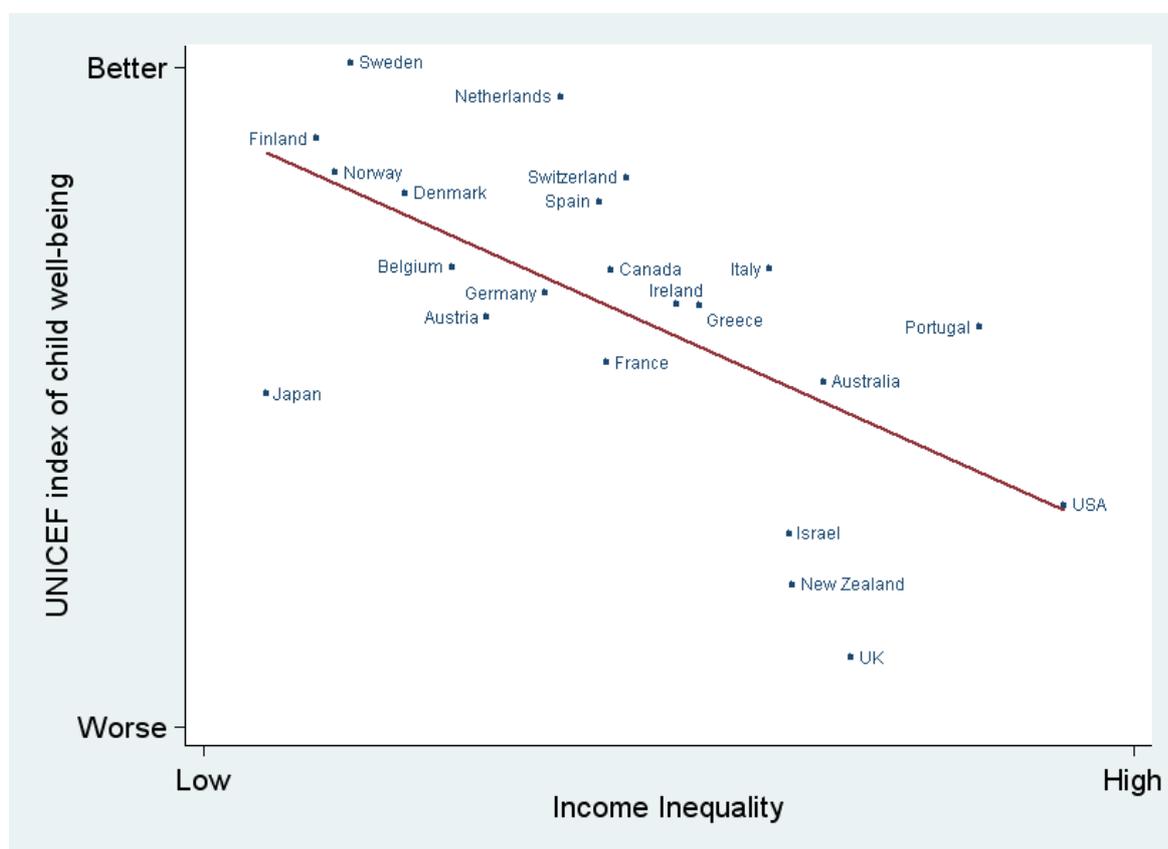
This first attempt to provide a picture of children’s well-being based on a multidimensional 3D-concept has sparked intense dialogue in some countries. For instance in the UK this has happened, though not yet in Finland. **It would be useful to start discussions on the reasons behind the general high ranking of Finland. What has been done well – what are the policies we should *not* dilute or abandon?**

The OECD has carried out a similar exercise using slightly different dimensions and indicators.³⁸ There are rather wide differences between specific rankings of the OECD and UNICEF tables. **The top ten group tends to include the same countries with 2 exceptions. Also the bottom ten are the same with one exception.** While ranking countries on the basis of various dimensions is useful to create discussion, unweighted *composite* indexes are not very informative. It is more useful to compare single variables that have a clear content and meaning – and that can be influenced by public policy.

Child well-being is not clearly related to the level of GDP per capita. However, there is a clear relationship between income equality (measured by Gini Index) and child well-being in rich countries.

³⁸ OECD, 2009 *Doing better for children* [online] Available at http://www.oecd.org/document/12/0,3746,en_2649_34819_43545036_1_1_1_1,00.html [Accessed 12 January 2012]

Fig. 4.3.2.c. The relationship of child ill-being and income inequality



Source: Marja Vaarama **Development of inequality according to some social indicators from the 1990s up today** Inequality and the Nordic Welfare Model –seminar. 7th November 2011, Helsinki. Marja Vaarama marja.vaarama@thl.fi Data from Wilkinson & Pickett: The Spirit Level

4.3.3. Key messages on child poverty in Europe and OECD

More effort and resources should be given to designing indicators and conducting studies that reflect the three-dimensional approach to child well-being. The overemphasis on economic aspects slants concepts, studies and policies. The social and psychological dimensions should be given more attention when the effects of policies on children are assessed and followed up.

There are many studies on the various aspects of child poverty. Generally, a multidimensional approach is favored in principle. However, most of the European dialogue is relying on income indicators, which are rather poor approximations of child well-being.

Be careful while interpreting composite indexes calculated by averaging a number of variables or dimensions. A more detailed and qualitative study gives more useful policy advice.

There are a number of composite indexes that try to summarize a bulk of data. These tend to give quite unpredictable and hard to interpret results. A very general and rough overall division between the well performing and the poorly performing countries can result. Much depends however on the indicators selected.

Use policy impact assessments and policy evaluations for tracking the channels of impact, flows of resources and barriers that facilitate or hinder the positive impact of economic growth on child well-being. Use disaggregated data and

- **Promote at the EU level an approach to track the child impact of macro policies and programs and budget options.**
- **Give more attention to the distributional aspects of those resources and conditions that are needed for promoting child well-being and the prevention of child poverty.**
- **Develop further methods for collecting the views and voice of children and youth e.g. in cooperation with NGOs.**

Aggregate national income or wealth does not seem to determine child well-being in high income countries. GDP does not trickle down to children's well-being without goal-conscious policies by government. In descriptive comparisons, disaggregated data and distribution analyses are most policy relevant. The voice of children and youth is essential in evaluating the impact of policies on their well-being.

Raise the profile of child poverty issues in European dialogues as a necessary component of sustainable poverty prevention and reduction policies.

- **In the OECD and the EU, Finland should make efforts to raise the priority of child well-being issues with special focus on those countries and population groups and children that have high risk of falling into poverty and deprivation.**

Much of the study and policy program (e.g. the European Year on Poverty) on poverty has concentrated on adult populations. The voice of children and youth is weak or non-existent in mainstream studies on child poverty and well-being.

Partner with new member states in child and family policies.

The new member states face challenges in their family and child policy and lag behind the rest of the EU in child well-being in many aspects. The social protection policies and program inherited from the socialist era are in need of review and replacement.

Support for and cooperation with the UNICEF INNOCENTI centre is one option through which more adequate databases can be created and relevant policy dialogues in the European region promoted.

The UNICEF INNOCENTI Research Centre is producing useful and timely analyses on child well-being and child rights, also in rich countries. It was founded in 1988 and has accumulated skills in child research. Core funding is provided by the Government

of Italy but additional voluntary funding or earmarked funding for projects is essential for its operations. It often provides a unique independent second opinion.

International comparisons should be tabled for national dialogue and the lessons that are learned by other countries – both those doing better and those doing worse – should be raised for discussion.

There are lessons to be learned from the experiences and evidence of other European countries in regard to those policies and programs that do or do not work. However, the international and domestic policy arenas are far from each other and the knowledge coming from the global institutes and institutions is not well known by domestic researchers or politicians.

Key readings 4.3. Child Poverty in Europe and the OECD

Innocenti Report Card 7. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre [online]
Available at
<<http://www.unicef.org/media/files/ChildPovertyReport.pdf>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

Source UNICEF, 2007. *Child poverty in perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries*,
Innocenti Report Card 7. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre [online]
Available at
<<http://www.unicef.org/media/files/ChildPovertyReport.pdf>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

OECD, 2009 *Doing better for children* [online] Available at
<http://www.oecd.org/document/12/0,3746,en_2649_34819_43545036_1_1_1_1,0_0.html> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

4.3.4. Poverty of children in Finland – trends, main features, causes and consequences (Pasi Moisio)

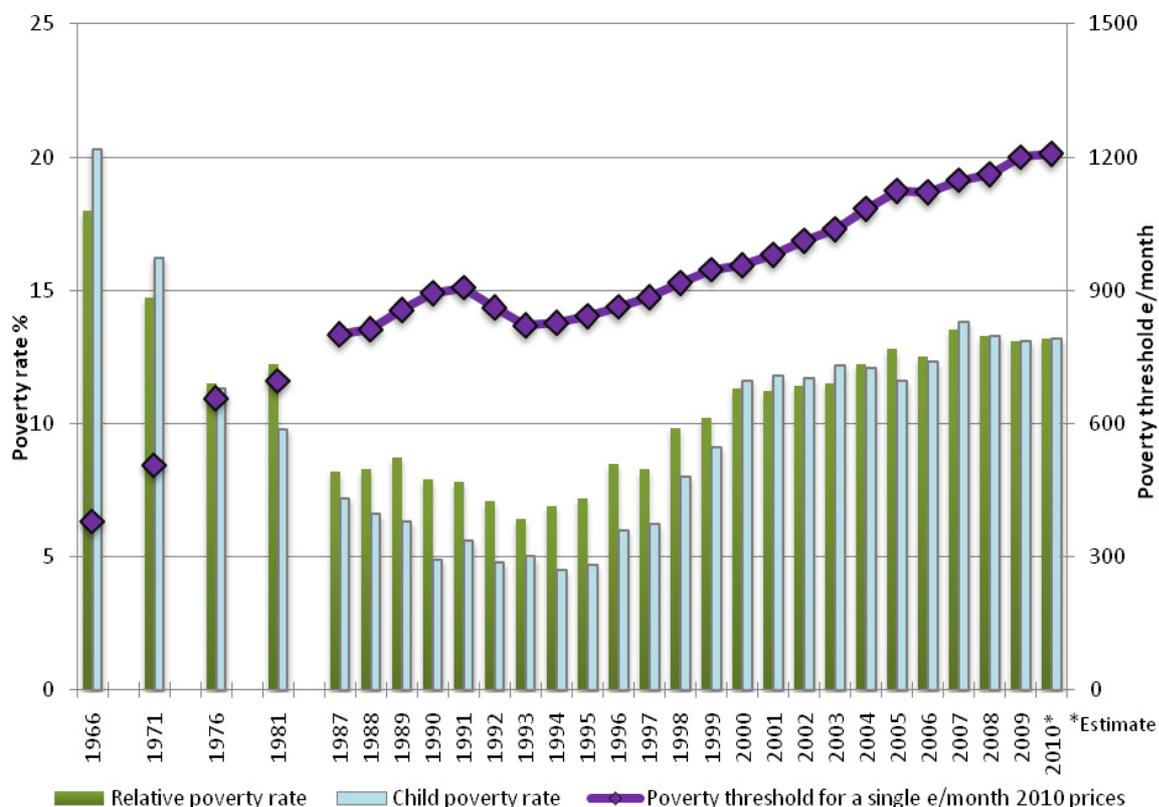
4.3.4.1. Development of relative poverty and child poverty

The relative poverty rate, measured by the Eurostat relative poverty-risk-threshold of 60% of median incomes, doubled in the population in the period 1995–2005 in Finland. The relative poverty rate almost tripled among the child population. The rapid growth of relative poverty and child poverty rates was associated with the rapid growth of income inequalities in Finland during the same period, which was sharpest among OECD countries.³⁹ However, while incomes in real terms increased across income deciles during the period 1995–2005, the annual growth in the lowest income deciles was very modest compared to the middle and high income deciles. Since the relative poverty threshold is set at 60% median income, the poverty threshold increased faster than the incomes in the lowest income deciles. As a result, more and more households dropped below the relative poverty threshold during the period. **During the 2000s, the relative poverty and child poverty rates reached the level they were in the mid 1970s.** (Figure A.)

The relative poverty and child poverty rates peaked in 2007, when 14 percent of both the population and the child population lived below the poverty threshold. Since then both relative poverty and child poverty rates have slightly decreased, both being around 13 percent.

³⁹ OECD, 2008. *Growing Unequal? Income Distribution and Poverty in OECD Countries* [online] Available at <http://www.oecd.org/document/4/0,3343,en_2649_33933_41460917_1_1_1_1,00.html> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

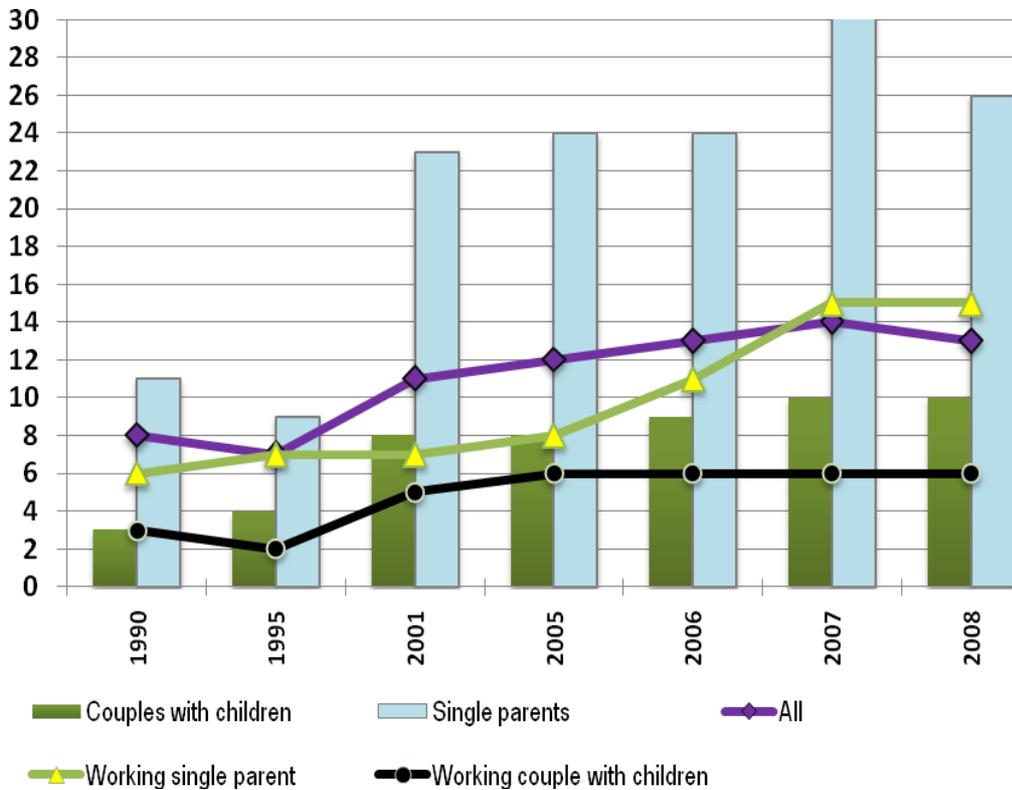
Fig. 4.3.4.a.: Relative (child) poverty risk and poverty threshold in Finland 1996–2010.
Source: Statistics Finland, Income distribution statistics.



The growth of relative poverty was distributed very unequally in Finland in the period 1995–2005. The relative poverty increased especially among households outside the labor markets (Figure B). Among households with dependent children, the relative poverty rate rose especially among single-parent households. Between 1990 and 2008, the relative poverty rate has increased among couples with children from 3 percent to 10 percent, and among single parents from 11 percent to 26 percent. If we look at the development of poverty rates among households with dependent children by economic status, we can see that both the level and the increase in poverty rates are much lower among households where there is a working parent/s. The relative poverty rate among working single parents was 15 percent in 2008, very close to the average poverty rate in the population, which then stood at 13 percent. Among working couples with dependent children, the relative poverty rate is around half the average poverty rate, at 6 percent.

Summarizing from figures A and B we can say that **child poverty increased sharply and faster than poverty in whole population in Finland from 1995–2005**. The poverty rate increased especially among single-parent households and households with no working parent. Among working single parents, and working parents with children, the increase in the poverty rate followed the population average. Child poverty in Finland is noticeably associated with the families where the only parent or both parents are unemployed or outside of labor markets for some other reason.

Figure 4.3.4. b. Relative poverty risk (%) among families with dependent children by employment status in Finland, 1990-2008



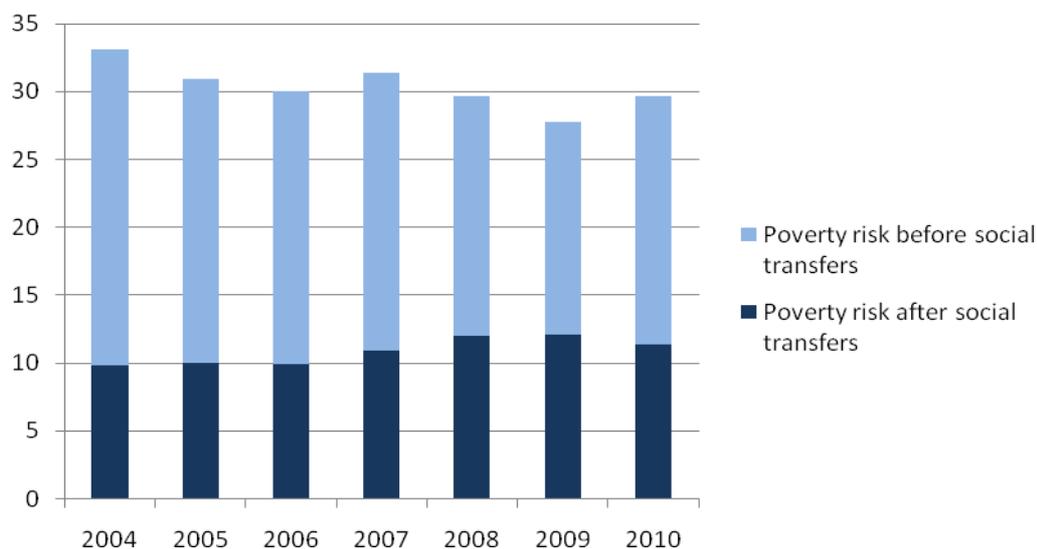
Source: Vaarama et al, 2010. *Suomalaisten hyvinvointi* Helsinki: THL.

Social transfers usually constitute the main part of incomes among households outside of labor markets. Social insurance with its unemployment benefit, child-care allowance, parental allowance and child benefits, together with the means-tested housing allowance and social assistance, usually form the main source of incomes among the non-working households with dependent children. During the deep recession in the first half of the 1990s, many social insurance benefits and social assistance were cut. Since the mid 1990s some increases have been made to benefit levels, but in general the benefits for families with children are at a lower level than in the early 1990s. Also without increases, the relative level of benefits has decreased compared to the average income level and earnings. The relative decrease of the benefits level compared to earnings goes some way to explaining the increase of child poverty in Finland. The relative poverty threshold follows the median income, so the widening of income disparity between average incomes and the level of benefits has meant a larger share of families that are dependent on social transfers have fallen below poverty threshold.

This development is illustrated in the Figure C, where the child poverty rate is presented before and after social transfers. In 2004, the child poverty rate before social transfer was 33 percent and after social transfers it was 10 percent. This means that social transfers reduced the child poverty

rate by 70 per cent in 2004. In 2010, social transfers reduced the child poverty rate from 38 percent to 11 percent.

Figure 4.3.4. c. Relative child poverty-risk (%) before and after social transfers in Finland 2004-2010



Source: Eurostat, SILC

4.3.4.2. Deprivation on other dimensions

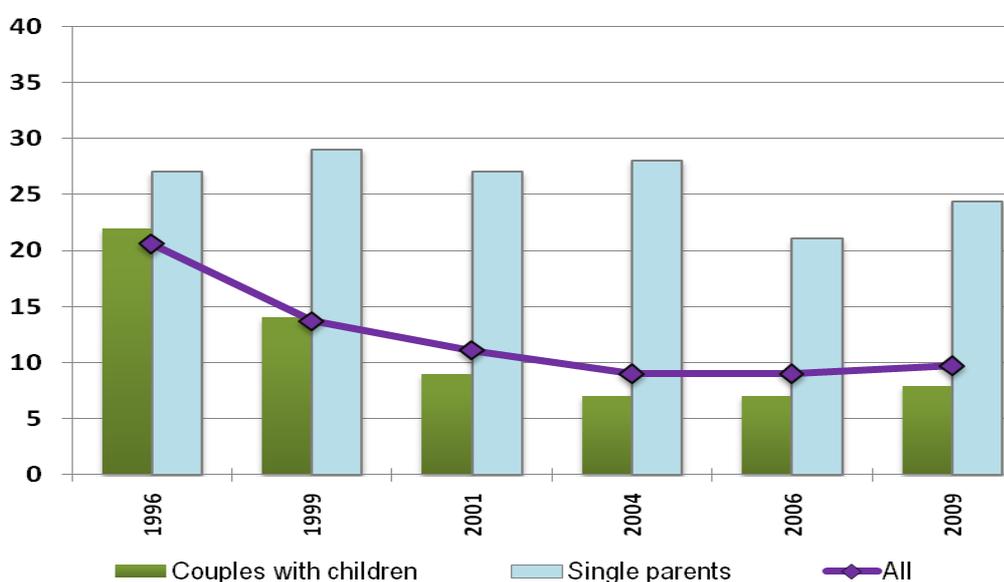
Poverty is traditionally defined as too low economic resources to be able to achieve the minimum acceptable standard of living and way of life. Income poverty measures, such as the relative poverty threshold measure, are measuring poverty indirectly as low incomes. Income poverty measures do not necessarily tap into material deprivation, that is, by definition, the manifestation of poverty. For this, income poverty measures are often complemented with 'direct' material deprivation measures for a more comprehensive picture. So Figure D presents the proportion of households reporting difficulties in making ends meet in Finland in the period 1996–2009. Figure E presents the proportion of households reporting an enforced lack of two or more essential durables or services.

