

Investing in children: EU policy instruments and funding opportunities



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FUTURES**

The national policy framework
for children & young people
2014 - 2020



National Irish Seminar on

**Implementing a multi-dimensional approach to child poverty,
informed by the EU Recommendation on Investing in Children**

**6 November 2014
DES Clocktower, Marlborough Street, Dublin**

Introduction

Target group

This seminar is designed primarily for national and local officials responsible for the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESF, FEAD and ERDF) either as Managing Authorities or as project promoters. Other envisaged participants are academics and NGOs, representatives of Ministries and the Irish member of the SPC.

Description and objectives

In February 2013 the European Commission adopted the Recommendation “Investing in Children-breaking the cycle of disadvantage” (REC) as part of the Social Investment Package. The Recommendation recalls that investment in children is not only a fair but also a cost efficient approach, contributing to long term growth. It invites Member States to step up their efforts and grasp opportunities provided by EU instruments.

The issue is most relevant in Ireland where children are more at risk of poverty and social exclusion than the overall population. Also, the lack of adequate, affordable and accessible child care facilities in particular for children under three is a particular challenge. In the context of Europe 2020, the EU’s growth strategy, the European Commission and the European Council recently called on the MSs to *enhance “the provision of child-care facilities, in particular for children below three years of age, (...) improve access to high quality and inclusive pre-school and school education for marginalised communities”*.

The objectives of the seminar are:

- To develop a cross-government multidimensional approach to tackling child poverty as outlined in the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People
- To take account of recent Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) as they relate to growing risks of poverty and social exclusion for children in Ireland, and to the higher than average proportion of households with low work intensity
- To support the implementation of the EC Recommendation on Investing in Children
- To apply a social investment approach through maximising EU and national funding opportunities
- To promote best practice in tackling child poverty

The 2014 CSR asked the Irish government to “tackle low work intensity of households and address the poverty risk of children through tapered withdrawal of benefits and supplementary payments upon return to employment. Facilitate female labour market participation by improving access to more affordable and full-time childcare, particularly for low income families”.

The seminar will highlight recent policy developments, the main instruments which can support Ireland in delivering reforms as well as present ESIF projects. It will provide a space for Managing Authorities to discuss lessons from the past and how to move forward in the new programming period 2014-2020. Participants will be encouraged to intervene and present their experience.

Programme

08.45-09.15 **Registration**

09.30-10.15 **Opening Addresses**

Moderator: Mr HUGH FRAZER, Adjunct Professor at the National University of Ireland (Maynooth)

Ms ANNE VAUGHAN, Deputy Secretary, Department of Social Protection

Mr JULIUS OP DE BEKE, policy analyst at the European Commission DG EMPL, presentation of the recommendation, social investment package and the link with the CSRs

10.15-11.30 **Setting the Scene**

Professor MARY DALY, Independent Social Inclusion Expert for Ireland

Associate Research Professor DOROTHY WATSON, Economic and Social Research Institute & Growing Up in Ireland Research

Discussion

11:30-11.45 **Coffee Break**

11:45-13.00 **Improving economic opportunities for poor households with children**

Mr WILLIE MC INTOSH, Head of ESF Managing Authority, Department of Education and Skills, Role of ESI in the realm of child poverty

Mr NIALL EGAN, Principal Officer, Department of Social Protection, on DSP reforms

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Discussion

13:00-14.00 **Lunch**

14:00-15.30 **Investing in effective services to improve child poverty outcomes**

Ms MARIAN QUINN, Chair, Prevention and Early Intervention Network

Ms COLMA NIC LUGHADHA, National Coordinator, Children and Young People Services Committees

Discussion

15.30-15.45 **Coffee Break**

15:45-16.45 **Wrap-up session: Towards a multidimensional approach to tackling child poverty**

Open Discussion to identify key actions and next steps

16:45-17.00 **Conclusion and Next Steps**

Mr JIM WALSH, Principal Officer, Department of Social Protection