

Effects of education and training, youth and cultural activities on combating poverty and social exclusion

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Table of Contents

1. Background	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Definitions	1
1.2.1 Definition of poverty	1
1.2.2 Definition of social exclusion.....	2
1.2.3 Definition of education and training.....	3
1.2.4 Who are the poor and socially excluded in European regions?	4
2. Analysis of empirical evidence	5
2.1 Academic literature.....	5
2.2 Policy documents and papers	6
2.3 Drivers of social exclusion and poverty	9
3. Overview of main findings	11
3.1 Types of approach	11
3.1.1 Long-term, patient policies.....	11
3.1.2 Policies with a more narrow focus	13
3.2 Types of beneficiary	15
3.3 Actors promoting/financing measures.....	16
4. Good practice	17
4.1 Methodological remarks	17
4.2 Examples of good practice	18
5. Culture and sport as tools of social integration	34
5.1 Culture	34
5.2 Sport.....	35
6. Conclusions	36
Appendix I – References	37

1. Background

1.1 Introduction

Some 78 million Europeans, or 16 % of the population of the European Union (EU), are at risk of poverty. Poverty strikes in particular the unemployed, the disabled and the elderly; women are disproportionately at risk. Children and the younger generation are also affected. Even employment is not a guarantee against poverty: in-work poverty is on the increase, with some 8 % of employed people at risk of poverty. In Europe, low skills levels are a major driver of poverty and social exclusion (the average unemployment rate for low-skilled workers is around 10%, compared with 7% for those with upper secondary education and 4% for those with tertiary education).¹

There is no agreement in literature on how to define either poverty or social exclusion. Different disciplines emphasise different characteristics of poverty, and national policies or international organisations give different definitions. A short overview of different approaches and their common elements is given below.

1.2 Definitions

1.2.1 Definition of poverty

A distinction is made between *absolute* and *relative poverty*. The former concerns lack of access to the means of satisfying basic human needs and is mostly encountered in developing countries. However, even in advanced countries, lower-income citizens, particularly in light of the increasing income disparities of the last decade and the recent economic crisis, live in absolute poverty, and demographic changes, unemployment, immigration patterns and stringent economic policies risk aggravating the number of poor in the EU Member States (MS).

When speaking of poverty in the EU and OECD countries, we are mainly referring to relative poverty, using quantitative indicators.^{2,3} According to Townsend I "...the consensual deprivation approach defines poverty in terms of

¹ European Parliament, 2009.

² Examples of such indicators include: the share of the population with an income below the poverty line (defined as households of 50 % of median household income), share of the population with GDP per head below 1/3 of the national average, or the Gini index, which measures the extent to which the distribution of income (or consumption) among individuals or households within a country deviates from a perfectly equal distribution.

³ Buchanan, 2006.

*a standard of living unacceptable to the majority of the population. The validity of this approach rests on the assumption that there are not wide variations in the definition of necessities amongst the different groups in society. Otherwise, the definition of an unacceptable standard of living just becomes the opinion of one group against another."*⁴ The EU Social Inclusion Process uses a relative definition of poverty. *"People are said to be living in poverty if their income and resources are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living considered acceptable in the society in which they live. Because of their poverty they may experience multiple disadvantages through unemployment, low income, poor housing, inadequate health care and barriers to lifelong learning, culture, sport and recreation. They are often excluded and marginalised from participating in activities (economic, social and cultural) that are the norm for other people and their access to fundamental rights may be restricted".*⁵