The proportion of households reporting difficulties in making ends meet or material deprivation decreased sharply between the mid-1990s and mid-2000s. In 1996, 21 percent of households reported difficulties in making ends meet and 37 percent with material deprivation. By the early 2000s, these proportions decreased to 9 and 18 percent respectively, the proportion remaining at the same level throughout the 2000s. This might seem to be in contrast with the growth of relative poverty during the same period. The opposite development of relative income poverty and material deprivation is explainable by the growth of income disparities, which happened in spite of real incomes increasing also in the lowest income groups during that period. Decreasing unemployment from the record high level of 1995 improved the economic situation and incomes also among the lowest income groups. However, averages incomes increased faster (affecting the

60% of median poverty threshold) than in lowest income groups, which explains the growth of relative income poverty.

If we look at material deprivation among households with dependent children, there is a clear difference both in the level and development between single parent households and households with two parents. Difficulties to make ends meet and deprivation is much more common among single parents than among households with two parents. Almost a quarter (24%) of single parents reported having difficulties making ends meet, compared to 8 percent of households with two parents. What is noticeable is that the economic strain among single parents has not really decreased since 1996 (27%). However, the material deprivation among single parents has decreased from 59 percent in 1996 to 41 percent in 2009. Only 13 percent of households with two parents reported material deprivation in 2009.

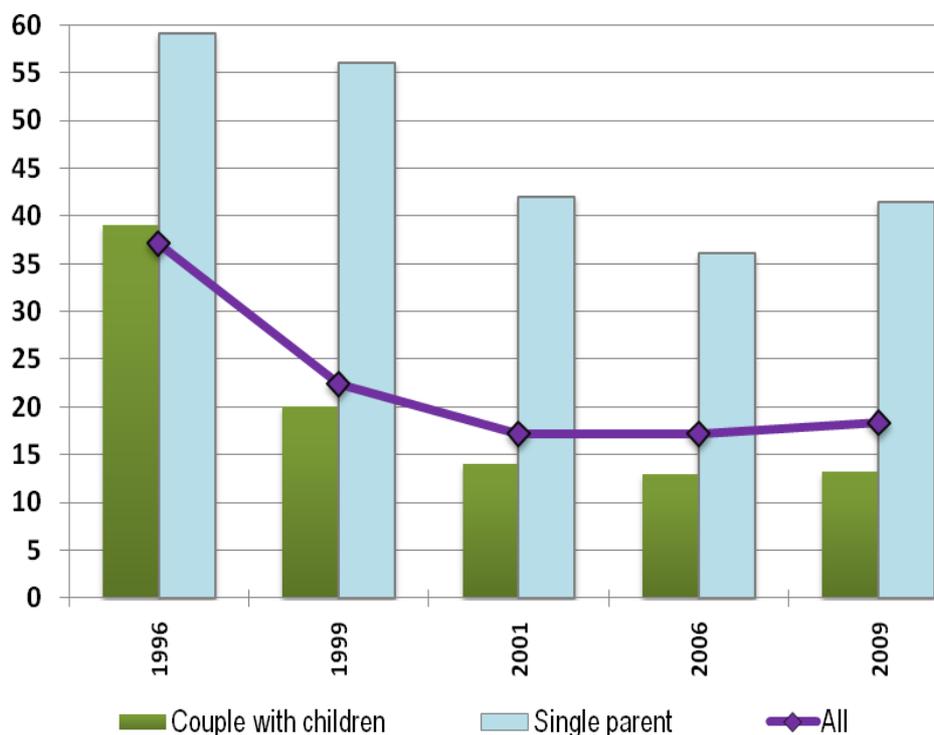
Figure 4.3.4.d. Economic strain by household type in Finland 1996-2009



* The percentage of population with difficulties to make ends meet

Source: Eurostat, ECHP 1996-2001; THL, HYPA 2004-2009.

Figure 4.3.4. e. Material deprivation by household type in Finland 1996-2009

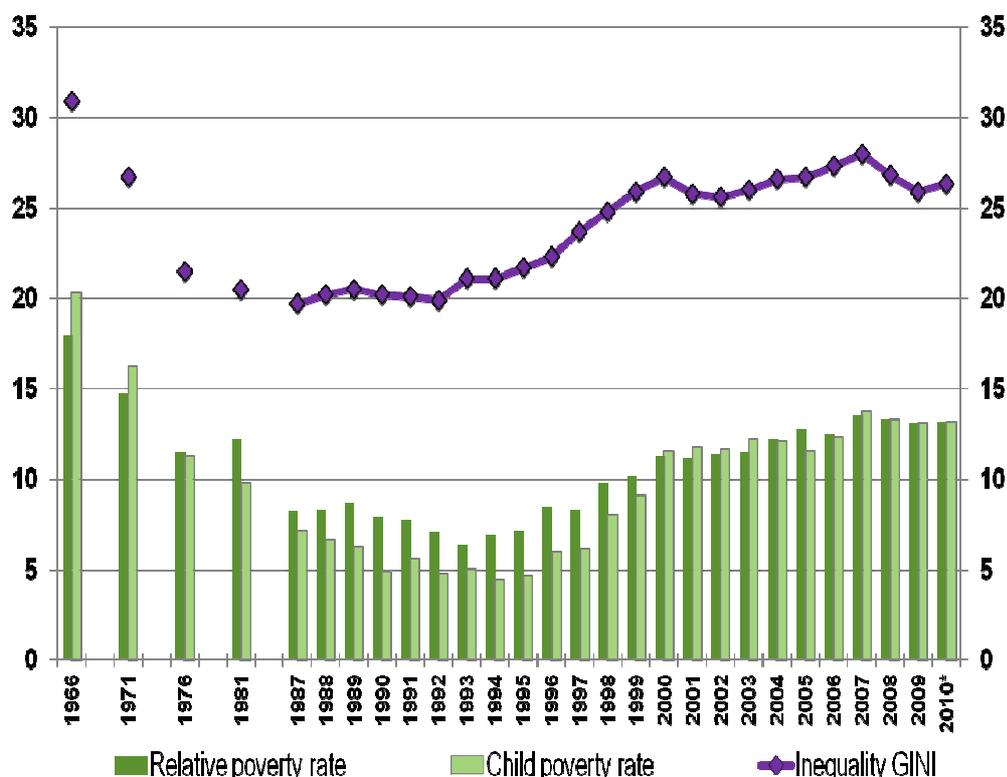


* Enforced lack of at least two of four deprivation items: 1) have chicken or meat at least every second day, 2) buy new clothes, 3) buy new furniture or 4) a week holiday away from home. Source: Eurostat, ECHP 1996-2001; THL, HYPA 2004-2009.

4.3.4.3. Causes to child poverty

As child poverty is poverty of families with children, the causes of child poverty are the same as causes of poverty among parents and working age population in general. There are several explanations for the increase of income inequalities and relative child poverty in Finland. These explanations overlap to a high degree, since the relative poverty threshold is in reality a measure of income inequality. The relative poverty threshold measures the income inequality between middle and low income groups. Another explanation is the overlap between inequality and deprivation, since the factors and mechanisms that explain why some families are at the bottom of the income distribution are usually plausible also as explanations of why some families suffer material deprivation – even in the most affluent societies.

Figure 4.3.4.f. Development of income inequality, relative poverty and child poverty in Finland, 1966–2010



The path of the level of inequality and that of relative child poverty in Finland has been very similar. Inequality as measured by the Gini Index decreased rapidly between 1966 and 1986 with the maturation of the welfare state. Further, relative poverty in general and child poverty in particular decreased. Correspondingly, following the great depression of the early years of the 1990s, we can see the same pattern of a parallel rise and slight fluctuation in both inequality and child poverty.

Employment and earnings are the main source of income and status in the market economies. Labor markets and labor market status are prominent explanations for income inequalities and deprivation. In Finland, **the rapid growth of income inequalities from 1995–2005 was associated with high unemployment and decreased working hours in the lowest income groups.** Other labor market related factors that explain rising income inequalities in Western industrialized countries are globalization (in the allocation of work) and the move towards knowledge intensive production. The latter has increased individual differences in productive capacity compared to old industrial work. Globalization has eroded demand for and the bargaining power of industrial and low-skilled workers in industrialized countries.

The second major factor shaping income distribution is social transfers. Social transfers decrease income inequalities and relative poverty less today than they did ten or fifteen years ago. The progressiveness of taxation has decreased and trends towards indirect and energy taxes will further erode progressiveness. **The level of social security and social assistance has decreased 30–40 per cent compared to average earnings during the last two decades, which explains**

especially the increase of relative poverty among households outside of labor markets or receiving earnings-related social security.

4.3.4.4. Key messages by the UN Committee on the Rights of the child to Finland

The issue of child poverty and children's rights in Finland has also raised the concerns of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. In its response to Finland's fourth regular Report on the implementation of the CRC, the UN Committee on the rights of the child regrets that Finland has not yet adopted a comprehensive policy and a harmonized plan for the full and effective implementation of the Convention and recommends that such a plan with time-bound targets – including a budget – be prepared. The plan should be in line with the outcome document of the UNGASS 2002 A World Fit for Children.

The Committee raises special concerns on the following issues that are closely related to the scope of this study of child poverty. *The Committee remains **concerned that***

- *- **the number of children and families with children, especially under the age of 3, living in poverty, has more than doubled in the last ten years and that the amount of child benefits and parental benefits has de facto been reduced.***
- *- **insufficient data are available concerning the living conditions of children in vulnerable situations, including children affected by poverty, children with disabilities, minority/immigrant children and children in alternative care. It is also concerned at the limited statistics on abuse, neglect and violence against children and on services provided to them.***
- *- **the prevalence of discrimination against children with disabilities, immigrant and refugee children and children from ethnic minorities such as Roma children. It is also concerned at the social exclusion and structural discrimination of the Roma population, which leads to increases in substance abuse, mental health problems and a poor standard of living for Roma children.***

In the field of international relations the Committee recommends that the State party:

- ***ratify the core United Nations human rights instruments to which it is not yet a party, namely the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and the Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.***
- **meet and, if possible, surpass the internationally agreed target of 0.7 per cent of GNI by 2015.**

- encourages the State party to ensure that the realization of child rights becomes a top priority of the international cooperation agreements established with developing countries. In doing so, the Committee suggests that the State party take into account the concluding observations of the Committee on the rights of the Child for the recipient country in question.
- ensure that the business sector complies with international and domestic standards on corporate social responsibility, particularly with regard to child rights, in line, *inter alia*, with the UN Business and Human Rights Framework adopted unanimously in 2008 by the Human Rights Council and which outlines the duty of States to protect against human rights abuses by businesses, corporate responsibilities to respect human rights, and the need for more effective access to remedies when violations occur.

4.3.5. UK - Child poverty case study (Meri Koivusalo)

4.3.5.1. Background, historical and contextual features⁴⁰

Analysis of child poverty has long traditions in the United Kingdom with prominent research and analysis on the state and measurement of child poverty. This has been associated closely with both domestic and international work in the area and it can be argued that a **large share of both the conceptual framing and measurement of child poverty owes something to research related to United Kingdom.** This case study first discusses the extent, trends and nature of child poverty in the UK with a focus on policy measures that have sought to address child poverty as well as lessons that can be learned.

In United Kingdom child poverty became a key policy concern in the 1990s after two decades of rising child poverty. On the basis of research and assessment, child poverty was found to be rising even faster than poverty and inequality, which rose in general **during the 1980s. While the overall poverty rate increased from 9 to 25% between 1979 and 1996/97, child poverty rose from 10% to 35% in the same period, indicating that children had moved down in the income distribution.**⁴¹

In the mid-1990s, child poverty in the United Kingdom was thus not only increasing, but again increasing at a faster pace than poverty and inequalities within the society otherwise. The increase in UK child poverty levels during the 1980s and early 1990s was substantial, from average levels of 1 in 10 children, to 1 in 3 children growing up in poverty.

The dire situation of child poverty in the United Kingdom brought about not just a broader action and focus on the issue by researchers, but also an establishment of nongovernmental organizations and policy coalitions to raise the matter on the political agenda. Initial concerns and action had been raised already in 1960s, when a main national policy actor in the form of a child poverty action group was established.

In the late 1990s, Labour's Tony Blair set the eradication of child poverty as a core goal for the New Labour government. Tony Blair's Toynbee Hall Lecture in 1999 on poverty laid the grounds for a commitment to end child poverty within 20 years. The target of halving child poverty by 2010 and eliminating it by 2020 was a bold one and strongly supported by policies within HM Treasury. A specific interim target was set with respect to reducing child poverty by 25% by 2004/2005.⁴² This adoption at the core of the government agenda of tackling child poverty provides a good case for analyzing the extent to which child poverty can be reduced through government action and

⁴⁰ This exploration is focussed on the UK in relation to foreign policy, however, due to devolution, separate policies have been developed in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Where these are not indicated separately, the focus is on the UK and England (e.g. childrens' commissioner). This being said it is necessary to recognise and emphasise that measures in the devolved countries have often been more far-reaching than in England (e.g. Child Poverty Strategy), though initial levels of poverty have also been higher.

⁴¹ Bradshaw (2000) Child poverty in comparative perspective. In: Gordon D, Townsend P (eds). *Breadline Europe. The measurement of poverty*. Bristol: Policy Press.

⁴² HM Treasury 2004/2005

focus. **While the government failed in halving child poverty by 2010, there is a need to recognize the substantial change and shifts in the levels of child poverty up to 2010.**

The OECD study on "Doing Better for Children," on the other hand, has emphasized that **high spending on child welfare and education in the UK is failing to produce results, with education results low relative to spending levels and where spending more than the OECD average on children has not impacted on results in many areas that are below average.** In comparison to other studies, the OECD report considers that the UK "stands out as increasing early investment in recent years", but high rates of spending on older children are not effective with high rates of underage drinking and teenage pregnancies.⁴³ These rates may be affected by the extent to which higher spending reflects efforts to lower child poverty, as compared to countries where child poverty has been traditionally low but rising.

The actual success in reducing child poverty has not gained sufficient recognition and may be undermined by not achieving the higher targets in reducing child poverty. **Furthermore, it is evident that rising child poverty is a matter of politics and political prioritization during both upturns and downturns.**

⁴³ OECD 2009

Fig.4.3.5.a.: Point changes in child poverty between the mid-1990s and 2008*



Note: * Data for changes refer to the period from the mid-1990s to around 2007 for Canada, Denmark and Hungary; to 2006 for Chile and Japan; to 2005 for France, Switzerland and the United Kingdom; to 2004 for Australia, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain and Turkey.

Poverty thresholds are set at 50% of the median income of the entire population.

Source: OECD Income Distribution questionnaire, February 2011

4.3.5.2. Child Poverty Act - eradicating child poverty by 2020

The Child Poverty Act (2010) was intended to enshrine in law the Government's commitment to eradicating child poverty by 2020, to define success in eradicating child poverty; and to create a framework to monitor progress at both national and local level. The bill was accepted as a cross-government bill to which all parties signed.

The bill further sets it as a duty of the Secretary of State to meet particular targets in the Act, including a relative low-income target, a combined low-income and material deprivation target, an absolute low-income target and a persistent poverty target. The targets are thus set not only in

the context of a relative low-income target, but also in the context of material deprivation, absolute income and persistent poverty. It also sets out the achievement of the targets in the context of National Statistics, as well as detailing a response if the set targets are not met.

The Child Poverty Act also established a Child Poverty Commission and a UK strategy on the reduction of child poverty, to be set up within a year of adopting the Act, with tasks and duties set out as part of Act, including consultation of local government, children and groups representing children and their interests. Furthermore, the Act singles out tasks for the Secretary of State in the follow up and reporting of the Strategy.

While it is too early to evaluate the success, full or partial, of the Child Poverty Act, it does represent a mechanism whereby a crucial policy that is a concern for the whole society - i.e. child poverty - can be brought to the forefront of policy-making. The subsequent government has indicated substantial changes in the focus of action with respect to addressing child poverty compared to the previous government, which has caused concern for child poverty action groups and UNICEF.⁴⁴ It is also expected that the economic situation is likely to affect capacities in the area. **Child poverty cannot and should not be seen as a possible or prioritized issue only during good times or when economic policies allow this to take place, but rather should reflect essential values, priorities and principles within societies.**

4.3.5.3. Progressive realization of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Child Poverty Act can also be seen as providing a mechanism for the progressive realization of a child's right to an adequate standard of living under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It is also an example of a Government's engagement with guidance from the UN committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights on using international human rights law as a framework for poverty reduction strategies.⁴⁵

All UN Member States that have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child are required to report two years after ratification and again after five years. The UK report in 2008 gives a detailed account of issues and concerns with respect to the implementation of the Convention.⁴⁶ A UN committee response is then given on the basis of the national report.⁴⁷ NGOs provide reports to the UN committee, which then contribute to the UN committee response to the Government report on the matter. **The Children's Rights Alliance issues an annual publication of The State of Children's Rights in England**, which analyses the extent to which law, policy and practice in England is complying with the recommendations made by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. It also co-ordinates the NGO alternative report to the UN Committee.

⁴⁴ UNICEF, 2011. *UNICEF UK responds to child poverty* [online] Available at <<http://www.unicef.org.uk/Latest/News/Child-poverty/>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

⁴⁵ HL and HC Joint Committee on Human Rights 2009

⁴⁶ UK Government *The Consolidated 3rd and 4th Periodic Report to UN Committee on the Rights of the Child* [online] Available at <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/uk_uncrc-2.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

⁴⁷ United Nations, 2008. *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* [online] Available at <<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/AdvanceVersions/CRC.C.GBR.CO.4.pdf>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

The UN reporting thus feeds back to NGOs, which remind and campaign on the basis of conclusions and recommendations of the reports at national level. The use of the CRC to guide the work of Children's Commissioners was, however, not self-evident, but rather happened as a result of campaigning and further parliamentary work.

The UK has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The 1998 Human Rights Act incorporated into national legislation the European Convention on Human Rights. It came into force in England and Wales in 2000 and enables citizens' to seek to protect their ECHR rights through domestic courts and the European Court of Justice in Strasbourg. The use of UN and European law provisions has been documented by Children's Rights Alliance.⁴⁸

4.3.5.4. Child poverty and measures addressing child poverty in the UK in a comparable perspective

Child poverty in the UK is high in comparison to other similar countries within Europe and more prominent in comparison to Nordic countries. The UNICEF Innocenti report on child well-being in rich countries has positioned the United Kingdom as last among OECD countries on the basis of the combined measure for child well-being, although in material well-being, Ireland, Poland and Hungary were placed behind UK.⁴⁹

One arm of the more specific reforms in the UK reform package constituted measures that lengthened maternity leave, established paternity leave and broadened the services for children. Specific efforts towards supporting more vulnerable children were made through the Sure Start program, modeled on the US Head Start program. Several measures focused on improving the social safety net and the capacities of parents who work on low incomes on the basis of tax credits and related measures in support of daycare services and pre-school programs. While many of these efforts lag in many ways behind other Northern European countries, they have been clear and progressive moves in the context of overseas, US or global policies.

Gender related policies that affect child poverty reduction remain an area where perhaps more could have been done. Possibilities to work full-time for lone-parents still remain challenging within the UK on the basis of the Rowntree report on social exclusion in 2010:⁵⁰ *"The number of children in poverty fell by 370,000 in the ten years from 1998/99 to 2008/09. Two-thirds of the fall in the number of children living in poverty was among children living in single-adult households."* However, the same report pointed out that challenges for the Government included: *"in-work poverty, the number of children/young adults with few/no qualifications, young adult unemployment, health inequalities and low-income households' lack of access to essential services."*

Health inequalities and problems are part of the broader picture of child poverty. One part of this is due to the increased vulnerability of families and children with disabilities or serious/chronic illnesses. Another is related to distribution and the nature of the social determinants of health. Bad diets, lack of exercise, abuse of alcohol and smoking are more

⁴⁸ Children's Rights Alliance for England, 2003. *Human Rights Act* [online] Available at <<http://www.crae.org.uk/rights/hra.html>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

⁴⁹ UNICEF (2011)

⁵⁰ Parekh et al 2010

prevalent in poorer households and further reflected in poorer health, obesity and teeth decay. About half of teenage pregnancies remain unplanned.

Education has relevance for child poverty both as a result of the qualifications of parents as well as part of the pre-school and school education of children. In the UK, measures to address child poverty were accompanied by increased focus and investment on schools and pre-school education. This focus is likely to continue as part of further efforts with respect to early years, including early years education and support for older children to continue school and gain qualifications.

UK child poverty reduction measures have not clearly addressed **ethnicity** so far, although a more recent Department of Work and Pensions report indicates that it is an issue. According to Platt (2009): "*Ethnic minorities make up 12 per cent of the population and 15 per cent of children, but 25 per cent of children who are in poverty.*"⁵¹ However, while child poverty is greater amongst ethnic minorities, child poverty as a concern in the UK cannot be reduced to ethnic groups.

