

Newsletter

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Erasmus+

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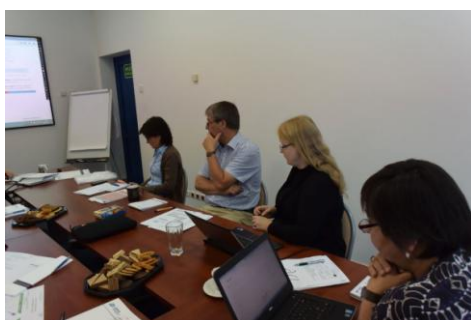
Together
Against
Poverty



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THE PROJECT IS IMPLEMENTED BY A CONSORTIUM OF SIX PARTNER INSTITUTIONS:

- Center for Education and Enterprise Support Association – Poland (coordinator)
- Confederación Española de Centros de Enseñanza – Spain
- Mittetulundusühing MITRA – Estonia
- Centro Servizi per il Volontariato Sviluppo e Solidarietà in Piemonte – Italy
- Consorțiul Internațional Lectura și Scrierea pentru Dezvoltarea Gandirii Critice – Romania
- Stichting LEIDO – Netherlands



TOGETHER AGAINST POVERTY - THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

The project is the result of the diagnosed gap between the real needs of people from both target groups. This gap results from misunderstanding the problem of the risk of poverty and social exclusion and inadequate support. The main Intellectual Outputs are related to planned actions undertaken in two stages of the project. In the first stage – research – it has been planned to conduct a thorough study of poverty and social exclusion, supplemented with the study of social security models. These actions are expected to produce the following outputs:

- Research paper on poverty;
- Research paper on the functioning of social security models.

This stage will run from 01/09/2014 to 31/08/2015.

The second stage – workshops – involves development of a training methodology and providing workshops for the two target groups. The results produced at this stage are:

- Methodology for conducting workshops targeted at groups of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion;
- Methodology for conducting workshops targeted at decision-makers and social policy makers.

This stage will run from 01/09/2015 to 31/08/2016.

The main goal of the project is poverty prevention through the development and implementation of educational tools that are suitable for two target groups of the project:

1) those most vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion [i.e. unemployed people, people with low skills or little education, single-parent families or families with many children];

2) the politicians and decision-makers in the field of social policy.

The statistical surveys conducted by the Central Statistical Office indicated that the groups most vulnerable to poverty in Poland are households with the following categories of people:

- unemployed (especially when the household head has a low level of education),
- disabled,
- families with many children.

The high rate of extreme poverty relates primarily to people living in rural areas and small towns of up to 20 thousand residents [1].

Figure 1 shows the relevant data.

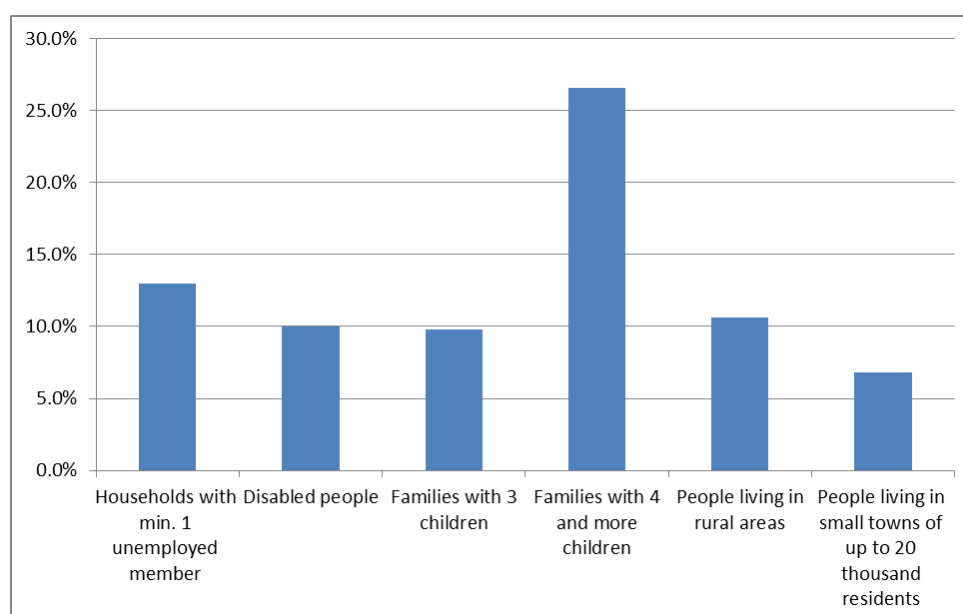


Fig. 1. The groups most vulnerable to poverty in Poland

Source: *Poverty in Poland according to research of GUS*, Ed. GUS, Warsaw 2013.

