



Regional Centre for Child and Youth  
Mental Health and Child Welfare

## Children and Poverty - a Norwegian Context

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# The Presentation

Definition of Poverty

Characteristics of poor Families and their Children

Public Strategies to Combat the Problem

*«Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical, social and mental needs. Government must help families who cannot afford to provide this»  
(Article 27, UNCRC)*



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## How to Measure Poverty ?



Most industrial countries measure poverty through median income – the amount of income which divides the income distribution in a nation's population into two equal groups – half having income below that amount and half above

OECD defines the poverty level at 50 % of median income, and EU 60 %

## Other Measures

Poverty can also be measured from shortage of important welfare goods; e.g. satisfying nutrition, books, leisure-activities, friends, going on holidays and access to internet



## Poverty in Norway

Regardless of measures, Norway is among the countries with «less risk of poverty»

Nobody dies of poverty in Norway, but the standard of living in poor families can be strongly reduced compared to other families



# Families at Risk for Poverty

Child poverty is increasing in Norway; from 4 % living in families with income below 60 % of median (1996-1998) to 8 % in 2008-2010.

Child poverty has also increased while poverty in general has been steady.

Child poverty is very high among immigrant families (Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and South America) – in some districts in Oslo nine out of ten children in poverty belongs to these families.

Single parents families, families with more than three children, unenemployed parents, and families receiving money from child welfare, are all at risk for poverty.



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# Public Initiatives to Combat Poverty

- High general participation in working life
- Low unemployment
- High average salaries, and relative small differences between working groups
- Sufficient and good welfare services
- Integration of marginal and vulnerable groups in society



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## And how about the Children?

UN has a list of 14 fundamental goods important for children's well-being in industrial countries:

1. Three meals a day.
2. Meat, fish or vegetables once a day.
3. Fresh fruit and vegetable every day.
4. Books for children suitable for their age.
5. Leisure equipment for out-door use.
6. Regular leisure activities.
7. In-door toys (at least one per child).
8. Enough money for school trips and other activities.
9. A quiet place to relax and do home-work.
10. Internet access.
11. Some new clothes.
12. Two pairs of suitable shoes.
13. Possibility to invite friends to their home for playing and eating.
14. Possibility to celebrate birthdays etc.



According to the UN list of basic goods which are important for children's well-being in industrial countries; 1,9 % of children in Norway donot have these needs fulfilled, while the persentage in Romania is 70.



# Initiatives Directed to Children

High quality in day care facilities and schools to integrate children at risk and give language teaching in Norwegian.

Reduce social differences in access to education.

Special initiatives/services for minority children.

Develop including childhood environments.

Governmental funding to communities and voluntary organisations to specific initiatives to combat child poverty.



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# References

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*Photos: colourbox*

# THANK YOU



# Questions

1. How do you perceive child poverty in your country?
2. What is done from the Government to help families and children in poverty?
3. Do you have any suggestions to combat child poverty?



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