The focus on child poverty is closely associated with social assistance and support to households with several children. However, new government caps on social assistance and housing allowance will set limits to the available financing. Child benefits have so far been a universal feature of UK social policy and continue until 20 years age for children in education. However, there are plans to cut child benefits from more affluent families as part of the budgetary measures of the Coalition government.

A Children's Commissioners post was established for each of the devolved countries: England, Wales and Scotland, with somewhat different responsibilities. The post was established as a result of the Children's Act in 2004 and the Commissioner uses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to guide her work. It was the result of long (13 years) campaigning work by NGOs, in particular, the Children's Right Alliance, which established and coordinated the campaign. The example was set by Norway in 1981, while in 2002 the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child urged all states to establish independent human rights institutions for children.

4.3.5.5. Challenges

The current UK government is committed to the Child Poverty Act targets due to the cross-party nature of the Act, however, it is also committed to substantial budgetary cuts, including on social assistance and child benefits. Budgetary cuts will also imply a larger burden in poorer regions, which are more dependent on public funds and local government support. The rising fuel and food costs are likely to add to the burden of the poorest households.

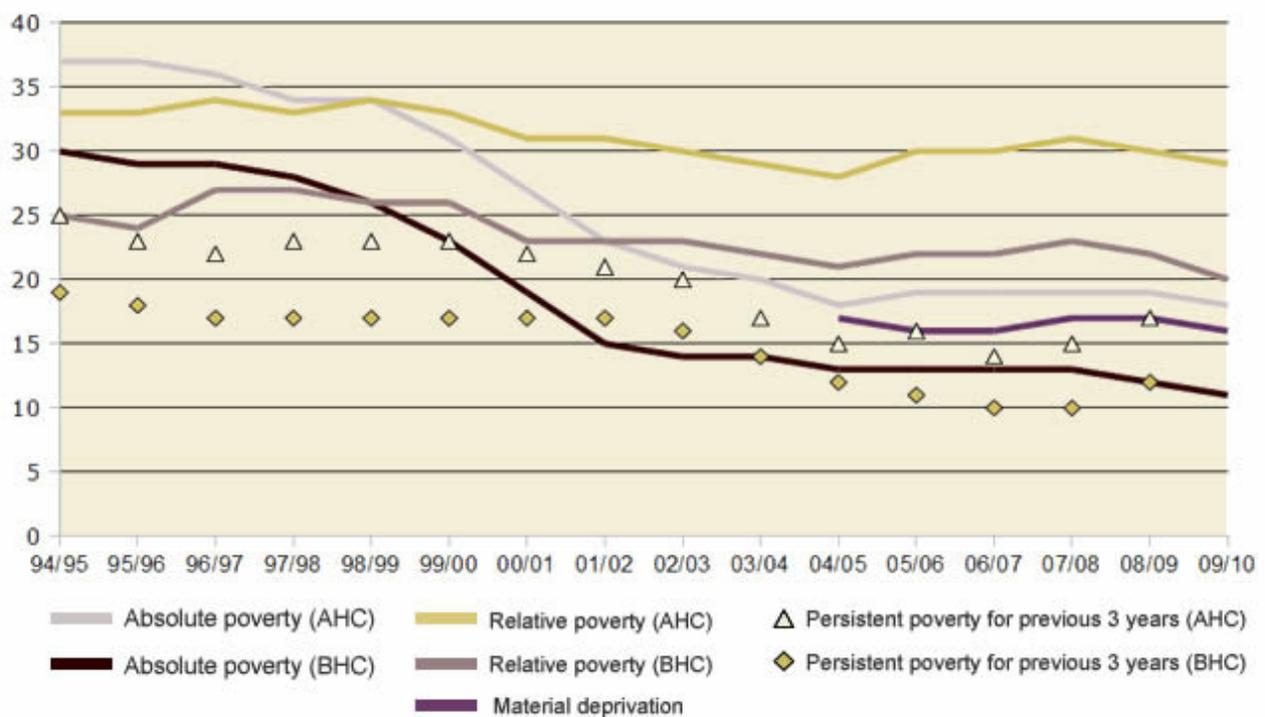
Child poverty in the UK has been reduced both in terms of absolute measures, as well as in terms of relative poverty. Waldfogel has emphasized that the latest reduction in child poverty took place when the country was already in recession, whereas in the United States a rising trend of child

⁵¹ Lucinda Platt, Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex, 2009. *Ethnicity and Child Poverty* [online] Available at <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep576.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

poverty was observed after economic downturn.⁵² On the basis of official figures, the numbers of children living in poverty declined in 2009/2010. Other assessments suggest that while the previous government just missed the set target to lower child poverty by a quarter by 2004/2005, it has also been estimated that reduction of child poverty stagnated and child poverty began to rise already in 2006/2007.⁵³ The poverty measures below would suggest that, while levels stagnated in 2006-2008, they moved again in 2009-2010, as the government upped their action in the area.

The different measures and their changes can be seen in the follow-up on child poverty by the Child Poverty Action Group, which draws together the different measurements of poverty:

Fig. 4.3.5.b. Risk of child poverty in the UK since 1994/5 by different measures⁵⁴



Nongovernmental organizations, such as the Save the Children Fund, have also emphasized the importance of severe child poverty. According to Save the Children:⁵⁵

⁵² Waldfogel 2010

⁵³ Hirsch, 2009. *Ending child poverty in a changing economy*. [online] Available at <<http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/hirsch-child-poverty-changing-economy.pdf>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

⁵⁴ Child Poverty Action Group, 2011. *Poverty in UK : a summary of facts and figures*. [online] Available at <<http://www.cpag.org.uk/povertyfacts/>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

⁵⁵ Save the Children, 2011. *Severe child poverty in England*. [online] Available at <<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/severe-child-poverty-nationally-and-locally>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

"2008-09 saw a slight decline in the proportion of children in severe poverty compared to 2007-08 of around 100,000. This was consistent with the fall in the rate of overall UK wide child poverty since 2007-08 and a result of government measures at the time which boosted the incomes of low income families (child benefit and tax credit increases). However, since we first introduced this measure we've seen an overall rise in the number of children living in severe poverty, from 11% of all children in 2004/05 to 13% in 2008/09."

A microsimulation analysis by the The Institute of Fiscal Studies has emphasized five key measures that could contribute and help government to reach its targets:⁵⁶

1. **Child Tax Credit** only option: Increase the child element of the Child Tax Credit by £650 per year (about £12.50 per week, or a rise of 29%).
2. **Child Benefit** only option: Increase Child Benefit by £12.50 per week for all children (a rise of 63% for the first child and 95% for subsequent children).
3. **Child Tax Credit plus large families (CB)**: Increase the child element of the Child Tax Credit by £475 per year (about £9.13 per week, or a 21% rise), and introduce a higher rate of Child Benefit for the third and subsequent children that is £20 per week higher than that of the second child (or 152% higher than Child Benefit would otherwise be for the third and subsequent children).
4. **Child Tax Credit plus large families (CTC)**: Increase the child element of the Child Tax Credit by £490 per year (about £9.42 per week, or a 22% rise), and introduce additional payments for the third and subsequent children paid with the family element of the Child Tax Credit of £20 per week (a 4% increase in the family element for those with three children, or twice that increase for those with four children, etc.). The difference with the above is that the extra support for the third and subsequent children is tapered away from families with incomes over £50,000.
5. **Child Tax Credit plus WTC for couples**: Increase the child element of the Child Tax Credit by £330 per year (about £6.35 per week, or a 15% rise), and increase Working Tax Credit for couples with children by £2,100 per year (£40.38 per week, or a 56% rise).

A further concern is thus whether commitments to the elimination of child poverty will be delivered on the basis of policies and reform assigned to address the matter. The emphasis on measures has been on non-fiscal and economic measures, although reform of social services and universal credit in 2014 is likely to contribute in this respect. While government has highlighted

⁵⁶ Brewer M, Browne J, Joyce R, Sutherland H., 2009. *Micro-simulating child poverty from 2010 to 2020*. London: Institute of Fiscal Studies.

the importance of the early years, there are also concerns over the position of older children and youth if efforts on child poverty are being focused mostly on the early years.

The Child Poverty Action Group has also drawn attention to the implications of the review or possible removal of statutory responsibilities with respect to local government statutory responsibilities that relate to child poverty.⁵⁷

The most recent projections in the area would suggest that child poverty is likely to rise. IFS's new forecasts suggest that falling incomes will mean the biggest drop for middle-income families since the 1970s and will push 600 000 more children into poverty due to a large decline in incomes and that absolute child poverty will peak at 3.1 million in 2013.⁵⁸

4.3.5.6. Child poverty reduction and global policies

The commitment to halve child poverty in the UK was reflected in the emphasis on children and poverty as part of foreign and development policies, although it did not gain as much prominence as it did at national level. In global policies the UK initiatives were often put on the agenda of G8 meetings as well as in the form of new initiatives and support for mothers and children and children's health and services. However, in comparison to gender, support for children or addressing child poverty has not been mainstreamed in ways that would go beyond support to the provision of health and maternity services or the development and access to vaccines (e.g. IFFim). There is a growing uneasiness amongst researchers on global poverty with respect to the discrepancy between the aims and focus related to child poverty in the context of MDGs and other measures, and the necessity to focus on conditions where children live, in particular, housing and sanitation. The extent to which DFID funds are in practice allocated and contribute to the reduction of child poverty was beyond the means of the case study.

The role of child poverty as part of foreign policies is currently not prominent and it is unclear if a critical mass of expertise and capacities are held in the area. On the other hand the resources, capacities and expertise of nongovernmental organizations working on the matter can be substantial. This implies that the UK voice in foreign policies is not mediated only through government, but also on the basis of campaigns and policies or through large charities and nongovernmental organizations, such as the Save the Children Fund. Furthermore, **the UK has also been on the receiving end of global policies and policy focus on child poverty in the context of UNICEF and OECD comparisons as well as with respect to CRC follow up and reporting.**

The focus on poverty research in the United Kingdom has had a major influence on policy developments globally. It also stands out in comparison to other European countries. The extent to which the national focus on poverty-related research has contributed to this is difficult to address, but it is clear that in the area of measurement and conceptualizing of poverty this has been of importance for global policies and multilateral work. Resources from development funds have been allocated to research program and efforts in the area. While large program are able to

⁵⁷ Child Poverty Action Group, 2011. *CPAG submission on the Communities and Local Government Department Review of statutory duties placed on local government* [online] Available at <http://www.cpag.org.uk/info/briefings_policy/CPAG_submission_local_government_statutory_duties_0411.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

⁵⁸ Institute of Fiscal Studies (2011)

focus on more detail, it was felt that cross-disciplinary smaller policy-oriented studies were often able to be more focused and draw out new insights.

4.3.5.7. Main findings

- 1) Child poverty can be reduced on the basis of government policy measures. While the pace of poverty reduction is affected by economic policies, it is not determined by these
- 2) Policy measures to raise child poverty higher on the policy agenda exist and can be used as part of the legislature
- 3) The existence and follow up of legal obligations and rights were considered as key measures to ensuring that attention is drawn to the matter as part of policy-making
- 4) The commitments in the context of a cross-party child poverty act have maintained the agenda as a legitimate focus for policy assessments, for the media and analysts
- 5) The role of research and the voluntary sector community in bringing up and discussing matters is of crucial importance, drawing attention to the importance of sufficient critical mass and an understanding of the matter in civil society and within the research community and financing bodies
- 6) Multilateral commitments have influenced UK policies and policy priorities and should not be considered merely as means for development policies. While country comparisons are usually recognized as effective, the role of reviews, policy analysis and assessment in relation to human and children's rights has become more important
- 7) Research on intersectoral and policy aspects can often provide important and timely cross-sectoral insights and policy level analysis, whereas the funding of research programs is likely to build longer term capacities as well as be able to focus on country-level outcomes. UK researchers and work on poverty has contributed not only to the national, but also the global analysis on child poverty
- 8) Efforts and costs with respect to child poverty reduction and its effectiveness relate to i) level of child poverty; and ii) how deep poverty is ; iii) political context of acceptable measures; and where the main issues lie that require a multisectoral focus, including, but not restricted to economic policies or social welfare alone
- 9) Policy learning across countries as well as policy changes from international commitments may not be automatic, but are important in providing a basis for change

4.3.5.8. Conclusions

- 1) The main lesson learned is that child poverty reduction is a matter of politics and levels of inequality that a society and political leadership will tolerate, and is not an inescapable consequence of globalisation.**

- 2) The role of legal obligations and rights is essential in legitimating focus and making the priority of child poverty more explicit.**
- 3) A critical mass of researchers and organizations with a focus on child poverty within civil society is necessary to enable follow up, analysis and action both at national and international levels.**
- 4) Child poverty is a matter of distribution and affected by access to, the costs of, and the organization of social services, the role of women, the position of single-parent families and ethnic groups within society, as well by the distribution of income and costs and the organization of housing within the society.**
- 5) Adequate follow up and understanding of child poverty requires multiple approaches and measures, including a legitimate focus for analysis on the economic and distributional aspects of policies.**
- 6) Children and children's rights should be seen as a cross-sectional and broader focus within foreign and development policies, going beyond the MDGs or access to services or vaccines.**
- 7) Understanding of realization and implementation of rights-based and cross-sectional policy matters can be enhanced through smaller-scale and more focused policy-oriented funding of research and analysis—including on policy learning from other countries—which are often more able to focus on the changing policy context in comparison to the sole use of surveys as a basis for action and articulation.**

4.4. Child poverty and well-being in countries of transition:

Russian Federation, Ukraine and the Roma in the EU (Simo Mannila)

4.4.1. Background

This paper is a synthesis report based on international research into child poverty and vulnerability in countries in transition, with short case descriptions on child poverty in the Russian Federation and Ukraine and on Roma children in Europe. By transition I mean socio-economic transformation from a “socialist” country into a standard market economy and – at least some degree of – political pluralism. On the basis of the findings, I have commented concisely on child poverty as a topic in Finnish international cooperation and development policy, as far as the latter is relevant here. The comments contain also recommendations. The main bulk of research utilized here was done by the Independent Institute for Social Policy (Moscow), the Institute for Demography and Social Research (Kyiv), UNICEF and the World Bank.

4.4.2. Poverty and vulnerability

In this paper **poverty is defined as material deprivation**, which can be measured by a number of indicators such as income, consumption expenditure, and various material assets.⁵⁹ This definition is a standard one, and poverty can be measured both by **absolute and relative indicators**. The European Union approach to poverty lays the main emphasis on relative indicators defining the poor segment of population as those whose income is 40%/50%/60% below the population median level. The concept of relative poverty as well as other related European work on social indicators contains a value statement, since it focuses on the distribution of material assets (income):⁶⁰ this is in compliance with the work of Wilkinson and Pickett promoting the idea of equality “better for everyone”,⁶¹ and the criterion is very useful for analytical purposes. Lately there is, nevertheless, an increasing discontent concerning the results based on the concept of relative poverty, since it is not able to reflect the situation of those worst-off and may give peculiar results in comparative statistics: a country with a rather high level of absolute poverty may have an even income distribution⁶² and have a low level of relative poverty. Subsequently, there is a certain emphasis on integrating some measure of absolute poverty into the European poverty discourse for analytical purposes. There is simultaneously an approach to use the criterion of relative poverty as a means to define the entitlement to social assistance, but this approach is not yet widely endorsed.

In the context of many countries in transition (e.g. Russian Federation), rather than income data, consumption **expenditure data** are used for defining poverty, since they are more reliable than income data, in particular in countries with a high level of informal employment. These data are gained from **household budget surveys** or **living condition surveys**. Globally speaking, poverty is most often measured by a concept of a **subsistence minimum** based on quasi-scientific

⁵⁹ Townsend P, 1987. Deprivation in *Journal of Social Policy* 16 (2) 125-146.

⁶⁰ Atkinson T, Cantillon B, Marlier E & Nolan B, 2002. *Social Indicators. The EU and Social Inclusion*. Oxford University Press.

⁶¹ Wilkinson R & Pickett K (2010) *The Spirit Level. Why Equality is Better for Everyone*. London: Penguin Books.

⁶² Guio A-C (2005) Income poverty and social exclusion in the EU25. *Statistics in Focus, Population and Social Conditions 13/ 2005*. http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPYB/KS-NK-05-013-EN.PDF.

calculations of a minimum consumption basket in many countries, e.g. the USA, and the Russian Federation, assessed by the cost of calories and basic utilities needed. Usually the schemes of these calculations are vulnerable to criticism; the subsistence minimum is confirmed always in a political process, and the definitions have been criticized e.g. in the context of the monetarization of privileges in the Russian Federation in the 2000s.⁶³ The stagnation of the level of social assistance and basic pension benefits in e.g. Finland indicates an implicit presumption of a subsistence minimum, although in the Nordic countries there is no quasi-scientific i.e. basically nutritional definition.⁶⁴

Poverty or material deprivation is often linked with other social ills, although the links are far from unproblematic. Here we may refer to Matti Heikkilä's classic study on Finland revealing that low-income persons i.e. materially poor persons are usually different from those receiving social assistance.⁶⁵ For the analysis of a more widely defined vulnerability, various terms have been coined, such as *social exclusion*⁶⁶ or *social deprivation*.⁶⁷ In the discourse on child poverty, too, it is useful to focus on a larger set of social ills and not only on material deprivation: for instance, UNICEF speaks of *child well-being, where poverty is only one dimension*.⁶⁸ UNICEF focuses on five dimensions, which are

- monetary poverty,
- health and nutrition,
- education,
- housing and access to public utilities and
- deprivation of family upbringing.

Besides material deprivation—which as such due its complexity should be measured by a set of indicators—for the sake of simplicity, we in this paper focus on two other key spheres of human development as defined by the UNDP, *education and health*. Inequity in education and health is of paramount importance for children and it defines their future. We also look at the *social exclusion of children and youth from the standard way of life*, in extreme cases as placements in a residential institution; this is *deprivation of family upbringing* for the reasons of social or other orphanhood or caused by e.g. crime or other deviant behavior, in compliance with the UNICEF approach. Blatant inequity in the basic dimensions of human development (material well-being, education and health) or social exclusion of children is in contradiction to the enhancement of

⁶³ Alexandrova A & Struyk R (2008) Reform of in-kind benefits in Russia – high cost for a small gain. *European Journal of Social Policy* 17, 2, 153-166. <http://esp.sagepub.com/content/17/2/153.full.pdf>.

⁶⁴ Kangas O & Ritakallio V-M (2008) Köyhyyden mittaustavat, sosiaaliturvan riittävyys ja köyhyyden yleisyys Suomessa. *Sosiaali- ja terveysturvan selosteita* 61/ 2008. Helsinki: Kansaneläkelaitos. [http://www.kela.fi/\(WWWAllDocsByID/F14309B3950187ACC25745F0034C9F/\\$file/Selosteita61_netti.pdf](http://www.kela.fi/(WWWAllDocsByID/F14309B3950187ACC25745F0034C9F/$file/Selosteita61_netti.pdf).

⁶⁵ Heikkilä M (1990) Köyhyys ja huono-osaisuus hyvinvointivaltiossa. Tutkimus köyhyydestä ja hyvinvoinnin puutteiden kasaantumisesta Suomessa. *Sosiaalihuollituksen julkaisuja* 88. Helsinki: VAPK.

⁶⁶ Atkinson T & al. (2002) *ibid.*

⁶⁷ Townsend P (1987) *ibid.*

⁶⁸ Menchini L, Marnie S, Tiberti L, Ticci E & Kools M (2009a) *Innocenti Social Monitor 2009. Child Well-Being at Crossroads: Evolving Challenges in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre. http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/ism_2009.pdf.

human and children's rights.⁶⁹ In general, the human rights perspective and anti-discrimination policies are increasingly important for policy-making both in developed and developing countries. However, we do not expand on family or child policies: this paper describes mainly the state of affairs.

4.4.3. Child poverty and well-being in transition

Child poverty in the transition countries can be analyzed as an aspect of general poverty, but it also has some specific characteristics.

- In the countries of transition it is common that ***the risk of poverty among children and young people is higher than that of the general population*** – this is basically related to the fact that a family with many children entails a higher poverty risk, but this does not have to be so, as evidenced by several developed countries. This phenomenon is deplorable from a human rights perspective: unlike it can be argued of some adults, children in poverty are always victims of that poverty.
- ***Imperfect families entail usually a higher risk of poverty in both developed and developing countries***: the standard case is that of single mothers, but there can also be extended families where e.g. grandparents take care of grandchildren for the lack of direct parenting and the earning capacity of such a family is often low. The ***high mortality*** of working-age men in e.g. the Russian Federation and Ukraine makes imperfect families rather common: the expected length of life of e.g. Russian men was for a long time stagnated at 58 years, and although it is rising now, it is still rather low at 60. The death of a close relative, in particular that of a spouse, entails a high stress and comes with a 50% elevated risk of depression,⁷⁰ which may endanger children's well-being directly or indirectly.
- ***Imperfect families and thus the risk of poverty may also be due to emigration***: recent UNICEF research points out an emerging risk for children of parents are working abroad, with child care provided by other family members, if any.⁷¹ Labor emigration is in many transition countries a typical phenomenon of the poor countryside, but there is also a brain drain of well-educated echelons of society, thus, there may be different risks for the children according to the various segments of labor emigrants.