The results of research on social cohesion indicated that:

15.1% of households were affected by income poverty (household with income below 60% of median equalized income),

13.5% of households were affected by poor living conditions (the composite index poor living conditions takes into account housing conditions, possession of durable goods, deprivation of basic needs and of tangible and intangible assets),

15.9% of households were affected by budgetary imbalances (the composite index takes into account the subjective opinions of households regarding their material status, wealth and facts concerning budgetary difficulties including arrears).

The multidimensional risk of poverty (exposure to all three forms of poverty) was present in 4.6% of households.

Analyzing this phenomenon by age, we found that:

- income poverty threatened in the highest degree people aged 16-24 years (18.4%),
- poverty concerning living conditions threatened in the highest degree persons aged 65-74 years (18%),
- poverty concerning lack of a balanced budget threatened in the highest degree people aged 55-64 years (19%).

Analyzing this phenomenon by place of residence, we found that:

- income poverty affects 10.7% of urban and 23.7% of rural residents;
- poverty affects the living conditions of 11.5% of the urban population and 17.7% of the rural residents;
- budgetary imbalances affect 15.7% of the urban and 16.4% of the rural population.

Source:

[1] *Economic poverty in Poland in 2013. (Based on household budget survey), signal information, CSO Research Department of Social and Living Conditions, 2014, p. 3.*

[2] *Poverty in Poland according to research of GUS, Ed. GUS, Warsaw 2013, p. 49, 56.*

KICK-OFF MEETING IN RZESZÓW

The first meeting in the framework of the ERASMUS+ project "TAP-Together Against Poverty" took place on 7th-8th October 2014 in Rzeszow. The meeting was attended by representatives of the management teams of each partner organization. The first day was devoted entirely to the discussion of the substantive work to be performed under the project. The partners discussed the work plan for the implementation of research on poverty and social exclusion and the functioning of social security models. The partners presented previously obtained results of the analyses conducted. On the second day, the delegates discussed issues related to project management, monitoring and evaluation processes, and the dissemination of the project and its results. the meeting, a Facebook account was set up (<https://www.facebook.com/TAPPLROESEENLIT?fref=ts>). This will be one of the channels where current information on the project and the measures implemented will be published.

According to the sources of income, all three forms of poverty threaten households living on other social benefits and pensions. Respectively, for these sources of income:

- income poverty threatens to 71.3% and 37.6%, respectively,
- poor living conditions threaten 57.7% and 30.2%, respectively
- income poverty imbalances threaten 57.6% and 34.4%, respectively.

Single parents are also exposed to a high degree to each of these forms of poverty: income-related (27.5%), living condition-related (24.5%) and poverty related to the lack of a balanced budget (34.3%). Similarly, married couples with 3 or more children are exposed to these forms of poverty (39%, 20.7% and 23.3%, respectively). These indicators increase when in the household, in addition to children, there are other dependents as well [2].





SPANISH CONFEDERATION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING CENTERS (CECE)

The Spanish Confederation of Education and Training Centers (CECE) is a non-profit employers' professional organization founded in 1977. It represents a wide educational sector in Spain from nursery school to university level. It has more than 5,000 Education and Training Centers among its members.

CECE's institutional roles are: the management of updating educational agreements; the negotiation of collective agreements for this sector; the representation of this sector in the collegiate boards; institutional presence in the Spanish Employers' Organization (CEOE) and in some international organizations in which it takes an active role, as well as liaising with Education Public Authorities. CECE is member of the following international organizations: EFVET (European Forum for Technical and Vocational Education and Training), ESHA (European School Headmaster Association) and ECNAIS (European Council of National Associations of Independent Schools).

CECE gives support to his members in 5 areas: (1) organization of LLL courses for teachers; (2) implementation of technological innovation for its members; (3) international relations of the members; (4) assistance in the implementation of the EFQM Excellence Model in its member institutions; (5) legal consultancy for the member institutions.