⁶⁹ Kravchuk N (2009) Children in post-communist Russia: Some aspects of the child's right to protection. *International Journal of Children's Rights* 17, 611-622.

⁷⁰ (The) World Bank, 2005. *Dying Too Young. Addressing Premature Mortality and Ill-health to Non-Communicable Diseases and Injuries in the Russian Federation*. Washington: Europe and Central Asia Region, Human Development Department, Russia Country Management Unit.[online] Available at <<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTECA/Resources/DTY-Final.pdf>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

⁷¹ Menchini L & al. (2009a) *ibid*; cf. Menchini L, Marnie S & Tiberti L (2009b) Child well-being in Eastern Europe and Central Asia – A multidimensional approach. Mannila S & Vesikansa S (eds.) *Social Problems and Policies in Central and Eastern European Countries*, 7-63. Helsinki: National Institute for Health and Welfare, Report 42.

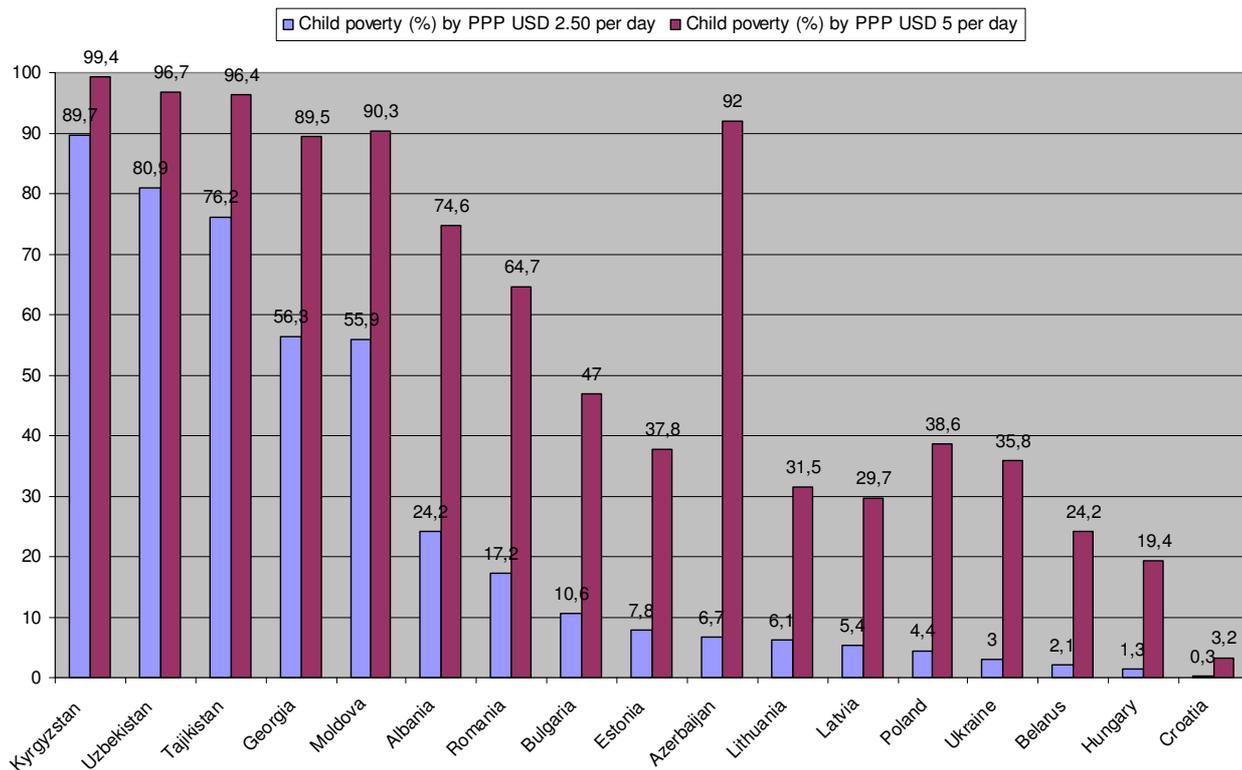
- Some children become street children, victims of violence etc. ending up socially excluded and in residential institutions. **The processes leading to the social exclusion of children into institutions may often not be directly linked with poverty**, and social exclusion in its extreme forms may be a more important social disadvantage than just the material poverty. These processes indicate a general problem in family culture or society.

A multidimensional approach to poverty, social well-being and exclusion requires that we look at material poverty but also beyond it, at social well-being and the risks of exclusion.

All countries in transition are parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), but the countries in transition show a widely heterogeneous profile as to child poverty and vulnerability as seen below. The UNICEF report states that **“there are increasingly stark contrasts between those benefiting from transition and those left behind”**.⁷² The following table (Fig 4.4.1.a.) shows the share of children aged 0-15 with a per capita consumption below PPP USD 2.50 and 5.00 a day in selected countries of transition according to UNICEF in 2005. In all countries the child poverty rate is higher than that of the total population.⁷³ (Fig. 4.4.1.a)

Figure 4.4.1.a The share of children aged 0-15 in selected countries of transition in 2005 with a per capita consumption below PPP USD 2.50 and 5.00 a day.

- FIGURE 1 -



⁷² Menchini L & al. (2009a) ibid.

⁷³ Menchini L & al. (2009a) ibid. p. 16-17.

The UNICEF report groups the countries into three main categories on the basis of material well-being.⁷⁴

- ***The new Member States of the European Union now participate fully in the EU development of social policy, including family and child policy;*** through Eurostat and European Commission programs, information concerning poverty and families is accumulated from them and analyzed subsequently. For instance, the Statistics on Incomes and Living Conditions (SILC) contain key data on children in these countries,⁷⁵ and the European Union Social Protection & Social and Inclusion activities⁷⁶ are an efficient instrument for information exchange and the development of good practice. So we see that focusing on what is happening in most new Member States of the European Union in accession countries with a good potential (e.g. Croatia) will not give added value to this paper. Looking at the results of Fig. 4.4.1.a. we see that extreme poverty is rare in these countries, although a significant share of children live rather poorly: e.g. in Estonia the share of children with a PPP USD 5.0 per day is 38% and in Poland 39%. ***The situation of the Roma and Roma children as the key vulnerable group in the European Union and in countries of transition deserves, however, specific attention.***
- ***Some transition countries can or should be classified as developing countries, and the general discourse on developing countries is very relevant for them.*** This is valid for the poorest counties in Central Asia e.g. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, and for Moldova in Europe. These countries suffer from general poverty at various levels up to 80-90%, with the majority of children vulnerable to extreme forms of poverty such as inadequate nutrition, while the risks of family disorganization due to emigration are high and there is international acclaim on trafficking; the countries also have a heritage of domestic or international armed conflict, the impact of which is still felt in families. We see this profile, for instance, in most Central Asian republics where fertility is high, and a large share of the whole population is children or young people.⁷⁷ For the poverty analysis, this means that general poverty data will also reflect rather well the child poverty.
- ***An intermediate group contains most Balkan*** (in Table 1 Albania, and also Romania and Bulgaria) ***and South Caucasus countries*** (although by Table 1 Georgia comes close to the group 1) and shows to various degrees alternatively both the characteristics of more developed and developing countries (incl. poverty, emigration, heritage of ethnic conflicts).

⁷⁴ Menchini & al. (2009a) ibid.

⁷⁵ European Commission EUROSTAT *Statistics on Incomes and Living Conditions (SILC)* [online] Available at <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/microdata/eu_silc> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

⁷⁶ European Commission *Social Protection & Social Inclusion* [online] Available at <<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=750&langId=en>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

⁷⁷ Chawla M, Betcherman G, Banerji A, Bakilana A M, Feher C, Mertaugh M, Sanchez Puerta M L, Schwartz A M & Sondergaard L, 2007. *From Red to Grey. The "Third Transition" of Aging Populations in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union. Overview.* Washington: The World Bank. [online] Available at

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTUKRAINE/Resources/Red_to_Grey_eng.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2012]. Cf. Menchini & al. (2009a).

In the following, I will focus on **child poverty and well-being in the Russian Federation and Ukraine and Roma children in Europe**. The Russian Federation is a special case, since it is the neighboring country to Finland and there is long and extensive experience of Finnish-Russian cooperation in the field of child health and child protection. Ukraine is one of the largest countries in Europe both by population and territory, but it is largely unknown to Finland; Ukraine is a neighboring country to the European Union and there is a wealth of research into child poverty in Ukraine. It would be most interesting to focus on poverty also in some other transitioning countries, e.g. Moldova, with the widespread poverty in the heart of Europe, high emigration rate and corresponding risks to families and children, but that would be a topic of a different study. Roma children in Europe deserve special attention, since most of them live in the transitioning countries and they are a most vulnerable group of children by any criterion of poverty or well-being.

The demography of a country has a major impact on family and child policy and is, thus, relevant also to child poverty. According to the present forecasts, the Russian Federation and Ukraine face a reduction of population due to low fertility, high mortality, and migration; the trend is clear, although it is a matter of controversy of how strong the change will be.⁷⁸ Measures have been taken, in particular in the Russian Federation, to counterbalance the situation: a country with diminishing human resources can hardly maintain the status of a superpower, in particular if the **dependency ratio** is at the same time worsening. The latter phenomenon means that in social policy, generations may have to compete over priorities and resources: more focus on children is needed so that people would have children, and more focus on elderly care is needed, since people live longer and old age cohorts grow. For the Russian Federation and Ukraine, a **general population policy and its priorities have a strong impact on family and child policy**.⁷⁹

In the following cases of the Russian Federation and Ukraine, we attempt to focus on the present situation as much as possible. There is a wealth of research results describing what happened in the 1990s, but social change in the countries of transition is rapid and most findings of the 1990s and their conclusions are outdated. Some general remarks concerning the definition of poverty in the Russian Federation, Ukraine as well as other countries in transition must be made.

- Rather than income data, poverty assessments in those countries, too, often use consumption expenditure data, which are more reliable. Another key definition of poverty is an official poverty line, based on regional and national subsistence minimums confirmed by law. **We are therefore bound by the definitions of primary sources and corresponding statistics.**
- We must bear in mind the **strong effect of household coefficients on poverty**. In spite of international recommendations (e.g. OECD) the coefficients vary by country, and this is to a certain extent natural, since they should be related to the structure of family expenditure. In most Western countries e.g. housing expenditure is very high and education is largely free, which motivates low coefficients e.g. for children (i.e. they add rather little to the

⁷⁸ Chawla & al. (2007) *ibid*.

⁷⁹ Ovcharova L N (2010a) *Determinanty reproduktivnogo povedeniya naseleniya i factory semeynogo neblagopoluchiya: rezul'taty panel'nykh issledovaniy*. Moskovskiy obchestvennyi nauchnyi fond; Nezavisimyy Institut Social'noy Politiki, Moskva. [online] Available at <http://www.socpol.ru/publications/pdf/Fertility_behavior_determinants_2010.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

economic load of a family), but in many countries of transition the situation may be different due to a very vulnerable starting point or a different profile of household expenditure.⁸⁰

- There is a **conceptual difference between “family” and “household”**, which may not be strictly observed in the following chapters. A family member may not live in the same household (e.g. due to labor emigration), and in some cases the household may include persons (e.g. relatives) usually not included in the family.
- UNICEF states that even in countries with a positive general development **there are pockets of poverty that cannot always be identified by a quantitative analysis or official data.**⁸¹ This means that we must be aware of the constraints of the general data and go deeper through targeted research, when needed. The paramount case is that of Roma children.
- The research results up to now show that **poverty in transition has largely been of a transitory character** i.e. there are large segments of the population around the poverty line, but the poverty gap is usually not very deep and there is social mobility mostly upwards from poverty. There is, however, **a risk of a poverty culture** for those who are most vulnerable, including all the handicaps related to that e.g. **stigmatization, reduced risk-taking and intergenerational poverty**. This is an argument for multidimensional poverty analysis and panel research.

4.4.3.1. Case 1: Child poverty in the Russian Federation

A most comprehensive picture of the Russian poverty is given by the Shaban et al. in the World Bank report Reducing Poverty through Growth and Social Policy Reform in Russia.⁸² It gives basic facts of poverty with hardly any significant changes. When the poverty incidence in the whole population was 20%, it was 27% among children and youth up to 15 years i.e. the poverty risk among children and youth was 36% higher than that among the whole population. **Most poor people in Russia live in households with children, but the relationship between children and poverty is not direct. Approximately one third of poor families had no children, one third had one child and only one third had two or more children: the main reason for poverty is low productivity. This result is bad for social policy: a successful combating of poverty cannot be implemented by social policy alone or through improved targeting. It requires a combination of labor market policy and family support, and it is closely linked with the general socio-economic development.**

⁸⁰ Heikkilä M & Kuivalainen S, 2002. *Using social benefits to combat poverty and social exclusion: opportunities and problems from a comparative perspective. European synthesis report. Trends in social cohesion No. 3.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

⁸¹ Menchini & al. (2009a; 2009b) *ibid.*

⁸² Shaban R, Asaoka H, Barnes B, Drebenstov V, Langenbrunner J, Sajala Z, Stevens J, Tarr D, Tesliuc E, Shabalina O & Yemtsov R, 2005. *Reducing Poverty through Growth and Social Policy Reform in Russia.* Washington: World Bank Europe and Central Asia Region, Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Unit. [online] Available at <<http://www.scribd.com/doc/16059917/Reducing-Poverty-through-Growth-and-Social-Policy-Reform-in-Russia>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

The results of Shaban et al.⁸³ show, that ***the risk of poverty is particularly high and exceeds 50% for households with 3 or more children (“large families”)***. The share of large families among all families is, however, rather low: according to Ovcharova & Popova⁸⁴ the child load, defined as a ratio of children under 18 and able-bodied members in the family higher than 0.5, is the sole poverty generating factor for merely 6% of families: other factors, in particular, those related to labor market status are, likewise, of importance. ***There are also major differences between regions: while the poverty risk of having a child in the best off regions (e.g. Moscow, Tyumen, St Petersburg) is very small, it is around 80% in the poorest regions.***⁸⁵ ***All North-West Russian regions belong to the lower-middle or middle range of regions and Saint Petersburg is one of the best Russian regions according to the human development index (HDI).***⁸⁶ Moreover, the urban–rural divide bears an impact on child poverty: while most poor in the Russian Federation live in an urban context, ***the poverty risk was 30% in rural and 16% in an urban context.***⁸⁷

Pisnyak and Popova⁸⁸ show a complex picture of child poverty in the Russian Federation. Using the EU criteria, i.e. defining those whose income is less than 60% of the median income of the population as poor, they find that the share of the poor in the Russian Federation in 2009 was 19% of the whole population but the share of the poor among all children until 16 years was 30%. The risk of poverty among children went up during the transition until 1998 but it has been going down thereafter. Pisnyak and Popova described multidimensional poverty by means of monetary data, material deprivation (e.g. not able to pay for necessary medical care; keep the flat warm; have at least one week’s vacation yearly) and subjective assessment, and they find the results by these criteria are far from overlapping and the differences between families with children and with no children were rather small. Altogether 8% of the former group and 6% of the latter group were poor by all three sets of criteria. Similar analyses have been carried out in several countries, and the results show that a careful multidimensional analysis is needed for effective anti-poverty policies.

Shaban et al. summed up the **key findings on poverty stating that a combination of**

- ***many children***
- ***unemployment in the family and***
- ***rural domicile***

make for the riskiest life context for adults and children.⁸⁹ According to the UNDP (Andjelkovic & al. 2011) in 2008 the share of children under 16 among the poor was 22%, which is only 2% less than in 2000, but the share of children under 16 among those under the subsistence minimum was

⁸³ Shaban R & al. (2005) *ibid.*

⁸⁴ Ovcharova L N & Popova D O, 2005. *Child Poverty in Russia. Alarming Trends and Policy Options. UNICEF Report Summary.* Independent Institute of Social Policy, Moscow [online] Available at <<http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/Russiapoverty2005.doc>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

⁸⁵ Shaban R & al. (2005) *ibid.*

⁸⁶ Zubarevich N V, 2010. *Regiony Rossii: neravenstvo, krizis i modernizaciya.* Moskva: Nezavisimyi Institut Social’nyi Politiki. [online] Available at <http://www.socpol.ru/publications/pdf/Regions_2010.pdf>

⁸⁷ Shaban R & al. (2005) *ibid.*

⁸⁸ Pisnyak A I & Popova D O, 2011. *Bednost i blagosostoyaniye rossiyskikh semei s det’mi na raznykh etapakh ekonomicheskogo cikla.* Spero 14 (Vesna-Leto 2011), 57-78. [online] Available at <http://spero.socpol.ru/docs/N14_2011_04.pdf> [Accessed 10 January 2012]

⁸⁹ Shaban R & al. (2005) *ibid.*

only 18% as compared to 34% in 2000. This is after the definition of the subsistence minimum changed during 2000-08, laying a stronger emphasis on services due to increased utility and transport prices. The UNDP report tells that

- **the poverty risk increases with the number of children and**
- **it is high for single-parent families.**

The poverty risk was 40% higher for children than for the average population i.e. by this measure there has been a slight increase in child poverty since the early 2000s. The family support measures aiming at birth promotion have not yet at least alleviated child poverty; it remains to be seen how the development will be influenced by the new benefits known as “family capital”.⁹⁰

Despite a temporary backlash in the first half of 2009 the general poverty rate in the Russian Federation has gone down now to 14%. The share of population under the regionally defined subsistence minimum went down from 29% in 2000 to 13% in the pre-crisis year of 2008. Nevertheless, the UNDP points out a simultaneously growing discrepancy between the general positive development and family policy. The structure of allowances has changed dramatically due to the reform of privileges in the mid-2000s: now the major part of all allowances goes to the cash equivalents of the previous in-kind privileges, and **the share of allowances to mother and child has gone down from 34% to 20% - being in 2006 down at 12%**.⁹¹ This means that the problem of corporate privileges has been transferred into the system of social benefits, with the effect of lowering the poverty reduction impact of the latter. Child allowances were previously universal, Soviet-style, but the system was changed into a targeted one, due to the scarcity of resources and in compliance with the international interest in targeting. Most Russian **social benefits are badly targeted as compared internationally**; child allowances covering approximately two-thirds of all families with children have been targeted the most successfully and even they had over 50% leakage to non-poor i.e. their poverty alleviating effect is limited.⁹² **Unfunded mandates and low take-up for various reasons have been traditional problems of Russian child benefits.**⁹³ According to the criticism of Gassmann & Notten a universal system of child allowances might be better than a targeted one from the point of view of poverty reduction, since many families with children are erroneously excluded, and the better impact of targeting found after the introduction of targeting may simply be due to better adequacy of benefits i.e. there was an increased cash flow into benefits in the early 2000s.⁹⁴ Thus, we see that the key issue is about funding and priority setting.

⁹⁰ Andjelkovic B, Ivanov A, Balász H, Marnie, S, Michailov D, Milcher S, Peleah M, Peric T, Rende S, Spoor M, Stubbs P & Taadijbakhsh, 2011. *Beyond Transition Towards Inclusive Societies. Regional Human Development Report*. Bratislava: UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS.

⁹¹ Andjelkovic B & al. (2011) *ibid*.

⁹² Shaban R & al. (2005) *ibid*; cf. Ovcharova L N, 2010b. *Poverty, economic growth and the crisis in Russia in the first decade of the 21st century. National Human Development Report in the Russian Federation 2010*. Millennium Development Goals in Russia: Looking into the Future, 25-38. UNDP, Moscow. [online] Available at

<http://www.undp.ru/nhdr2010/National_Human_Development_Report_in_the_RF_2010_ENG.pdf. > [Accessed 10 January 2012]

⁹³ Alexandrova A & Grishina E, 2007. Who receives targeted benefits in transition? The effect of household characteristics on take-up rates in Russia's child allowance programme. in *Social Policy & Society* 6: 2, 141-150. [online] Available at <<http://journals.cambridge.org>> [Accessed 10 January 2012]

⁹⁴ Gassmann F & Notten G, 2006. *Size matters: Targeting efficiency and poverty reduction effects of means-tested and universal child benefits in Russia*. Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, Maastricht. [online] Available at <<http://web.up.ac.za/userFiles/G%20Notten%20paper.pdf>> [Accessed 10 January 2012]

Poverty in the Russian Federation is likewise connected with lower resources for education and training, thus pointing to the development of an intergenerational poverty: poor children have a higher probability to have lower well-being in adult life. The average difference in the length of education between the lowest and highest income quintiles was 2–3 years in the mid 2000s. **Children from poor households have less access to pre-school education as well as post-compulsory education; additionally, children from non-poor households participate more in competitive education program and only 15% of children from poor households get to university, while the corresponding figure for the children of better-off households is 80%.** The cash investment of poor families in children's education is considerably lower than that of non-poor families in monetary terms, but relatively speaking the share for poor families is high.⁹⁵

There is a general observation that **the older generation has been socially better protected than the young one during the transition years in the Russian Federation**,⁹⁶ and the trade-off in the social protection between generations (coupled with the impact on population increase; the sustainability of the pension system) is a complicated political issue. Looking at some key health indicators we see that the child mortality rate for children under 6 years has continued to go down over the past 30 years, and it is a very realistic expectation that it will be at the EU level by 2020. **Child mortality is not a major problem in the Russian Federation or Ukraine, although it is higher than that of the EU, and its reduction will have a very small impact on the attainment of the MDGs:** the main problem of these countries is the excess mortality of the adult population. **Regional variation in infant mortality is, however, also high.**⁹⁷

Orphanhood is an extreme case of child vulnerability, and it is linked to high mortality of the working-age population rather than to poverty, although mortality is socially stratified. According to the World Bank data the probability for Russian men to die while of working age was over 42% and for Russian women 15%, while the corresponding risk e.g. in Turkey was for men 22% and women 12%.⁹⁸ **This entails a major risk of family disorganization leading to single parent families at risk of poverty and increasing stress in the family. The share of orphan children has steadily grown in the Russian Federation and it was 2.7% of all children in 2007:** this is alarming since the growth has continued in spite of the general socioeconomic improvement of the country. An overwhelming majority of these children are **social orphans** i.e. they have living parents (at least one) who have lost their parental rights for various reasons. **This indicates a major problem in Russian families that is related to culture rather than material assets and is thus not overcome solely by alleviating poverty.**⁹⁹ A majority of the orphan children were in 2007 in custodial care, while 24% of children were in residential institutions and, rather surprisingly, 22% had been adopted; only 3% of children were in foster care and family-type foster homes. Being aged over 10 years, disability and being one of many children coming from the same biological family are the key obstacles to foster care or adoption. Over 95% of family placements seem to succeed, and the

⁹⁵ Shaban R & al. (2005) *ibid.*

⁹⁶ For instance: Ovcharova & Popova (2005) *ibid.*

⁹⁷ Andjelkovic & al. (2011); cf. Zubarevich (2010) *ibid.*; Danishevsky K D, 2010. *Reduction of child mortality and better maternal care. Health priorities for Russia. National Human Development Report in the Russian Federation 2010.* Millennium Development Goals in Russia: Looking into the Future, 63-81. UNDP, Moscow.

⁹⁸ (The) World Bank (2005) *ibid.*

⁹⁹ Sinyavskaya O, 2009, ed. *Sem'ya v centre social'no-demograficheskoy politiki? Sbornik analiticheskikh statey.* Moskva: Moskovskiy obshchestvennyy nauchnyy fond & Nezavisimyy Institut Social'noy Politiki. [online] Available at

<http://www.socpol.ru/publications/pdf/Family_2009.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

Rotkirch A, 2000. *The Man Question. Loves and Lives in Late 20th Century Russia.* Helsinki: University of Helsinki, Department of Social Policy Research Reports 1/ 2000.

typical reasons of failure are the behavior of the child as well as her/his health status. **Early interventions and a stronger emphasis on preventive family policy as well as support to adoptions combined with e.g. a good assessment of the adoptive families are recommended to prevent deprivation in parental upbringing.**¹⁰⁰

4.4.3.2. Case 2: Child poverty in Ukraine

In Ukraine the development of poverty in the 2000s has been very similar to that in the Russian Federation. Poverty reduction by absolute and relative criteria, based on a subsistence minimum (“living wages”) and defining the relative poverty line at 75% of the median consumption expenditure (as opposed to income - see above), shows a picture close to that of the Russian Federation: while the poverty rate by the former official criterion in 2000-07 went down from over 70% to approximately 26%, the share of poor in the population by a relative criterion remained more or less stable. The result is largely due to the adjustment of the subsistence minimum to the new circumstances and requires further analysis. When using the EU household coefficients, we see that the poverty rate goes down in the 2000s, and families with children were slightly less often poor than families without children. **Ukrainian figures showed clearly that having more than one child entails a poverty risk and this risk was particularly high for families with many i.e. three or more children.** Libanova et al. defined children in general as one of the vulnerable population groups; the problem is also apparent in a three-generation family where the non-working load is high.¹⁰¹ In 2007 the poverty rate for families with one child was 27% i.e. not any different to the national average, but the rate for families with two children was over 40% and for families with 3+ children it was 65% over the national average. The risk was higher for families with a child under 3 years. In the 2000s, there has been positive development in child poverty only for families with one child, and **more than one third of all households with any children in 2007 were poor.**¹⁰² **These results indicate that the link between child bearing and poverty is more direct in Ukraine than in the Russian Federation, since the risk starts from the second child already. Thus, a reduction of child poverty can be somewhat easier to affect by a stronger focus on families and children.**

Domicile is linked with poverty, and the poverty risk in a rural context was 40% higher than the Ukrainian country average. In rural areas, even one child entails a poverty risk, but the highest poverty risk was for families with 3+ children in small urban settlements. In large families the energy value of family’s food ration decreases and 20% of families with children i.e. 14% of the total population suffers from inadequate daily nutrition. Single parent families, families where one parent is of non-working age and large families showed here the lowest consumer capacity. For 43% of families with children the share of food cost was over 60% of the total consumption expenditure and could also be defined as poor.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Ovcharova L N, 2009. *Problema social'nogo sirotsva v Rossii i puti ee resheniya*. Sinyavskaya O (2009, ed.) *Sem'ya v centre social'no-demograficheskoy politiki? Sbornik analiticheskikh statey*. Hezavisimyi Institut Social'noy Politiki, Moskva, pp. 97-124. [online] Available at <http://www.socpol.ru/publications/pdf/Family_2009.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

¹⁰¹ Libanova E, Makarova O, Cherenko L, Tkatchenko L, Palii O, 2009. *Social Protection and Social Inclusion in Ukraine*. Manuscript for the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. [online] Available at <<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=5756&langId=en>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

¹⁰² Libanova E, 2010, ed. *Child Poverty and Disparities in Ukraine*. Kyiv: Institute for Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Ukraine; UNICEF, Ukrainian Centre for Social Reforms.

¹⁰³ Libanova E (2010) *ibid*.

Using a criterion of material deprivation based on a list of the 18 most typical and important items needed, deprivation was slightly less common among families with children than among those without children. However, 18% of families with children were unable to buy, if needed, new clothes and footwear for children; there was no (primary) school near the house for 11%, while 8% reported that there was no possibility to receive professional training for children. Additionally, **10% of households with children had a living space less than 5 square meters per person.** Cumulative deprivation was more typical of the rural population, and only 14% of rural households had no characteristics of material deprivation (cf. 44% of urban ones). Comparing various poverty criteria such as the national relative criterion, the criterion based on the share of food costs in total expenditure and material deprivation by the list of indicators, the overlap for families with children was only 10% as compared to 8% in the total population – a very similar result to that found in the Russian Federation, although the indicators were different.¹⁰⁴ This again is **an argument for a multidimensional poverty assessment so that the various types of poverty or related ills can be found and the required policies drafted accordingly.**¹⁰⁵

The assistance to families with children covers 5% of the public expenditure on social protection and 1.4% of the GDP in Ukraine; the Russian figures are at the same level or less. In Ukraine, only 27% of families received benefits for children (incl. e.g. birth grants, benefits for children in various age brackets). This surprisingly low figure is due to the lack of awareness of eligibility, low take-up and income (e.g. family is not entitled to a benefit). The benefits are not well targeted, although 39% of child benefit recipient families were poor as compared to the poverty rate of 27% in the whole population: all these findings are very much similar to those from the Russian Federation. Nevertheless, child benefits have developed positively in general lately; for instance, the minimum benefit for children aged under 3 covered in 2007 up to 21% of the subsistence minimum, while the corresponding share in 2003 was only 12%, and also the numbers of recipients of the benefits for children with disabilities have risen steeply in 2004-07.¹⁰⁶ Social services for families with children (e.g. for those with special needs) have developed rather slowly as compared to cash benefits. This, again, is a general characteristic of countries in transition; it is difficult to change the emphasis from benefits to services.

Similarly to the Russian Federation, there are social differences in pre-school activities as well as post-compulsory education between poor and non-poor segments of the population in Ukraine. Domicile also plays a major role here: for instance, the enrolment in secondary education was at the beginning of a transition in 1990, being equal in urban settlements and rural areas, but in 2007 the urban enrolment rate had grown to 89% and the rural one had gone down to 77%. The difference is also one of quality: while over 70% of urban schools were connected to the Internet, the corresponding figure for rural ones was 55%. The risks of living in a rural context in Ukraine are similar to those in the Russian Federation.

The development of the incidence and prevalence of mortality among children is different from that in the Russian Federation, they - including infant mortality - have been increasing at least up to 2007, although some part of the phenomenon may be due to the introduction of an international system of audits and statistics. Approximately one fifth of the Ukrainian population

¹⁰⁴ Libanova E (2010) *ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Menchini L & al. (2009a; 2009b) *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Libanova E (2010) *ibid.*

did not get the medical assistance they required in 2007; the most typical problem was that they were not able to buy the required medicine. This general finding is most relevant for families with children; we may also point out that there is no mandatory medical insurance in Ukraine. Nevertheless, ***Libanova states that the main problem is not a complete lack of health service; it is the generally low quality of the service.***¹⁰⁷

Libanova lists the vulnerable categories of children in Ukraine. They include the following groups:

- ***children from disadvantaged families;***
- ***orphaned children and children deprived of parental care;***
- ***street children;***
- ***children with special needs or children with disabilities;***
- ***children of labor emigrants;***
- ***children of parents representing national minorities (e.g. Roma, Crimean Tatars etc.);***
- ***other vulnerable categories e.g. children from single parent families or those with a severe diseases.***

In 2007 there were over 100 000 orphans in Ukraine, of which 41 000 are in residential institutions (shelters, homes or schools). The share of children in children's homes of family type or in foster families has grown but in 2007 it was no more than 4521; the number of yearly adoptions has oscillated between 4300 and 7600 lately and the share seems to be considerably lower than in the Russian Federation. The development of foster care and adoption is closely linked to the availability of relevant legislation and to implementation practice. The number of street children is estimated to be 30 000–100 000, and the average age is going down. The number of children born to HIV-infected women has also increased continuously and it reached approximately 3 000 in 2007. There were 2.5 million disabled persons in Ukraine in 2007, with over 7000 of them disabled children in various inpatient facilities.¹⁰⁸ These figures illustrate the size of various groups of vulnerable children in Ukraine. ***Libanova et al. in summarizing, state that there is a serious problem of education for children from low-income families in the countryside, particularly if the children are disabled.*** Approximately 7% of all families – 1.1 million in absolute numbers – are single parent families or children with at least one parent who does not live on the premises.¹⁰⁹ This share is, however, internationally not very unusual.

In order to improve the effectiveness of social protection for the fight against child poverty, the UNICEF report on Ukraine recommends reforming the system of social privileges so that funds are freed up and thus be used for the benefit of the poor; to restrict the non-poor families' eligibility to housing benefits and to improve the targeting of benefits to low-income families.¹¹⁰ This all requires reforming legislation and capacity building in administration, including better monitoring. In the report on poverty alleviation during the economic crisis, Libanova et al. point out that the targeting system does not work effectively, and, for instance, the government's program to support motherhood, childhood and youth has not been properly

¹⁰⁷ Libanova E (2010) *ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Libanova E (2010) *ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Libanova E & al. (2009) *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Libanova E & al. (2010) *ibid.*

funded. There has been a catastrophic decrease of children in rural areas, leaving those still there with reduced and low-quality services (e.g. education, health care) and reduced life prospects.¹¹¹

4.4.3.3. Case 3: Roma children in Europe

Describing the situation of the Roma in Europe on a representative basis is not easy, since **the definition of Roma is controversial**. In the countries with a significant Roma minority, the ethnic classifications are based on self-identification, but due to the stigma related to Roma, this criterion has a strong downward bias. Moreover, while **there are various groups among the Roma, the Roma are internally very heterogeneous** (e.g. by self-identification, language, religion) even in one country, which makes the definition even more complicated. For instance, the census number of the Roma in the Russian Federation is around 200 000, but according to some estimates the figure might be up to 1 million; similarly the census figure for Roma in Ukraine is 48 000 but according to some estimates the figure might be up to 400 000. **The largest Roma population in the EU is in Romania, where the census figure is over 500 000, but several estimates are several times higher at up to 2–3 millions. Other significant Roma minorities by absolute numbers live in Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Spain and some Balkan states. According to various estimates, the Roma represent over 5% of the total population in Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania and Macedonia.** In many countries the most significant problems are experienced by Roma with no identification documents. Finally, the statistics collected in many countries are often not disaggregated by ethnicity, since ethnicity is considered a rather sensitive issue.¹¹²

This means that all results concerning Roma children and their situation is based on scattered and biased data, but even they show major problems. The **general poverty profile of countries with a large minority is most relevant here, since children represent over 40% of the Roma population in Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, while the share of children in the total population of these countries is less than 20%**. In 2001 three-quarters of Roma households in Bulgaria had children, while two-thirds of the non-Roma households did not have children. **The number of Roma children in Europe (not only the EU) varies depending on the source from 600 000–700 000 to over 2 million.**¹¹³ For comparison, the lowest figure is approximately twice the population of Iceland and the highest is as high as the population of Latvia.

From Bulgaria in 2001 we know that the Roma children represented 17% of the total child population but over 70% of the children in the poorest consumption expenditure decile. **Around half of the Roma children lived in extreme poverty defined as per capita consumption lower than the poverty line of PPP USD 2.15, as compared to 2% among ethnic Bulgarian children. In Romania, the poverty rate for 2004 was 40% for Roma children, while the national average was 8%.** There are interesting country differences in social assistance: while the share of households receiving assistance in 2006 was in Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria, approximately 70–80% the share in Albania was only 2%. Besides the country variation **the figures show that social assistance does not have a major impact on Roma poverty.**¹¹⁴ The EU-MIDIS, which was carried out by the Fundamental Rights Agency, shows **a high rate of discrimination against Roma**

¹¹¹ Libanova E, Cherenko L & Sarioglu V, 2010. *Poverty and social impact analysis of the economic crisis in Ukraine*. Kyiv: UNDP, 2010. [online] Available online <http://content.undp.org/go/cms-service/stream/asset/?asset_id=2636830> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

¹¹² Menchini L & al. (2009a) *ibid*.

¹¹³ Menchini L & al. (2009a), p. 89.

¹¹⁴ Menchini L & al. (2009a) *ibid*.

(approximately 50%) and being a victim of crime (32%) during the past 12 months. Due to the lack of confidence in law enforcement, the Roma usually do not report this officially. The EU MIDIS Survey focused on Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, with Greece not coming up any better than the new EU Member States.¹¹⁵ An experience of discrimination against any family member has a major impact on the children and their future.

There is **a tendency to segregate education in all countries with a major Roma minority**, and in extreme forms this means that **Roma children are sent to schools targeted to children with “special needs” i.e. with intellectual disabilities**. This has in the 2000s been a common practice for instance in Bulgaria and Slovakia. Pre-school education for Roma children is a rare case, and the 1990s data show up to one third of Roma pupils in Romania tend to drop out of primary school. **Child health is significantly worse for Roma** and compared to the majority populations in Europe; in Romania and Hungary the infant mortality for Roma has been 2.5–3.5 times higher than non-Roma. Some of the problems in child health are related also to cultural patterns, such as frequent and early childbearing. Finally, **there is a significant vulnerability in housing: a large share of Roma live in segregated housing, with substandard quality of housing utilities and sanitation and in a cramped space less than half the sizes of non-Roma housing**.¹¹⁶ **There is also accumulation of substandard housing and ill-health among Roma; this is most probably also linked with other vulnerabilities such as extreme poverty and inadequate education**.¹¹⁷

In general it is estimated that the living conditions and education of Roma have deteriorated during the transition: the children of today and most probably also tomorrow are more socially excluded than their parents have been in the pre-transition societies. Despite several projects addressing the Roma situation during the accession period of the new EU Member States, the Roma have benefitted rather little from this process. By using general standards of child poverty and well-being, we have in the European Union and the present accession countries a major problem facing up to 2 million children.

4.4.4. Some Finnish activities relevant to child well-being in the Russian Federation – and what next?

Here I list and comment on the Finnish–Russian cooperation in the field of family policy, child health and child protection during the 2000s, mainly as reflected by the activities of the International Affairs unit at the National Institute for Health and Welfare (and its predecessor). In this field there has not been significant Finnish–Ukrainian cooperation, although there have been activities implemented through European Union funding. Finnish organizations have participated in various European-funded Roma projects, but there has been no direct Finnish funding for Roma projects in the countries of transition beyond some NGO work.

¹¹⁵ EU-MIDIS, 2009. *European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey. Main Results Report Conference Edition*. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. [online] Available at <http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/eumidis_mainreport_conference-edition_en.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

¹¹⁶ Menchini & al. (2009a) *ibid*.

¹¹⁷ Fundación Secretariado Gitano, 09. *Health and the Roma Community – analysis of the situation in Europe. Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia & Spain*. Madrid: EXINI POLI, FSG, Office of the Council for Roma Community Affairs (CZ), PDCS, REDPN, ROMANI CRISS, THRPF[online] Available at <http://www.gitanos.org/upload/78/83/Health_and_the_Roma_Community.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

Finnish-Russian cooperation relevant to child well-being has been based on **bilateral agreements** or multilateral program, such as in the context of the Barents or Northern Dimension cooperation. For instance, in the present **Northern Dimension Partnership on Public Health and Well-Being** there is an emphasis on youth as a target group and promotion of healthy lifestyles. Similarly, in the **Barents Cooperation Programme on Health and Related Social Issues** (2008-11) there has been an emphasis on children and youth, and this emphasis will continue during the next program period 2012–15. Nevertheless, most Finnish-Russian cooperation for addressing the vulnerability of children and youth in various forms has taken place in the context of bilateral cooperation with the neighboring areas; the ongoing program is for the years 2009–11. Some important projects have also been implemented with European funding.

The main Finnish or EU-funded projects implemented by the **National Institute for Health and Welfare**—the key player in this context—in the Russian Federation of the 2000s are as follows:

- In 2000-02 EU Tacis project *Partnership in Education, Health and Social Assistance* where open and home care for children with special needs were supported by advice and creating forums for an interchange of good practice.
- In 2002-04 and funded by the Nordic Council, *Updating Training of the Personnel in the Rehabilitation Centres for Disabled Children in the Republic of Karelia in Russia*, which prepared e.g. one of the first textbooks in Russian on rehabilitation of children with disabilities
- In 2004-06 and funded by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, *Support to the School Health Education in Saint Petersburg*.
- In 2004-06 *Development of State Social Policy for Kaliningrad Region* (EU Tacis IBB Key Institutions) prepared a draft for a regional legislative concept of family policy, including support to integration of children in families.
- In 2005-07 and funded by Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Saint Petersburg *Prevention of Social Exclusion of Children and Youth at Risk in Schools of Nevsky District* addressing children dropping off school by various types of early intervention and cross-administrative cooperation: the intervention model was published both in Russian and in English.
- In 2006-08 and funded by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, *Together against Tobacco and Alcohol* – a community programme to prevent alcohol consumption and smoking among youth.
- In 2007-09 and funded by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the Republic of Karelia *Support to Social Work Addressing Families and Children* support to social work as a profession, developing a mentor system for an interchange of experience between academic studies and civil service and addressing practical issues of child care in particular in rural communities. The project prepared two handbooks in Russian.
- In 2007-09 and funded by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in Saint Petersburg and Leningrad Oblast *Promotion of Health Education in Child Care Institutions* integrating health promotion in the daily activities and curricula of these institutions plus to giving staff training.
- In 2009-10 and funded by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, *Dissemination of the Together against Substance Misuse Programme in the Republic of Karelia* and its implementation in the further education of teachers.

The above list is not exhaustive and does not include e.g. projects addressing primary health care or rehabilitation with potential components addressing children or youth. There have also been some other Finnish key players in the field of Finnish–Russian cooperation for the benefit of children, and at present the financing instruments of the European Union support the cooperation of regional and local governments as well as NGOs with the corresponding structures of the Russian Federation. A most important output of Finnish–Russian cooperation is the book ***Child Protection in Europe and Russia***,¹¹⁸ with both Finnish (from Palmenia, University of Helsinki, Central Union of Child Welfare, Finland) and Russian contributions mainly from the point of view of children’s rights. Also e.g. the ***Family Federation of Finland*** has implemented projects in the North-West Russian regions addressing sexual health and social work.

The priorities of the funding program are defined in official meetings, and concrete projects developed in the program have usually been planned by means of a logical framework analysis carried out jointly by Finnish and Russian experts and civil servants. A certain weakness of the cooperation has been the weak link between research and development work. There has been a clear emphasis on ***health promotion at schools and child protection*** in various forms, but there have been no projects directly addressing child poverty. This is due to the defined priorities, even though the evaluation results concerning cooperation in the field of social affairs and health are positive.¹¹⁹ In the context of Finnish–Russian cooperation, significant Finnish capacity – both substantial and managerial – has been concentrated in work that seeks to benefit children in the countries of transition. At present there is a risk that this capacity will be devaluated, if the project funding goes down and no new institutional cooperation ties are developed.

For the future, the following comments and recommendations for Finnish international cooperation with the countries in transition can be made:

- ***Finnish–Russian (or Finnish–Ukrainian) cooperation in the field of family policy, child health and child protection should not be based on a humanitarian discourse of helping the poor or combating against potential threats. These motivations are not productive to a genuine cooperation in the long run.***
- ***In the European Union and wider European context a strong emphasis should be given to Roma children as a beneficiary. This should also mean support to statistics and research for a better policy design. Roma children should be considered the primary target group of child poverty reduction in the countries of transition.***
- ***If we want to emphasize the general development discourse and address extreme child poverty and offer (preventive) crisis management with their positive impact on families and children, then Finland should focus on Central Asian republics and countries of the Southern Caucasus among all the countries of transition.***

¹¹⁸ Mikkola V, 2007, ed. *Zashchita detey v Rossii v Evrope*. Helsinki: Palmenia.