CECE's educational profile has widened with the constitution of its Foundation (Fundación Ángel Martínez Fuertes) in 1996 that centres its activities on social inclusion through training of unemployed persons, persons over 45, women, disabled persons, immigrants, etc.

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CONTEXT

According to the latest report *7th Report about social exclusion in Spain* presented on October 28th, 2014 by Caritas Spain, 22% of households are below the poverty line, and another 30% on the edge of falling into poverty. The Spanish Roman Catholic Church charity organisation draws attention to the danger facing 11 million people who could fall below the poverty threshold, while confirming that there are around 30,000 homeless people across the country. Caritas Spain states that already 22% of Spanish households are living under the poverty line with a further 30% facing serious difficulties in making ends meet at the end of the month and 580,000 Spaniards, nearly 3.3% of the overall population, receiving no income whatsoever.

Citizens are using 34% of their budget for their mortgages and 7% of the population cannot pay their home expenses on time.

In 2010, the poverty threshold further decreased to Euros 7,800 per year, which is E200 less than in the previous year. Caritas expected the situation to get worse in 2012.

Spain is among the European countries with the highest poverty rates, totalling up to 21.8% of the population -- over the EU average of 16.4%. Only Romania and Latvia rank before Spain in the list.

Mittetulundusühing MITRA is non-governmental organisation founded in Estonia in 2012 by volunteers with experience in European projects such as Youth in Action, NordPlus, EuropeAid, DAPHNE, Grundtvig and Leonardo da Vinci Partnership.

One of the aims of MITRA is involving disadvantaged people - unemployed, national minorities, low educated and people without professional qualifications - in active life, to motivate them to learn and avoid social exclusion. MITRA works with these target groups on the local, national and European levels.

Mittetulundusühing MITRA organised Youth in Action "European Citizenship Education: Meanings, Understandings and Actions" training course in August 12-21, 2013 in Narva-Jõesuu, Estonia. This course provided intercultural educational experience for 27 youth and youth workers from 14 organisations from EU and EU neighboring countries. The project supported the active inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities - most of the participants attending the training course were from rural areas and socially disadvantaged groups and also immigrants and representatives of national minorities.

MITRA organised Erasmus+ KA1 "European Citizenship: learn and act" project for youth workers from 3 Baltic and 3 Caucasus countries on July 23-30 and September 1-8, 2014 in Nelijärve Estonia.

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EVERY FIFTH PERSON IN ESTONIA LIVED IN RELATIVE POVERTY

According to Statistics Estonia, in 2012, 18.7% of the Estonian population lived in relative poverty and 7.3% in absolute poverty. The overall percentage of people living in relative poverty increased by 1.2 percentage points compared to the previous year, but the percentage of people living in absolute poverty decreased by 0.8 percentage points.

The income of the population increased, nonetheless at the same time income inequality increased as well. Social transfers (state benefits and pensions) helped to prevent falling into poverty; had they been included in income, the at-risk-of-poverty rate would have been 39.6% and the absolute poverty rate 31.3%. A person was considered to be at-risk-of-poverty if his/her monthly equalised disposable income was below 329 euros (299 euros in 2011) and in absolute poverty if his/her monthly equalised disposable income was below 196 euros (186 euros in 2011). In 2012, the difference in income between the poorest and richest fifth of the population was 5.5-fold. Official unemployment rate in 2012 was 10.2% and in 2013 – 10.9%.



CENTRO SERVIZI PER IL VOLONTARIATO – V.S.S.P.

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Volunteer support center V.S.S.P. is a non-profit organization (member of the National Coordination of Service Centres CSVnet) based in Turin in the north of Italy, which has been working since 1997 according to the national regulations for volunteering (L. n. 266 dated 11th August 1991; M.D. dated 8th October 1997).

V.S.S.P. provides free services such as training, consultancy, planning assistance to support the voluntary associations in the Province of Turin. It manages a network of more than 1,000 non-profit associations, providing them all the tools necessary to fulfil their aims.

V.S.S.P.'s vision is a future in which the distinctive features of volunteering - free and self-giving, reciprocity and trust, passion and spirit of initiative, responsibility and care for each other - will be a guide for individual and collective challenge. Its mission is to train and support volunteers to enable them to seize opportunities and take individual paths of development. For this purpose, V.S.S.P. develops projects to increase the interest in voluntary work as well as builds tailor-made learning paths

to cater for volunteers' specific needs.