¹¹⁹ Aarva P, 2011, ed. *Suomen ja Venäjän välinen lähialueyhteistyö vuosina 2004 - 2009*. Helsinki: Ulkoasiainministeriö. [online] Available at <<http://formin.finland.fi/public/download.aspx?ID=69892&GUID={54C459AA-2B5E-454D-AA36-98E13D462212}>> [Accessed 12 January 2012]

- *In strengthening the visibility of Finland and taking into account increasing international mobility, it would be advisable to develop some cooperation in the field of family and child policy with Ukraine (cf. the cooperation of Sweden and the Netherlands with Ukraine). NB! For instance, in Italy, Ukrainian immigrants have a major role in informal child care as well as in many other informal social services.*
- *Due to the increased multiculturalism of Finnish society it would be in the interests of Finland to develop operational contacts with Russian family and child research as well as the corresponding policy-makers in the field of social affairs and health; contacts that would not depend on temporary projects alone. Russian-speakers are the largest ethnic minority in Finland and this minority is likely to grow.*
- *Finnish–Russian intermarriages are very common among the Russian-speaking minority in Finland, and comparative research as well as joint projects addressing diasporas and transnationality in the countries of transition would promote mutual understanding of social development in these countries as well as in Finland and give insights concerning family reunification as well as the global transformation of childhood and youth.*
- *In order to allow for a scientifically rewarding cooperation, the scope of cooperation with Russia should not be limited geographically just to North-West Russia. There should be a possibility to combine research and development work, while some coordination of scientific and other joint work should be promoted. UNICEF work gives a good example of how to develop practical work on the basis of high-level research.*
- *The field of social affairs and health in international cooperation should link more effectively with other fields of activity such as the economy (the main field for poverty reduction); employment (balancing participation in paid work and family life is of key importance for children); justice (equality and anti-discrimination are needed to safeguard children’s rights); migration policy (including labor migration and its impact on children); and environment (environmental health is most important for the future generation).*
- *In international cooperation that addresses child poverty and well-being there will always be room for the standard Nordic emphasis on e.g. prevention, development of maternal and child health services, open care and deinstitutionalization, and gender equality.*
- *The child and family work should be coordinated with the scientific and program work of the UN bodies UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA, which have the best knowledge available from the countries in transition.*

4.5. Child Poverty in Finland's Development Partner Countries

4.5.1. Nepal - Advancing children's rights with equity (Minna Sinkkonen)

Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world. It currently ranks 138 of 169 countries in the United Nations' Human Development Index (UNDP 2010). More than a third of Nepal's 12.6 million children live below the national poverty line.

During the last decade Nepal has made impressive progress towards poverty reduction in spite of the armed conflict and the painful process of socio-economic and political transition. ***The poverty rate has come down from 42 percent in 1995/96 to 25.4 percent in 2010.*** Significant improvements have been made in the fields of education, health and drinking water. Consequently the status of children has improved as shown by aggregated indicators. However serious disparities can be seen along the lines of geography, caste, ethnicity and household characteristics. ***The measure of inequality shown by the Gini coefficient has increased from 0.34 to 0.46 during the same period.***¹²⁰

To fully understand the situation and to tackle the disparities, a new approach has been adopted by UNICEF. The new approach of the UNICEF's ongoing Global Study on Child Poverty and disparities, launched in 2007, looks beyond the traditional methods of measuring poverty and emphasizes the multidimensional face of child poverty. The methodology applied in defining child poverty is based on that developed by Bristol University and adopted by UNICEF for its global study. The dimensions of poverty are interrelated and interdependent. If a child is deprived of one of his or her rights, it is likely to affect the child's ability to exercise other rights. The dimensions of poverty used in the methodology to measure child wellbeing are based on agreements reached at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, Denmark, 1995.

Hence deprivation of children has been measured using the following seven indicators (aspects): (i) shelter; (ii) sanitation; (iii) water; (iv) information; (v) food; (vi) education; and (vii) health. A child lacking in any one of the dimensions as defined by the Bristol indicators, is considered to be severely deprived. A child that is lacking in two or more of the severe deprivation indicators is considered to live in absolute poverty.

In Nepal, when measuring those factors that constitute a child's wellbeing, an even larger proportion of Nepal's children suffer from severe malnutrition (just under 50% of children are short for their age or stunted), have inadequate access to schooling (10% of children do not attend school), and are deprived of at least one of the seven basic human needs (69%). Two in every five children experience severe deprivation of at least two basic human needs and, by this measure, can be considered to be living in absolute poverty.

¹²⁰ Child Poverty and Disparities in Nepal. Towards escaping the cycle of poverty. Nepal Report 2010. UNICEF 2010)

The major findings of the Global Study in Nepal are:

Households with children experience more poverty.

Slower than average poverty reduction among households with two or more small children or six or more family members reflects structural factors that prevent these households from escaping poverty.

Child poverty is a highly asymmetrical condition. The most important determinants of poverty are household size, educational status of the household head, ethnicity/caste, residency, and dependency ratio. Children from large households, illiterate families, disadvantaged and Dalit households are likely to be the poorest, as are children from rural areas and hill regions, children from households with small landholdings, and from families with a high dependency. The incidence of child poverty is higher in families with illiterate household heads than in families with educated household heads. Child poverty is three times higher in rural households than in urban households. Children from households with small landholdings are twice as likely to be poor compared to children from households with large landholdings. The poverty incidence of children living in large families is three times higher than that of children living in small families. Fifty percent of children in families with a high dependency ratio (4+ children per adult) live in poverty. One in ten children lives in persistent poverty (defined as having a per capita consumption less than two-thirds of the requirement).

Two-thirds of Nepal's children are severely deprived and just under 40 percent live in absolute poverty. Applying the methodology developed by Bristol University, more than two-thirds of Nepalese children are severely deprived of at least one basic human need (shelter, sanitation, water, information, food, education, and health). Just under forty per cent of children experience severe deprivation of at least two basic human needs and, by this measure, can be considered to be living in absolute poverty.

The leading child deprivation in Nepal is lack of sanitation. Measured by the absence of a toilet of any kind, over half of Nepal's children (55.7% or 6.4 million) defecate in open spaces with obvious implications for the spread of diseases. Information and shelter follow sanitation as the next most common deprivations – each affecting close to a third of Nepal's children. Nepal is unlikely to meet the MDG 7 indicator on halving the proportion of the population without sustainable access to improved sanitation. Deprivation of basic services is generally highest among rural children.

The most frequent deprivations are of food and sanitation services, followed by deprivations of water and information services. More than three million children live in overcrowded conditions, with adverse effects on their health and resulting high levels of morbidity. More children from the mountain regions are deprived of food, health, and educational services than from other regions. Almost all children from the poorest wealth quintile, and nine in ten from marginalized households experience at least one severe deprivation, it being most frequently sanitation services.

Malnutrition is a severe problem with half of Nepal's children under the age of five being stunted and over two-thirds being underweight. Malnutrition is a serious obstacle to the survival, growth and development of children. Forty-one per cent of rural children are underweight (low

weight for age), 49 percent are stunted (low height for age), and 13 percent are wasted.¹²¹ More girls than boys suffer from malnutrition. Children from the western regions are the worst affected. Children of illiterate mothers and from households in the lowest wealth quintile suffer the most from malnutrition. This bodes ill for realizing the full intellectual potential of Nepal's children.

Nepal has witnessed significant improvements in health outcomes, but significant disparities exist and the overall health status remains low compared to other countries in the South Asian region. Nepal is likely to meet the MDG indicator on reducing under-five mortality by two-thirds. The under-five mortality rate (U5MR) is 65 deaths per 1000 live births, the infant mortality rate (IMR) is 51 deaths per 1000 live births, and the neonatal mortality rate is 31 deaths per 1000 live births.¹²² Declining child mortality rates indicate improved health services among other factors: only three percent of children experienced severe health deprivation in 2006. Nevertheless, significant disparities in access to health services and health outcomes exist between rich and poor, rural and urban, marginalized and non-marginalized groups, and less educated and more educated families. These disparities are reflected among children too. U5MR and IMR are highest in rural, mountain and mid-western regions. The education level of the parent, especially the mother, has a significant bearing on child health outcomes. Children with educated mothers and from households in the highest wealth quintile have the lowest U5MR and IMR and record better nutrition outcomes. Over 83 per cent of children are covered by all vaccines (including BCG, DPT3, polio3, and measles) (MOHP *et al* 2007). Slightly more boys (85 per cent) than girls (81 per cent) are covered, and coverage is lowest for children from rural, *terai* and hill areas, from the lowest wealth quintile, and with illiterate mothers.

Although progress towards universal primary education is encouraging, disparities exist. Education has been given a high priority since 1990 and public investment in the sector has increased significantly over the years. Nepal compares favorably with other South Asian countries in terms of the proportion of the national budget or GDP spent on education. The enrolment rate of primary-aged children has increased, and 90 percent are now in school.¹²³ Gender parity at both primary and secondary schools has improved (MOES 2007). Nepal is potentially likely to meet the MDG indicator on achieving universal primary education by 2015.

Nevertheless, many of the gains have been at primary level (rather than in early childhood and secondary education) and 9.5% children of school-going age have still not been to school. Worse, the gains even in primary education are inequitably distributed. Net enrolment rates for both primary and secondary schools are higher in urban areas than rural areas, and in the hills than in the *terai* and mountains (MOHP *et al* 2007). Net primary enrolment is lowest among children from the poorest wealth quintile and among Muslim and Dalit households. The mid- and far-western regions have the lowest net enrolment rates across the regions. Dropout and repetition rates are higher in rural areas than urban areas, suggesting problems with the quality of education, especially in rural schools. While public primary schools provide free tuition, other significant direct and indirect costs (e.g., books, clothes, transport) represent a major deterrent for poorer households to send their children to school.

¹²¹ Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) *et al* 2007

¹²² MOHP *et al* 2007

¹²³ Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) 2007

Child protection requires significant investment. A large number of children have been affected by the conflict and thousands of children are in institutionalized child care centers. The weak law enforcement system is unable to provide protection to the vulnerable in general and children in particular. Nepal lacks a child-sensitive judicial process and the high numbers of children sent to state children's homes for economic reasons due to the lack of a family support system places them at high risk of abuse and exploitation. There is also a severe lack of financial resources for child protection activities. What services exist are fragmented across an array of ministries and departments, while the outreach and scope of programs are weak. In particular, child labor, child trafficking and the over institutionalization of child care are major concerns.

Social protection system needs holistic attention. The social security system covers permanent and retired public servants and, to some extent, the old, the destitute, widows, and people with disabilities. The government is becoming more aware of the need for a comprehensive social protection program, and is gradually increasing investment in social protection schemes. A particular highlight in this regard is the introduction of a child grant announced in July 2009. Nepal's investment in social protection, however, is still low compared to other developing countries.¹²⁴

The UNICEF Global Study recommends the following strategies to Improve Child Poverty and Deprivations based on its findings:

Major data gaps on the situation of children need to be addressed. National surveys (such as the National Living Standard Survey (NLSS), the National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS), etc.) and the census should in the future make provisions to enable the analysis of child-disaggregated data. This will improve the capacity to monitor progress and make adjustments to policies and program in ways that will benefit children.

Effective public service delivery is crucial for reducing child poverty and deprivation. Service delivery is fragmented across sectors and monitoring of impact is virtually non-existent. This is particularly a problem with the multiple institutions and agencies responsible for planning, coordinating and implementing child-related services; putting in place a cadre of trained and professional child care workers is a vital need. This will enable the country to better address problems at the family and community level, moving away from the over-institutionalized approach that is currently practiced.

Focus on equity. Poverty and deprivations are high among children from marginalized groups, from less educated families, and those living in rural or remote regions. **Future policies and programs should pay specific attention to the plight of such children, and design and implement programs focusing on their needs.**

Resource mobilization. Since Nepal does not have adequate internal resources for speeding up progress in order to achieve all its MDGs, it will have to mobilize additional external resources. However, even currently available external resources are under-utilized. Therefore, the **implementation capacity of public sector institutions needs to be increased and strengthened.**

¹²⁴ For more information on the complex vulnerabilities in Nepal see recent Unicef Study : "Education and Emergencies in South Asia. Reducing the Risks Facing Vulnerable Children", 2009

Nutrition. Children from marginalized groups and poor families are under-nourished, and disparities between rich and poor have widened. Nutrition programs need to address children from all social and economic sectors, given its widespread prevalence. The priority component of nutrition programs should be to improve infant and young children feeding practices. Targeted nutrition programs for children from poor families, and supplementary food for mothers and children are also needed. Extra attention needs to be given to maternal nutrition before and during pregnancy.

Health, water and sanitation. Major causes of child morbidity are bad sanitation and unsafe drinking water, leading to a high incidence of diarrhea, which further exacerbates child malnutrition. **Provision of safe sanitation facilities should be made a national development priority, especially as it is a cost effective way to improve health and nutrition among children.** The public health delivery system needs to be made more pro-poor, as it is the poor that largely rely on public health institutions for their health services. Strengthening the public health system requires additional financial resources as well as improvements in management. The present policy of decentralization of health services by devolving the management authority of local health institutions to local communities is a step in the right direction. Ensuring the provision of free public health care and increasing the use of public health services by the poor must be emphasized. More attention needs to be given to capacity-building within local management bodies. This is an area where partnerships between public authorities and INGOs working in the sector can be forged.

Education: The present incentive scheme targeted at children left out of the schooling system (remote regions, girls, marginalized groups and children living with disabilities) is appropriate, but its implementation needs to be more effective. The provision of incentive scheme guidelines to schools will help to address the problem faced by local school management in the distribution of incentives on account of pressure from parents of children from non-poor marginal groups. Greater attention needs to be given to improving the quality and relevance of school education. This will require an assurance of high quality teaching standards, a more equitable distribution of well-trained teachers as well as increasing the number of teachers commensurate with increased enrolment, closer supervisory support for teachers, and curriculum reform. There should also be increased support to the early childhood and development (ECD) program, as this helps to improve young children's readiness for primary school and subsequent gains therefrom. Despite mixed signals from government, the present policy of allowing private schools should be continued as the government is not in a position to provide education for all children who are currently attending private schools. A more prudent strategy would be to devote additional public resources to improving the quality of public education.

Child protection. The present process of preparing a new Child Rights Act is an excellent opportunity to strengthen the rights of the child in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Concomitantly, **the law enforcement capacity of government institutions should be strengthened, and awareness programs to educate the general public about child rights should be continued.** Juvenile justice benches need to be more child sensitive through, for instance, developing a diversion mechanism for juvenile offenders and a child-sensitive justice procedure for child victims and witnesses. This is where partnership with INGOs could be fruitful. District Child Welfare Boards (DCWB) or equivalent bodies could play a crucial role in intercepting

and addressing child-related issues at subnational level if such structures were made more active and functional in relation to addressing children's rights rather than simply focusing on child welfare. The capacity of local bodies should be strengthened to maintain a sex-disaggregated database of children, including the incidence of violence against children at the local level. The child protection strategy should be based on a more systemic approach to ensure policies, legislation, justice systems and professional child protection services at all levels of society—family, community, school and so on—are strengthened and integrated. **The overly institutionalized approach to caring for children in difficult circumstances requires urgent review so that care provided by families and communities is offered as the first option.**

Social protection: Nepal should consider consolidating various social protection measures as part of developing a comprehensive social protection policy. A comprehensive review of existing social protection measures would help to identify needed actions in capacity and system building and to inform future policies and programs. The country's poverty reduction strategy is generally appropriate but must place stronger emphasis on issues relating to poor families with children. **The recently introduced Child Grant should be expanded and revisions in both the old age pension and single women allowance programs should be considered.**

These recommendations are following the recent research on child poverty. There is growing evidence from several developing countries that social protection programs can effectively increase the nutritional, health and education status of children and reduce their risk of abuse and exploitation¹²⁵ (Joint Statement on Advancing Child Sensitive Social Protection, DFID et.al, June 2009). Social protection programs can also accelerate progress toward the MDGs by facilitating access to essential services and decent living standards. There is evidence on the breadth and effectiveness of social protection programs in promoting development, enhancing equity and delivering results for vulnerable children, women and households:¹²⁶

- Children compose more than one-third of the population in most developing countries – particularly in the poorest – and tend to be over-represented among the poor within countries. Accordingly, effective development strategies must be informed by an understanding of the patterns of children's poverty and vulnerability.
- Child sensitive social protection strategies can address the chronic poverty, social exclusion and external shocks that can irreversibly affect children's lifetime capacities and opportunities.

By virtue of their age and status in society, children are practically and legally less able to claim their rights without the strong support that social protection strategies can offer.

- Child sensitive social protection can address the risk of exclusion that is intensified for children in marginalized communities and for those who are additionally excluded due to gender, disability, HIV and AIDS and other factors such as harmful socio-cultural norms that can marginalize children and leave them vulnerable.

¹²⁵ Joint Statement on Advancing Child Sensitive Social Protection, DFID et.al, June 2009

¹²⁶ Social Protection: Accelerating the MDGs with Equity, Social and Economic Policy Working Briefs, August 2010, UNICEF Policy and Practice.

Concretely, child-sensitive social protection should focus on aspects of well-being that include: providing adequate child and maternal nutrition; access to quality basic services for all, complemented by social inclusion policies and affirmative action to ensure that the poorest and most marginalized have equal quality access as all other groups in society; supporting families and caregivers in their childcare role, including increasing the time available within the household; addressing gender inequality; preventing discrimination and child abuse in and outside the home; eliminating child labor; increasing caregivers' access to incomes for care services, or employment in the labor market; and preparing adolescents for their own livelihoods, taking account of their role as current and future workers and parents.¹²⁷ Countries that implement holistic policies that address the multidimensionality of child poverty are likely to be more successful in ***advancing children's rights with equity***.

Finland could participate and support Child Sensitive Social Protection operations also through our bilateral system and not only through NGO funding.

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5. Timo Voipio: Social Protection for All- An agenda for Pro-Child Growth and Child Rights. Child Poverty Insights. January 2011. Social and Economic Policy. UNICEF Policy and Practice

4.5.2. Case Zambia: Social Security to Cut Off the Intergenerational Chain of Poverty

4.5.2.1. Background

Zambia's **population** is 13 million and the growth rate is 3.1%. That is the 11th highest in the world. Were this growth rate to continue, it would lead to a doubling of the Zambian population in 23 years. A high total fertility rate (TFR) of 5.7 children per woman ranks Zambia among the 10 countries with highest expected number of children per woman. Infant mortality is 62 per 1000 and under five mortality is 141 per 1000. Life expectancy at birth is 46 years.¹²⁸ It has come down from 51 years in 1990 as a consequence of the AIDS epidemics.

Half of the population is under the age of 16.5 years (the median). Only the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mali, Niger and Uganda have more youthful populations as measured by median

¹²⁷ Timo Voipio: Social Protection for All- An agenda for Pro-Child Growth and Child Rights. Child Poverty Insights. January 2011. Social and Economic Policy. UNICEF Policy and Practice.

¹²⁸ UNICEF Zambia site http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/zambia_1391.html

age. These figures paint a picture highlighting the central importance of childhood and youth issues to the country's present situation and its future.

Economic growth in Zambia has been rapid.¹²⁹ During the first half of the 2000s, growth in real terms has averaged 4.9% but due to high population growth of around 3%, the per capita growth was below 2%.¹³⁰ The most recent GDP growth figure in 2010 was a spectacular 6.8%. Zambia has benefited from investment by the emerging economies, the BRICS¹³¹ countries. The rapid growth has not, however, benefited the various population groups evenly. Zambia is relatively highly urbanized (36%) and economic growth is benefiting the urban populations. Rural areas have been left behind while climate change is making situation worse in rural areas year by year. In 2006 the income poverty rate (below 1.25USD/day) was 64% for the whole population but in rural areas it was some 89% compared to some 30% in urban areas. Since the end of the 1990s, the urban poverty rate has been falling while the rural poverty has stayed at about the same level. While there has been a decrease in poverty levels during the last 10 years, the number of poor people has been growing steadily between 1991 and 2006, mainly due to the rising number of rural poor. Regional disparities are also wide.

Inequality of incomes, as measured by the Gini Index, has been increasing since 2004, from 0.50 to 0.60. Zambia is one of the most unequal countries if measured by income disparities. Only in Namibia, South Africa, Botswana and Brazil is inequality higher.

Agriculture engages 86% of the labor force but productivity is low and its contribution to the GDP is only 19.7%. The formal economy was strengthened by the privatization of the copper mines in the 1990s, but Zambia fell into the debt crisis. In 2005 it benefited from the HIPC initiative and its debt relief. The economy remains vulnerable to fluctuations in copper prices.

Copper has also been a key element in the country's social services and security. The nationalization of copper mines in 1969 was followed by a period of rule by the State Mining Company ZCCM. It was operating a "cradle-to-grave" corporate social responsibility welfare policy. It provided a wide range of social services and amenities too all people residing in the mining communities. Its provisions included health care, schools, water, electricity, recreational facilities etc. Mines and a number of other state-owned enterprises were again privatized in the 1990s as a response to the unsuccessful economic policy and the changing global context. The country was deeply in debt, inflation was running at over 100% and shortages of basic commodities were chronic. The privatization orchestrated by the World Bank and the IMF was one of the most thorough in the world. After privatization the social services previously run by state-owned companies largely withered while public sector capacity was not able to replace them. The new foreign investors were not doing so either. A fragmented system emerged with low coverage of quality services to selected groups in the formal economy and a public sector of questionable quality. Between 1991 and 2000, employment in mining fell to less than half of its 1991 level. After privatization some new employment was created but it was accompanied by falling quality of employment as work became more casualized.

¹²⁹ <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2359.htm>

¹³⁰ see e.g. http://www.eoearth.org/article/Economic_growth

¹³¹ BRICS= Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa

The Human Development Index (HDI) rank of Zambia is 165 and the Human Poverty Index rank is 13, indicating that Zambia is one of the poorest and most deprived countries. Its HDI has been rising during the first decade of the Millennium. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) of the UNDP reveals that the most pressing dimensions of poverty and deprivation are living standard components: electricity, cooking fuel, sanitation, housing (mud floor), drinking water, and, of the health components, child mortality.¹³² Rural areas are more deprived by all indicators.

4.5.2.2. The challenge of poverty

Extreme poverty has decreased from 58% in 1990 to 51% in 2006.¹³³ In rural areas extreme poverty is 67% while in urban areas it is 20%. The population groups that are particularly vulnerable to extreme poverty are women, children, older persons, persons living with HIV/AIDS, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

Children and women are overrepresented in the poorest households. Some 20% of households are headed by a woman and 82% of these households are severely poor while in the population as a whole the rate is 64%. Age also increases the incidence of poverty.

Nearly one third of children from the ages 15-18 have lost either one or both parents, the second highest number in Africa. Only in Zimbabwe is the situation more severe. Orphanhood exposes the child to poverty and deprivation, including violence, abuse and trafficking.

The poverty gap ratio has declined from 62.2% to 34% between 1991 and 2006. This indicates that the severity of poverty has declined. The UNDP report of 2009¹³⁴ concludes that with the right policies and investments the incidence of poverty can be reduced rapidly.

Hunger and difficulties in accessing adequate food is a serious challenge in Zambia. Food insecurity (poor availability, access and utilization) affects most food-crop farmers (76% of households). The most severely affected are households that are headed by a woman, an elderly person, or in which the dependency ratio is high, and which depend on small-scale agriculture. Further, the lack of education of mothers in the household increases the risks. HIV in the family creates further constraints to labor input and affects production, storage and preparation of adequate food.¹³⁵

¹³² <http://www.ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Zambia-OPHI-CountryBrief-2011.pdf?cda6c1>

¹³³ Sepulveda report

¹³⁴ MDG outcome figures of this chapter are from the UNDP MDGs website for Zambia http://www.undp.org.zm/index.php?view=article&catid=2%3Adevelopment-in-zambia&id=37%3Amdgs&tmpl=component&print=1&page=&option=com_content&Itemid=10 and the UNDP MDG Progress Report 2011. Zambia http://www.undp.org.zm/joomla/attachments/052_compressed%201.pdf

¹³⁵ UNICEF: (2008) Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Zambia http://www.unicef.org/sitan/files/UNICEF_GRZ_Situation_Analysis_2008.pdf

The prevalence of underweight children decreased from 25% to 14%. However, stunting remains a persistent problem. UNDP recommends more attention to appropriate nutrition, health and education strategies targeted to pregnant women and children in their first three years.

The seasonality of food insecurity, labor demand and disease creates serious risks and difficulties for families. Food supply peaks around the end of rains in March -April. Shortages become serious between October and March. The labor demand is highest November–January when children’s contribution is also needed – at a time when food supply is low. The increasing disease burden adds to the hardship of the lean season. This is just the time when demand for cash is highest because of the need to buy additional food, to pay school expenses and to meet the seasonally rising health care costs.¹³⁶

UNICEF describes **three main strategies that families use to cope with the insecurity** and the periodic shocks.

Making more intensive use of existing livelihood activities. When money is not available to increase supply of capital and labor, families may turn to selling their assets, to increase women and child labor which decreases the time available for school and household management.

Turning to more productive activities. When other resources are not available, alternative economic activities requires an increased input of woman and child labor, sometimes even sending them to work on the streets.

Reducing consumption e.g. of food with harmful effects on the health of children.

UNDP MDG Report (2011) enumerates the further successes and remaining challenges as follows:

Net enrolment of children in primary schools has increased from 80% to 100% between 1991 and 2009. This achievement has resulted from increased construction of schools and the abolition of school fees in 2002. Gender parity in education has improved from .90 in 1990 to .96 in 2009. In secondary schools it decreased from .92 in 1990 to .88 by the year 2009.

Infant and child mortality has decreased but is still unacceptably high. *In order to achieve the goal of reducing child mortality, Zambia needs to significantly address the health and safety of mothers. Attention over the coming four years must be given to child marriages of girls, to reproductive health and the availability of contraception and to the reduction of the number of women dying due to complications during pregnancy, child birth and the postpartum period.*

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is affecting children directly and indirectly. *The national HIV prevalence rate among adults (15-49 years) declined from 15.6% in 2002 to 14.3% in 2007. The target, which is to keep prevalence below 15.6%, has been met. It must be noted that women in Zambia have a higher prevalence rate of 16.1% compared to men (12.3%), and the urban population has rates are twice as high as the rural population (19.7% versus 10.3%).*

¹³⁶ UNICEF: (2008) Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Zambia
http://www.unicef.org/sitan/files/UNICEF_GRZ_Situation_Analysis_2008.pdf 6-7

With regards to sustainable access to drinking water and sanitation, the proportion of households without access to a clean water source was reduced from 51% in 1990 to 40% in 2006. *More efforts in this direction to reach the target of 25.5% is recommended, enabled through access to boreholes replacing old wells in rural settings and greater access to treated municipal water in peri-urban areas.* The share of the population without access to improved sanitation grew from 26% in 1991 to 36.1% in 2006.

The incidence of extreme poverty is more frequent in rural areas and there are large differences between provinces. It is more common in female headed households (57%) than in male headed households (49%). Households headed by older people are also more often poor. Higher education of the household head offers some security from extreme poverty (9%).

Half of Zambian population living in extreme poverty are children.¹³⁷ This is partly due to the high proportion of orphans among children (20%). Most orphaned children have lost their parents to HIV/AIDS.

Child labor is common: 47% of children aged between 7-14 are economically active (2005) which interferes with their school. Birth registration is not systematic, only 14% of children under the age of five have a birth certificate. The independent expert Sepúlveda concluded that children should be at the centre of any poverty reduction strategy. She also recommended the scaling up of social cash transfer schemes through the establishment of a child grant.¹³⁸

UNDP recommends that economic growth policies should be accompanied by policies to create jobs, economic inclusion, social empowerment and investment in health and education.¹³⁹ More concretely the following policy and investment choices were recommended:

1. Commercialization of small scale agriculture and diversification of the rural economy;
2. Implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies;
3. An institutionalized social security system to protect the most vulnerable; and
4. More accessible and efficient service delivery that reaches the poorest.

The interdependence of risk factors and the multidimensional vulnerability of children - which is closely connected with the vulnerability of women - dictates **an integrated approach to the provision of basic social security and essential services. UNICEF proposes a "basket of basic services for children and their families necessary for equitable national development"**

Basket of Basic Services for Children and their Families Necessary for Equitable National Development (UNICEF)¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ UNCHR (2009) Report of independent expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona Mission to Zambia (20 to 28 August 2009) A/HRC/14/31/Add.1 http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/EPoverty/A.HRC.14.31.Add.1_ZAMBIA.pdf

¹³⁸ UNCHR ibid p. 8

¹³⁹ UNDP MDG Report for Zambia http://www.undp.org.zm/joomla/attachments/052_compressed%201.pdf

Social Protection

Provide security against extreme vulnerability, and violence, especially female headed households, OVCs and elderly, and disabled

Food Security

Availability, access, use of nutritious food for children and adults, wherever and whenever needed for a healthy productive life

Education

Early childhood development, equitable access, free basic compulsory education, improved retention and completion for boys and girls

Water and Sanitation

Equitable provision of adequate quantity and quality water and sanitation in rural and urban areas

Health

Equitable access to health facilities as close to the family as possible (for women and children)

Insecurity and vulnerability and lack of protection are crucial issues in the Zambian context, which create and maintain the poverty and deprivation of children. In the following we look closer at the social protection issue. A major and innovative joint initiative was launched last year by DFID, UNICEF, Irish Aida and Finland to extend basic social protection in Zambia.

4.5.2.3. Extending the Rights to Social Protection to All

In 2004 the Zambian Ministry for Community Development in cooperation with the German Technical Assistance Agency GTZ launched a **social protection pilot in Kalomo district to provide unconditional cash transfers to the poorest households**. The purpose was to reduce extreme poverty and hunger. The initial grant was an equivalent of 6 USD per month. It was estimated to cover the cost of one meal a day. It was given to households headed by the elderly and caring for orphaned and vulnerable children. The purpose was to generate information on the costs and benefits of cash transfer schemes as a component of social protection in Zambia. It was targeted to cover all *critically poor* households and 20% of the *poor* households. There were 1027 households involved, altogether comprising 3856 individuals. The encouraging results led to the extension of the program to a further four districts.

The Fifth National Development Plan 2007-11 included a plan for social protection. The plan acknowledged the need for complementing growth strategies with social protection. Social protection was understood to be "a way to achieve economic growth, access to social services, income equity and fulfillment of human rights." The Independent expert on human rights and extreme poverty Magdalena Sepulveda welcomed the emphasis on social protection but noted that the plan targeted only the poorest 20% and was seriously underfunded. Additionally, the

¹⁴⁰ UNICEF: (2008) Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Zambia
http://www.unicef.org/sitan/files/UNICEF_GRZ_Situation_Analysis_2008.pdf p59

budget was cut from 4.2% of the total budget in 2008 to 2.5% of the budget in 2009. She reminded that such a cut is not in line with the progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights established by the Covenant. Furthermore she reminded of "the importance of translating international human rights obligations on the realization of the rights to social security and an adequate standard of living into practice by substantially increasing public funding in this crucial area."¹⁴¹

In Zambia there are several social assistance schemes aimed at benefiting children, among others.

- Food security pack (2000-) provides small scale farmers with material and technical assistance to reduce their vulnerability.
- School feeding programme (2003-) sponsored by the World Food Programme aims at improving the nutrition of school age children and also to increase attendance rates. Volunteers were used in the preparation and distribution, a solution that is not sustainable.
- Food voucher schemes initially around Lusaka to address the impact of the 2009 crisis. The voucher was conditional on visiting a health centre. The idea was to address both health and nutrition concerns.

These schemes were all limited, targeting was difficult, people were unaware of the benefits and many were unable to participate due to a lack of identity documents. Systematic data on the functioning, coverage, costs and impacts were not collected either.

The expert made her evaluation of the five piloted Social Cash Transfer Schemes (SCTs). She noted that these schemes had a positive impact on the enjoyment of the right to an adequate standard of living of the beneficiaries.

From the perspective of the rights and best interest of the child, the following recommendations were made. These are valid in other contexts, as well:

"In the child grants scheme, children should not merely be seen as a target population but as the subjects of rights, and any evaluation scheme must be adequately child focused. In addition [to] child protection mechanisms, efforts must be incorporated into the scheme... the scheme can be specifically designed to combat child labor..."

"Special attention should be paid to particularly vulnerable groups of children, such as orphans, street children, children with disabilities and child-headed households, which are detached from adult-headed households, They [should] just not be excluded from the scheme."

She also recommended that specific additional attention to be given to the coverage, coordination and consolidation with other schemes, to targeting and the principle of non-discrimination, to effective management, to the meaningful participation of beneficiaries, to accountability, to complaint mechanisms and to information access.

¹⁴¹ The Sepulveda Report http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/EPoverty/A.HRC.14.31.Add.1_ZAMBIA.pdf

4.5.2.4. Donor support to *Zambian Basic Social Security Program*¹⁴²

The pilot social security program of Kolomo that started in 2004 was followed by the extension Social Cash Transfer (SCT) program in five districts in 2007. This extension was supported by UNICEF and DIFID. Ireland and Finland joined the donors in 2009. The Ministry of Community Development and Mother and Child Health (MCDMCH) is expanding the program from 5 to 15 districts and is also widening its scope. There are now three types of SCTs: Social Assistance, Child Grant and the non-contributory Social Pension. The amounts are small but they are *regular*. **The purpose is to empower women, improve food security of children, living environments and learning results - and to elevate hope for a better future.**

Social assistance:

The Community Welfare Assistance Committee (CWAC) of the village targets the grant to the poorest 10% of households. These are usually households that have lost the parent generation to HIV/AIDS and are now headed by the grandmother. The Pay Point Manager is usually the Principal or a teacher of the village school.

Child Allowance:

Granted to all mothers who have one or more children under 5. Mothers of children with disabilities get a double amount until the child reaches 14 years. The Mother and Child Clinic nurse administers the grant.

Social Old Age Pension. All men and women over 65 are eligible to the grant (about 7 euro per month)

The beneficiaries are mothers caring for their children aged under 5 and grandmothers taking care of their HIV/AIDS orphaned grandchildren. Children with disabilities receive twice the amount and the allowance continues until they reach 14 years of age.

The DFID is committed to the program for 10 years. For the time being Finland has a preliminary funding decision for 3 years. Finland's support is targeted to the development of the Management Information System and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) component of the program. The Zambian Government will expand the Program to all the 55 districts and increase its funding to 50% of the total costs by 2017.

On the side of the SCT pilots, there has been a Public Welfare Assistance Scheme. In all districts there have been one or two trained social workers, although with very small budgets. They have been able to provide basic social services to the poorest and most deprived citizens, such as the elderly, people with disabilities, people needing legal assistance and people who fallen victim of rape or crimes. The new inputs by donors make it possible to enhance the work of the network of social workers and to provide them with peer support, training and inspiration.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Based on the Mission Report by Timo Voipio, Senior Global Social Policy Advisor of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. HELM438-7 (17.10.2011)

¹⁴³ Finland was involved in the capacity building of the Directorate of Social Services of the Ministry for Health and Social Services in 1995-2000. Social Workers commended the peer support and training components to have elevated their status, professional identity and motivation. Also in Namibia there was and is a Social Cash Transfer system.

The first annual review of the STC in October 2011 found predominantly well-functioning operations and satisfaction by both participants and beneficiaries.

Feedback from beneficiaries

- *“This is by far the best program in the country”*
- *“It puts money directly in people’s pockets”*
- *“This program has ripple effects: it empowers women, it elevates them”*
- *“People are happier, living standards have changed, children are healthier”*

The mothers elaborated that the grant money was used for better food, for clothes, school uniforms, medicines, to acquire seeds, to buy chicken and pigs, to buy maize and sugar for further trading on the markets and to hire a work force during the busy season.

The evaluation team analyzed the experience, resulting in the following conclusions:

Strengths

- Strong and well-capacitated delivery
- Evidence-based learning approach
- Emerging rights-based mechanisms
- Flexible protective/promotive tool
- Strong community mobilization
- Effective gender focus: women collect benefits and are empowered

Weaknesses

- Bottlenecks to new registration: forms, communications, resource constraints
- Delivery systems are manual, paper-based and represent a fiduciary risk; beneficiaries forfeit benefits if they are not able to pick up the payment on time
- Women’s participation in CWACs and formal structures appears to be limited
- Little linkages to livelihoods

Threats

- Resource constraints
- Tensions with control group: fairness concerns may undermine social cohesion
- Volunteer model may face sustainability challenges—the role for CWACs may require a clearer mandate and support

Opportunities

- Consolidate resources or phase delivery to ensure full coverage
- Improve gender empowerment at district and local level (CWACs/DWACs)
- Electronic payment system offers substantial benefits, including better social protection, better risk management and better potential for livelihoods links

The program will be monitored carefully and the baseline study and monitoring framework has been coordinated with the national Living Conditions Monitoring Survey LCMS and the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS).

Key messages:

Social protection systems and equal access to basic security and essential services have not received adequate consideration in development frameworks. This constitutes a wrong choice by donors and partner governments.

First, equal access to basic social security and essential services are rights endorsed by all human rights legal instruments, including the CRC. Both donors and partners have committed themselves to these global agreements and should adhere to them.

Secondly, social protection has been shown to be an effective instrument for preventing poverty and for lifting people from poverty. Particularly children suffer from inadequacy of basic security and service systems. The negative impacts of a lack of access to basic security and services often impact the whole life course of the child. Inequality and discrimination add to the risks of life time deprivation and exclusion.

Thirdly, social protection systems are an essential element of legitimate governance and of an orderly society and their adequate functioning improve social sustainability and social cohesion.

Fourthly, recent studies e.g. by ILO, have shown that even low income countries can afford the gradual development of a "social protection floor". Donor support is often needed to initialize the process but donors must make a longer term commitment to ensure a sustainable take-off that the Government can support and develop in the long run.

Finally, neither donors nor partner countries can afford neglecting the development of social protection systems.

Key resources

UNICEF (2008): Zambia - Situation analysis of women and children
http://www.unicef.org/sitan/files/UNICEF_GRZ_Situation_Analysis_2008.pdf

UNDP MDG Progress Report 2011. Zambia
http://www.undp.org.zm/joomla/attachments/052_compressed%201.pdf

Sepulveda Report: **UNCHR (2009) Report of independent expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona Mission to Zambia (20 to 28 August 2009) A/HRC/14/31/Add.1**

Mission Report by Timo Voipio, Senior Global Social Policy Advisor of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. HELM438-7 (17.10.2011)

4.6. Special Concerns

4.6.1. Child Protection

The Convention on the Rights of the Child established that the child must be protected from economic exploitation and harmful work, from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse, from physical or mental violence as well as from separation from their family against his/her will. The Optional protocols refine further prohibition of children against sale, prostitution and exploitation of children for pornography purposes. The second optional protocol covers issues of children in armed conflict.

Child protection as a concept is multidimensional and tends to have different meanings in various contexts. It can refer generally to protection of children in all respects. In other contexts it refers only to child protection services or systems. The Finnish legislation covers both of these aspects: It refers to (a) preventive child protection and (b) child and family centered protective case work. The preventive functions imply generally the securing of the right of the child to a secure living environments, balanced development and special protection. The child and family centered case work covers then the special support and interventions.¹⁴⁴ **UNICEF uses the term to refer to prevention and response to violence, exploitation and the abuse of children.** This includes commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labor, and harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation and child marriage.¹⁴⁵

Violations of the child's right to protection are human rights violations with serious developmental consequences for child survival and development. According to UNICEF The consequences may include "risk of death, poor physical and mental health, HIV/AIDS infection, educational problems, displacement, homelessness, vagrancy and poor parenting skills later in life."

Conditions of poverty and inequality increase the risks of children to be abused and exploited. All child protection issues are not always related to poverty. Violations of the right of the child to protection take place in wealthy settings as well. In any case, children subject to poor protection are deprived of their rights and opportunities for a balanced and full development of their potential. Furthermore, children deprived of their right to protection have a higher risk of falling into poverty and passing this risks to the next generation. On the macro level, failing to protect children slows down progress towards the MDGs.

¹⁴⁴ See Finnish legislation concerning children http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/What_is_Child_Protection.pdf And Lastensuojelun käsikirja. Sosiaaliportti website (Finnish only) http://www.sosiaaliportti.fi/fi-fi/lastensuojelunkasikirja/mita_on_lastensuojelu/

¹⁴⁵ UNICEF's Child Protection Information Sheets http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/What_is_Child_Protection.pdf and more detailed information http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Child_Protection_Information_Sheets.pdf

In the foreword to the UNICEF Report Card No 8 on Child Protection (2009)¹⁴⁶ UNICEF Executive Director Ann M. Veneman stated:

"Effective child protection systems help ensure that vulnerable children and families have access to school, health care, social welfare, social protection, justice and other essential services. These systems can contribute to breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty and exploitation, thus contributing to achieving the MDGs."

UNICEF designed and adopted a "**systemic approach to child protection** in 2008.¹⁴⁷ It helps to bring an overall coherence to the various national contexts and to the details of national arrangements. Child protection systems are a component in social protection that nevertheless extend beyond its traditional boundaries.

"Child protection systems comprise the set of laws, policies, regulations and services needed across all social sectors — especially social welfare, education, health, security and justice — to support prevention and response to protection related risks".

Preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and the abuse of children is essential for realizing the rights of the child to survival, development and well-being, says UNICEF. The goals of child protection requires more than just a formal national system:

*The vision and approach of UNICEF is to create a protective environment, where girls and boys are free from violence, exploitation, and unnecessary separation from family; and where laws, services, behaviors and practices minimize children's vulnerability, address known risk factors, and strengthen children's own resilience. This approach is human rights-based, and emphasizes prevention as well as the accountability of governments.*¹⁴⁸

The UNICEF strategic concept of **Protective Environment** consists of two clusters of prerequisites:

- 1) **The child protection system:** The Governmental commitments, legislation and services monitoring, and capacity building that constitute the national child protection system.
- 2) **Social change** that involves open dialogue, social norms, engagement of children themselves with support by civil society

UNICEF's strategy makes it clear that focusing on systems development as such is not enough. **The whole community and society must become involved in the cause of protecting children.**

¹⁴⁶ UNICEF Report Card No 8 on Child Protection (2009) http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_50921.html

¹⁴⁷ http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/CP_Strategy_English.pdf
and http://www.iattcaba.org/IATT-theme/documents/Adapting_a_Systems_Approach_to_Child_Protection.pdf

¹⁴⁸ http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/CP_Strategy_English.pdf

Furthermore, children themselves must have a channel to be engaged and to strengthen their own resilience and capacity.