POVERTY IN ITALY

In 2013, the relative poverty phenomenon was stable in all the geographical areas, the relative poverty incidence was 12.6%, and the absolute poverty incidence 7.9%.

Absolute poverty increased from 6.8% to 7.9% (due to the increase in the south and in the islands from 9.8% to 12.6%).

In the south and in the island areas, where the absolute poverty increased, the relative poverty also increased from 21.4% to 23.5%. The relative poverty threshold for a two-member household was 972.52 Euros (about 18 euros less compared with the 2012 threshold). In 2013, relative poverty worsened for households with four and five or more members, particularly couples with two children (from 17.4% to 20.4%), especially when the children are minors (from 20.1% to 23.1%). (Source: ISTAT)

THE RIGHT TO PROTECTION AGAINST POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

There will not be eradication of poverty without the enhancement of rights

The annual event organised by the [Conference of INGOs](#) on 17 October, the [International Day for the Eradication of Poverty](#), took place this year in Turin. This event was connected to the high level Conference on the European Social Charter taking place in Turin on 17 and 18 October and discussion focused on Article 30 of the European Social Charter **“Everyone has the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion”**.

People living in poverty participated in the event and shared their experiences and hopes. The President of the Conference of INGOs transmitted the conclusions of the meeting to the participants in the high level Conference on 18 October.

The agenda of the day was split in three parts; in the morning there were welcome speeches by **Jean-Marie Heydt** – President of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, **Salim Muslumov** – Minister of Labour and Social Protection of the Population of Azerbaidjan on behalf of the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, **Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni** – Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe and **Elide Tisi** – Vice Mayor of the City of Turin.

The people attending the conference were key staff, volunteers and people representing civil society organizations and public bodies. Four parallel workshop were held addressing different topics linked with poverty. A person from the staff of V.S.S.P. attended the conference and he was actively involved in workshop 4: «Think, decide and act together against poverty» led by the **International Movement ATD Fourth World**. The workshop was introduced by two people belonging to the Roma community in Rome, who explained their living conditions, the threats of poverty they face and the social security provided by the State. During the workshop, the participants underlined the clear link existing between fight against poverty and enhanced social and civil rights. V.S.S.P. presented the goals of the TAP-project and invited the people to follow the progress of the project which is directly linked with social rights issue and fight against poverty.

During the afternoon, each workshop shared its recommendations with the general assembly, and a list of requests was compiled to be forwarded to the main conference at the Regio Theater. The conference formulated six requests, we quote here three of them ([the full document is available here](#)).

- of central, local and regional governments, they ask that they work together effectively to combat poverty and eliminate prejudice and discrimination, and provide the resources needed for action on the ground;
- of administrations at all levels and in all areas (justice, health, education, employment, social services, etc.), they ask that they deal with people living in poverty in a way that respects the full range of human rights and the dignity inherent to all human beings;
- of all public stakeholders, they ask that they pay attention and provide support to successful initiatives by people living in poverty in co-operation with civil society organisations.

The European Social Charter is a Council of Europe treaty signed in Turin on 18 October 1961, which safeguards day-to-day freedoms and fundamental rights: housing, health, education, employment, legal and social protection, freedom of movement for individuals, non-discrimination. The substance of the Charter was supplemented by a revised version in 1996.

Article 30

The right to protection against poverty and social exclusion.

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion, the Parties undertake:

- a. to take measures within the framework of an overall and co-ordinated approach to
- b. promote the effective access of persons who live or risk living in a situation of social exclusion or poverty, as well as their families, to, in particular, employment, housing, training, education, culture and social and medical assistance; to review these measures with a view to their adaptation if necessary.



RWCT
INTERNATIONAL
CONSORTIUM

CONSORTIUL INTERNATIONAL LECTURA SI SCRIEREA PENTRU DEZVOLTAREA GANDIRII CRITICE

Consortiul International Lectura si Scrierea pentru Dezvoltarea Gandirii Critice (in English: Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking International Consortium – RWCT IC; see www.rwctic.org) is a global community of educators collaborating across cultures and boundaries to enhance understanding of teaching and learning by engaging teachers and learners in critical reflection. We promote critical thinking education across the education system around the world. We define critical thinking as an *independent, self-reliant form of social thinking, which begins with posing questions and raising problems, and requires reasoned arguments while identifying answers and solutions*. Critical thinkers develop their own solutions to problems, and they support those solutions with good arguments and convincing reasons. They recognize that more than one possible solution exists, and therefore they work to demonstrate why their preferred solution is logical and practical (Klooster, 2001).