UNICEF's strategy builds on five approaches for building a comprehensive protective environment for children:

1. Improving child protection systems
2. Promoting social change
3. Enhancing child protection in emergencies
4. Partnering for greater impact
5. Building evidence

In the cause of developing comprehensive protective environments for children, UNICEF calls for partnerships and involvement by UN agencies, national governments, civil society, the private sector and bilateral and multilateral organizations.

The UNICEF report on child protection 2009¹⁴⁹ describes the current global challenges in child protection. It provides follow-up data on birth registration, violence against children, child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), child labor, sexual exploitation and abuse of children, child trafficking, migration, children with disabilities, children without parental care, children in justice systems, children in emergencies, landmines, explosive remnants of war and small arms.

Data on the challenges of child protection have long been difficult to compile. One of the reasons has been the lack of a unified definition for the concept. This report cannot cover the wide field of child protection challenges. In this item, only a sample of poverty-related issues are pointed out. Information is taken from UNICEF Report Card no 8.

Birth registration

A lack of official identity is both a consequence of the Family's poverty and exclusion and a cause factor that renders the child at risk of becoming excluded from societal services and full membership. UNICEF reports that some 51 million children born in 2007 were unregistered. One in four developing countries for which data are available had registration rates lower than 50%. Only one third of children in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa were registered. Registration rates were less than 10% in Somalia, Liberia, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Chad, Zambia and Bangladesh. In Somalia only 3% were registered. There are disparities between regions and ethnic groups.

Violence against children is not clearly related to poverty but rather to different cultural traditions. The 2006 UN Study on Violence Against Children stated that every year some estimated 275 million children are witnessing domestic violence, that some 126 million children face work exploitation under hazardous conditions and 1.2 million children are victims of child trafficking. "No violence against children is justifiable; all violence against children is preventable".¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ [http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/Progress_for_Children-No.8_EN_081309\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/Progress_for_Children-No.8_EN_081309(1).pdf)

¹⁵⁰ See www.unviolencestudy.org

Child marriage

In developing countries more than one third of women in the age group 20–24 reported that they were married before the age 18. Half of them live in South Asia, where the 'child marriage rate' was 46%. Over 60% of women were married as children in Central African Republic, Guinea, Bangladesh, Mali, Chad and Niger. **Marrying girls as children is clearly related to household poverty.** Based on data from 75 countries it can be seen that in the poorest quintile of households the rate was 57% and in the richest quintile 16%. While boys have a much lower risk of being married as children, about one boy in six are married as children in Nepal. Child marriage implies often adolescent pregnancies with high health risks, removal from school, powerlessness, risk of domestic violence, higher vulnerability to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Sometimes child marriage is connected with bonded labor and/or trafficking.

Child labor

The concept of child labor has been unclear and consequently the validity and comparability of data has been poor. The ILO Resolution II at the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 2008 created the first-ever international standards for the statistical measurement of child labor. It covers both 'child employment' and unpaid 'household services'.¹⁵¹

Child labor covers:

- 1) The worst forms of child labor, including slavery; prostitution and pornography; illicit activities; and work likely to harm children's health, safety, or morals, as defined in ILO Convention No. 182.*
- 2) Employment below the minimum age of 15, as established in ILO Convention No. 138.*
- 3) Hazardous unpaid household services, including household chores performed for long hours, in an unhealthy environment, in dangerous locations, and involving unsafe equipment or heavy loads.*

Some 150 million children between 5-14 years of age are working. Child labor is most common in sub-Saharan Africa where one child in three is engaged in child labor. Child labor is a consequence of poverty. It also compromises a child's education and thus increases the risk of poverty over the whole life cycle. Girls shoulder a triple burden: work, school, and domestic work, which has a serious negative impact on their school performance.

¹⁵¹ See UNICEF http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Progress_for_Children-No.8_EN_081309.pdf p. 16 and ILO (2008): Report III - Child labour statistics - 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, Geneva, 24 November - 5 December 2008
http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/meetings-and-events/international-conference-of-labour-statisticians/WCMS_099577/lang--en/index.htm

Child trafficking

Children are traded for a variety of purposes such as forced labor, prostitution, forced marriage, domestic work, begging, armed groups and drug gangs. It is estimated that some 600 000–800 000 people are trafficked across borders annually. **Child trafficking is strongly related to poverty and inequality between population groups and countries.**

Children without parental care¹⁵²

Vulnerability to the loss of the right to parental care is related to poverty. One of the background factors for loss of parents is AIDS. Poverty is also a background factor for the placement of children in institutions. UNICEF estimates that about 2 million children are living in institutional care. Institutionalization has also cultural and policy-based roots. In Central and Eastern Europe countries and in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) countries there is a history of institutionalization. While this tradition has been partly dismantled, the rate is still much higher than in other country groupings.

Children, emergencies and conflict

One billion children live in countries affected by armed conflicts. In 2006, 18.1 million children lived in displaced populations, including 5.8 million as refugees and 8.8 million in internal displacement.

The likelihood of poverty and under nutrition, poor health and lack of education¹⁵³ is higher in conflict-affected countries. Children are also more vulnerable to the impacts of natural disasters.

4.6.2. Rights of Children with Disabilities

There is a two-way relationship between disability and poverty. Some risk factors of disability are directly related to poverty. These include malnutrition, risk of some disabling infectious diseases (e.g. TB, Malaria, HIV/AIDS, polio), unsafe living environments and violence, including wars. The recent World Report on Disability by the WHO and World Bank (2011) estimates that the prevalence of moderate or severe disability is 15% for the population as a whole, while for children the rate was 5.1% and for people aged over 15 it was 19.4%.¹⁵⁴ The figures on disability prevalence are, however, very sensitive to the definitions used.

In all countries disability increases the likelihood of being or becoming poor. For children with disabilities the disadvantage imposed on them starts in childhood. Some are excluded even from

¹⁵² See Draft UN Guidelines for the Appropriate Use and Conditions of Alternative Care for Children will be adopted in 2009, <http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=13743&flag=report>

¹⁵³ The UN CRC Committee devoted its most recent Day of General Discussion in September 2008 to "education in emergencies" (www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/discussion2008.htm)

¹⁵⁴ WHO and World Bank (2011): World Report on Disability, p.29
http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2011/9789240685215_eng.pdf

their own family and hidden from the community. Lack of health care and rehabilitation creates secondary disabling impacts.

At school age the disadvantage of children compared to those without disabilities is clear in all countries. The discrepancy is wider in poorer countries.

The household surveys in Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe reveal that from 9–18 % of children over 5 years of age with disabilities have never attended school, while the figures are between 24 and 39 for children without disabilities.¹⁵⁵

Children with severe disabilities have very poor chances to go to school. Almost three-quarters of children with severe impairments are out of school, compared with about 35% to 40% among children with mild or moderate impairments.
(EFA 2010 p 183)

Case Ethiopia

A Social Assessment of the Educational sector in Ethiopia¹⁵⁶ summarizes the social obstacles confronting “children with special needs”. Children with special needs is a term that refers to any children who need special attention in order to be able to benefit from an educational context. Often this challenge is related to disability but learning difficulties can also have other, e.g. cultural or temporary life situation related, background causes. Often it is not at all obviously clear whether an impairment is involved or not.

Children with disabilities belong to the most marginalized in education. The Report enumerates the main obstacles for their education:

- *negative social perceptions*
- *a view by parents that they are incapable of learning*
- *parental concern about the safety of daughters and*
- *a lack of services, readiness or support from schools (finance, teaching, materials and facilities as well as human support).*

Children with disabilities are often excluded from the community, hidden at home because parents are ashamed of them. They may be considered as curses by God or as being a contagion risk for others. The lessons learned¹⁵⁷ that are described in the Report are applicable to many more settings:

Lessons to learn from the experience in Arba Minch include the following:

¹⁵⁵ ibid p. 208-209

¹⁵⁶ Department for International Cooperation. Report prepared by Mary Jennings
<http://www.sddirect.org.uk/uploads/pdfs/social-assessment-education-ethiopia.pdf>

¹⁵⁷ Ibid p. 38-39

- *Increasing the number of children being sent to school has been helped by educating parents about the need to educate children with disabilities and disseminating information about the rights of persons with a disability.*
- *The majority of children with disabilities in rural and urban areas who don't have access to education are from "economically poor" families. Therefore incentives such as boarding, dormitories, school feeding, pocket money, or material assistance (educational materials stationeries and uniforms) help in encouraging families to send their children to school.*
- *Quality facilities are also important in attracting the children to the schools (infrastructure at the school matters a lot).*
- *SNE centers in towns are usually dominated by children from the urban areas; this points to the need to promote awareness and the opportunities available to parents and communities in rural areas.*
- *There is a need to plan for the full cycle of education for children with disability – not just the first few years.*
- *The SNE centre has had a positive impact on changing the attitude of the community towards Persons with Disabilities.*

Finland has been supporting the integration of SEN education into the general educational system in Ethiopia. An advisor has been seconded to the Ethiopian Ministry of Education and the support remains ongoing.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)¹⁵⁸ that was adopted in 2006 establishes and endorses the rights-based model of disability as the international standard. It contains several paragraphs defining the rights of children with disabilities. **The Convention defines disability in the following way: "disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others"**. The medical model identifies disability as an impairment. This often leads to treating children with disabilities as "patients" to be handled by the health care system and more often than not in institutions.

¹⁵⁸ <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/disabilities-convention.htm>

Well fed - but extremely poor children

Institutionalizing children with disabilities has been very common practice. In the former Soviet Union and Eastern European socialist countries the tradition was particularly strong during the "socialist" regime. After the collapse of the system a need for deinstitutionalization of child care and reform of the system arose.

The photo shows the situation shortly after independence in one of the Baltic Countries in 1995. Children classified as severely disabled in an institution were kept in their cots without any toys or stimuli - only kept alive.

Given balloons by the delegation of Save the Children every child started playing with the balloons.

The cooperation between NGOs and e.g. Nordic country Governments with professionals changed the situation and the former traditional medical and charity model practices have been transformed to be more in line with the rights of children with disabilities. Spectacular progress has been made in many of these countries.

Still the attitudes and practices in many parts of the world favor institutionalization and segregation of children with disabilities into special units. The rights of the child are at risk in any institutional setting.



People with disabilities in general and children with disabilities in particular are extremely vulnerable to a violation of their human rights. One of the reasons is the charity model of "taking care of the disabled". A charity approach places a person with disabilities as an object of care and consequently deprives his/her right to be a subject, an agent of his/her own life and the owner of his/her rights. Another mechanism of rights violations is direct discrimination and segregation that is often established by legislation. Indirect discrimination follows e.g. from inaccessible living environments that are designed without consideration to the diversity of people. The barriers to access and to full participation by children with disabilities can be physical, social, economic or related to inaccessible formats of information.

The Convention prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination. Additionally **it requires the duty bearers to apply reasonable accommodation of living environments, services and information so as to equalize their usability by persons with disabilities.**

The rights and needs of children with disabilities must be mainstreamed in general systems. Mainstreaming shall be complemented by special empowering measures when mainstreaming alone does not produce equitable outcomes. The rights of children with disabilities must be included in all policy dialogues concerning children in general.

Key Readings 4.6.2. Rights of children with disabilities

UN Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities (2006)

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/disabilities-convention.htm>

World Report on Disability. WHO and World Bank (2011)

http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/index.html

- Most recent and unique basic facts on disability prevalence and policies.

Label us Able. A Proactive Evaluation of Finland's Development Assistance from the Disability perspective. Stakes for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

<http://formin.finland.fi/public/?contentid=50655&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>

The only comprehensive evaluation of Finland's Development assistance from disability perspective. There is a serious need to update the situation.

R. Wiman (1997, 2000, 2003): Disability Dimension in Development Action. Manual on Inclusive Planning. http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/toolaction/FF-DisalibilityDim0103_b1.pdf

- First ever comprehensive manual on disability inclusive planning. Contains basic policy perspectives "Towards a Society for All" and for disability inclusive planning of projects.

Make development inclusive. Tools for mainstreaming disability in Development Cooperation Projects <http://www.make-development-inclusive.org/toolsdetail.php?spk=en&nb=8>

-A comprehensive package of disability inclusive programme planning tools in the EU context.

4.7. Children, youth and the sustainable development agenda. Key messages.

*Sustainable development*¹⁵⁹ was defined by the World Commission on Sustainable Development in 1987 as development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The definition of sustainable development refers to the rights of "future generations" to social equity with the current generations in opportunities for satisfying essential needs. *Future*

¹⁵⁹ World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED 1987) p. 43. Referred to in Sustainable Development: From Brundtland to Rio 2012 Background Paper prepared for consideration by the High Level Panel on Global Sustainability at its first meeting, 19 September 2010 September 2010 United Nations. http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/climatechange/shared/gsp/docs/GSP1-6_Background%20on%20Sustainable%20Devt.pdf

generations are, however, an abstract notion that easily leads to “science-fiction thinking” that does not concretely specify rights owners and duty bearers, at least not in an accountable manner.

Today’s children are the immediate “future generations” that owns its right to development, as agreed in the UNCRC. Therefore, the first indicator of sustainable development should reflect the impact of current trends and policies on today’s children. The decision-making generation of today are the duty bearers responsible for enabling children to achieve development they are entitled to.

There are three dimensions in sustainable development: the social, the environmental and the economic. In this order of priority: the human development goals and equity in the distribution of desirable outcomes for current and future generations is the ultimate criterion of sustainability of development. The environment sets limits to resources that are available with existing technology. **Economy should be seen as a tool, an instrument for matching resources and needs. Economic values should thus not be elevated as the primary goal of development. Sustainability of development implies a balance between the three dimensions.**

Development is an extension of choices, as Amartya Sen has expressed it. It is freedom from fear and want and an expanding menu of options to create one’s own life-course. Poverty implies a restriction of choices. It is an iron jacket that thwarts all human aspirations.

Social sustainability of development can be defined as equity within and between generations. Inequalities based on direct or indirect discrimination are the main threat to social cohesion and social sustainability. If the current generations overuse the resources and/or the capacity of the nature to provide ecosystem for services in the long run, they are stealing the rights of future generations to make choices. The debt of current generations can be economic, it can be environmental and it can be social. The economic debt may involve national debts or unfairly large pension benefits. The social may include social disintegration, unjust social and economic structures, bad and undemocratic governance structures etc. The ecological debt includes e.g. overuse of non-renewable natural resources, extinct species, pollution and climate deterioration.

4.7.1. Children and the climate change agenda

The Millennium Declaration (para. 2) reminds us that

“... we have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. As leaders we have a duty therefore to all the world’s people, especially the most vulnerable and, **in particular, the children of the world, to whom the future belongs.**”¹⁶⁰

In any discourse on sustainable development, children should be in focus, as they are the immediate future generation that is entitled to intergenerational equity in terms of their lifetime share of the world’s resources. In line with the UN Convention on the rights of the child

¹⁶⁰ The Millennium Declaration <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>

children are owners of their right to development while the current decision-making generation belong to the duty bearers who are responsible for seeing that this right of children materializes.

The quality of the environment is highly relevant for children, both immediately and in the long term. Children are particularly vulnerable to environmental hazards and environmental degradation. "Protecting the environment and providing for the health, education and development of children are mutually inclusive goals" says the UNICEF Report on *Climate Change and Children. A Human Security Challenge*.¹⁶¹

The Report quotes the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon at the Bali Conference of 2007. He reminded the audience that "*Climate change affects us all but it does not affect us all equally. Those who are least able to cope with it are being hit hardest. Those who have done the least to cause the problem bear the gravest consequences*"

However, in regard to climate change, children are not sufficiently or systematically included in the adaptation and mitigation agenda. The UNICEF report has noticed that National Adaptation Programmes of Action rarely, if ever, make reference to the vulnerability of children and the need to adjust action from this perspective.

The Report also reminds that children and youth are sharp observers in environmental issues and could make significant contributions to the agenda.

"Today's children and future generations bear the brunt of the climate change impacts, but they are also great forces for change. As such, they have a right to be involved not only locally, but also in the current international negotiation process."

The messages of the UNICEF Report are the following:

- **The human rights based approach implies the inclusion of children's issues in all intentional agendas addressing environment and climate change.**
- **The health risk factors related to climate change pose a serious threat particularly to children through the main mortal threats to children, such as under-nutrition, diarrhea and malaria.**
- **The issue is complex and therefore the response also needs to be multi-sectoral, integrating action in the areas of clean energy, water, sanitation, education and natural disasters through inter-sectoral collaboration.**
- **Efforts to achieve the MDGs also increases the resilience of most vulnerable children to the challenges of climate change.**
- **Gender sensitive approaches to community development (e.g. water and energy, environmental education, food security, disaster and risk reduction) reduce vulnerability and empower the most marginalized households and children.**

¹⁶¹ Climate Change and Children. A Human Security Challenge http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/climate_change.pdf

- **Empowered children can also be a resource for protecting and improving the environment.**
- **Children and youth have the right to be involved in the negotiations on climate change mitigation and adaptation.**¹⁶²

The sustainable development discourse and negotiations should explicitly and concretely consider first the impact of current policies and decisions on the immediate future generation, that is today's children with a particular focus on their right to life, survival and development (Art.6 of the CRC).

4.7.2. Inequality and lack of future vision leads to social unsustainability

The social sustainability of development has not received the attention it would deserve. Social sustainability is difficult to measure. However, when development has become socially unsustainable, the signs are clear and visible – but the warnings tend to come too late.

The year 2011 has witnessed a number of events of mass “civil unrest” involving also youth and teenagers. The “Arab Spring”, civic uprisings in a number of countries in the MENA¹⁶³ region, has thus been the major and politically most visible sequence of events. There are many factors that explain the demands for democracy and freedom in these countries. One of the background factors has been the sharp increase in the number of youth who find it impossible to get decent work despite many of them have a good educational background. The experience of powerlessness and the lack of a tangible vision for the future can serve as a strong motivation to join forces to change the situation, especially when there are no channels for meaningful political participation and action. The Arab Spring resembles the year 1967 in Europe when an unprecedented wave of youth, the post-war baby boom, entered society. That was also a time of strong civic movements – and riots against the establishment.

The unrest that was recently sparked in French suburbs and in the UK has raised questions. Likewise, these events again largely involved teenagers and youth. In UK the Conservative leader David Cameron blamed the individuals: fatherless children, schools without discipline, rewards received without work, crimes without punishment. The welfare system that give incentives to laziness must be changed, police must be strengthened to give a counterforce to the rioters and gangs. He denied the possibility that the riots had something to do with ethnicity, poverty or Government spending cuts. The leftist leader Ed Milliband, in turn, claimed that the leading elites have not been able to show an example to society. Instead, people see the examples of greedy bankers and even greedy of Parliamentarians who are fabricating expense receipts to claim extra money. Milliband did not offer solutions though. (HS 16.8.2011)

Let a young person give his own interpretation of the London riots:
Sam 12:

¹⁶² A awareness raising and educational tool for smaller children can be found e.g. at http://tiki.oneworld.net/global_warming/climate_home.html Note: this is a commercial sit3e with ads.

¹⁶³ Middle East and North Africa - region

“I was at home when the riot in Clapham started but got a message from friends and came to have a look. The youngest rioters were ten, younger than myself. I understand well why they riot and rob. This is all just crap from the Government. Youth centres are closed down, they take education opportunities from the youth. Also here some youth centres have been closed down. Kids don’t trust in school because going to school does not lead anywhere. We have nothing to do. This gets worse all the time.” (HS 11.8.2011)

Also social scientists have been thinking of the background to such events. Of the British case, sociologist Eeva Luhtakallio of the University of Helsinki gives one insight. She reminds that the UK features the steepest income and wealth inequalities in Western Europe and these differences have been growing fast. Inequalities tend to have a strong correlation with various societal, health and security problems. These have increased rapidly in the Western part of the World, she claims. Further, she maintains that the key explanation for the negative consequences of income inequality is the relative deprivation of large parts of the population in contrast to the well-to-do. This deprivation leads to violent protests when channels for effective political action are not there. The bureaucratization and professionalization of political institutions has narrowed the number of people who can meaningfully participate in key political processes. Eeva Luhtakallio reminds that the impressively good outcomes of the Nordic Welfare States have resulted from the equality of income. **She suggests that in Finland we should also discuss and see how political action can steepen income differences, along with silent acceptance of the trend, and how this seeps into the lives of the larger majority. Burning suburbs come all the time closer to us and we would all be the losers.**¹⁶⁴ Such was an accurate forecast: while this work has been in preparation, civil unrest against the privileged classes has risen also in neighboring Russia.

Inequality and the relative deprivation of youth combined with a lack of meaningful channels for participating and influencing political processes and choices is a socially inflammable equation, especially when the proportion of young people in the city, suburb or nation is significant. Unemployment and lack of meaningful future opportunities will add combustible fuel to the situation.

Children of today are the first rights holders of future generations and inherit the consequences of current decisions that affect the sustainability of society, the ability of the ecological system to continue providing its benefits and services, as well as the effectiveness and equity of the economic system. The generations in power today have the duty to leave the world to children in at least as good a condition as it is today, to enable children to satisfy their needs during their lifetime.

Therefore, children and youth belong at the centre of the sustainable development agendas. They are entitled to participate in decision-making concerning their future. In the forthcoming forums of sustainable development, arrangements should be made to allow children and youth a meaningful way to participate in the decision making.

¹⁶⁴ HS vieraskynä 17.8.2011