The reason why RWCT IC engaged in the project Together against Poverty (TAP) is because we are aware that the provision of quality education for all – which is what critical thinking education strives to contribute to - and the chances of learners' academic success are affected by poverty and social exclusion, and at the same time quality education and academic success impact the chances of an individual getting out of poverty and of avoiding social exclusion. In the attempt to break the vicious circle of poverty, we believe that critical thinking education plays a key role.

In the early preparation phase of TAP, we found that according to the Romanian Ministry of Labour (*Raport de cercetare privind economia socială în România din perspectivă europeană comparată, 2010*), regardless of the dimensions of poverty among the population of the country, the profile of persons affected by / vulnerable to poverty remains constant:

- in terms of age: children and youth under 24 years of age;
- in terms of education: people with low levels of education;
- in terms of occupational profile: the unemployed, the homemakers and the self-employed,
- in terms of residence: poverty is more frequent in rural areas;
- in terms of ethnic background, the Roma are six times more vulnerable to poverty than the overall population.

In addition to implementing all the project activities in Romania, our main role within the project is to contribute our expertise to "translating" the diagnosed needs of our target groups (groups vulnerable to poverty and policy-makers) into specific learning objectives to be achieved through training and workshop support which we will design. We look forward to engaging in the partnership's work and to contributing to the accomplishment of TAP's goals and objectives.

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LEIDO ... IN SHORT ...

Leido is a nation-wide operating network of organization in the Netherlands. It is involved in lifelong learning, bringing together people working in institutions for vocational education and training and higher education institutions to facilitate discussions. We use a variety of activities for accommodating the discussion, the outcomes of which we publish in newsletters, reports and other documents to feed the

public discussion.

Leido was founded in 2003. The management of the network and the working groups are headed by people who also work or have been working in vocational and professional education, not as managers, but as coordinators, teachers, tutors, professionals in quality assurance, curriculum developers, etc. This ensures that the discussions really pertain to practical aspects affairs, knowing that problems have to be simply solved. This is what makes Leido unique.

THE PROJECT AND THE NETHERLANDS...

The TAP project is of high interest for us, even though the Netherlands is a relatively rich country with a system for social security that works well. Nonetheless, according to international standards, 9% of the Dutch community is living under conditions that can be seen as 'in poverty', sometimes hidden for others. And it will be becoming more and more difficult in the coming years, for some vulnerable groups.

As evidence for the above, we quote from an articles in a Dutch newspaper (NRC Handelsblad).

How equal is the Netherland – using the Gini index?

No country is the same and definitions of income and wealth vary significantly. Look at the Netherlands. What do we take? Gross income or net income. It is precisely the difference between the two – there is a lot of redistribution visible between large and small earners. Disposable income then, or the standardized income that the Central Bureau of Statistics uses? That can also be. The corresponding Gini indexes for these types of income, according to the latest data, are 0.33, 0.34, 0.28 and around 0.57, respectively. But what does it tell us?

Where are we?

All in all, a picture emerges from the Netherlands as an 'equal' country, but it could become unequal. In 2010, the Gini coefficient for net income was 0.29. This is lower than the average for industrialized countries, which then amounted to 0.32. But the gap between the largest and the smallest earners is indeed increasing. And power inequality here, compared to other countries, is just bigger. The richest 10 per cent here owns 61 percent of all the wealth, the poorest 10 percent only 1 percent.

(11 October 2014)

Measures against poverty: 80 million extra for poor households

In the next four years, the city of Amsterdam is going to use 20 million euro more every year to support more people with low income. At present, 83,000 households are entitled to support. There will be 15,000 households more because the city council raises the income limit from 110 percent of the social minimum to 120 percent. In addition, a free supplementary health insurance package is available and the identity card will be compensated for low-income people. Due to this, the poverty budget rises to 83 million euro annually.

(24 October 2014)