1.2.2 Definition of social exclusion

Social exclusion is a much broader concept than poverty and is often associated with discrimination. Empirical concepts of social exclusion are studied based on the estimated transition probabilities. Youths are considered socially excluded if they are currently outside school/work and have a low predicted probability of re-entering in the near future.⁶ Sheila Kamerman defines social exclusion as a multidimensional concept which involves economic, political, cultural and other particular aspects of disadvantage and deprivation, all of which have a role in excluding individuals and groups from participation in society. She notes that although some scholars use the term interchangeably with poverty, social exclusion is increasingly focused on the lack of access to civil, political and social rights and opportunities.⁷ The socially excluded are people who do not have access to the basic amenities of life, the means to ensure a secure and autonomous livelihood, and the opportunity to participate in decisions concerning their own conditions.⁸ In the UK's comprehensive programme for the elimination of social exclusion it is also accepted that social exclusion is about more than income poverty. Social exclusion happens when people or places suffer from a series of problems such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, ill health and family breakdown. When such problems combine they can create a vicious circle. Social exclusion can happen as a result of problems faced by individuals during the course their life but it can also start from birth. Being born into poverty or to parents with low skills still has a major influence on future life chances.⁹ The

⁴ Gordon et al., 1999.

⁵ European Commission, 2004.

⁶ Raauma et al., 2009.

⁷ Kamerman, 2005; Buchanan, 2006.

⁸ Hjorth, 2003.

⁹ Buchanan, 2006.

inter-generational aspect (despite the undeniable possibility of mobility on the social ladder) suggests that to break the cycle of social exclusion may be a challenging long-term task for policy-making.

The EU has adopted definitions for both social exclusion and inclusion. Social exclusion is a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination. This distances them from job, income and education and training opportunities, as well as social and community networks and activities. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies and thus often feel powerless and unable to take control over the decisions that affect their day-to-day lives. Social inclusion is a process that ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It ensures that they enjoy greater participation in decision-making, affecting both their lives and their access to fundamental rights¹⁰.

In addition to the long standing legislative protection on the basis of gender, the EU has legislation banning discrimination on grounds of religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation in employment and discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin in employment, education, social protection and access to goods and services.¹¹

1.2.3 Definition of education and training

Education and training are considered here in their broadest sense. This includes lifelong learning as a fundamental principle designed to cover learning in all contexts – whether formal, non-formal or informal – and at all levels: from early childhood education and schools through to higher education, vocational education and training and adult learning. One of the objectives of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training is precisely the promotion of equity, social cohesion and active citizenship, recognising the crucial role they play in combating poverty and social exclusion.¹² In this context, even coaching aimed at teaching new behavioural patterns and thus helping integrate excluded individuals into society, is seen as a form of informal adult training.

¹⁰ The World Bank (2007).

¹¹ European Parliament, 2009.

¹² Council of the European Union, 2009.

1.2.4 Who are the poor and socially excluded in European regions?

The situation of poor people is determined by their income and access to basic necessities. If they are helped to find adequately rewarded employment they can easily and rapidly leave their situation of poverty. Since in most EU MS unemployment is lower among skilled people, the most frequently encountered measures addressing the problems of the poor and socially excluded are focused on their training, the challenge being to identify the appropriate skills for them to find employment in the local market. However, over-skilling or mis-skilling is also a frequently encountered problem. In some regions, unemployment of young graduates is higher than the average unemployment levels; this is a result of inappropriate longer term educational priorities and needs to be addressed in a broader context than just education and training to improve the immediate problem of the poor population of the region.

Socially excluded people in Europe are mainly the long-term unemployed, who are gradually pushed out of their social networks; low-skilled immigrants who are not assimilated in their host country¹³; ethnic minorities (e.g. Roma); religious minorities; people with disabilities and people who continuously, or during certain periods of their life, have had substance abuse problems (drug addicts, alcoholics); former prisoners; and people who have been in institutional care.^{14,15} The young generation is often particularly vulnerable to growing up in exclusion. Traveller children or Gypsy/Roma children, or groups classified by behavioural characteristics or by institutional setting, for example the permanently excluded, persistent absentees, young people with behavioural difficulties and young people who have grown up in care, may prefer to face exclusion by their own choice; psychologically, it may feel better to reject society than for society to reject them. However, this leads to their exclusion being perpetuated because it deters them from fighting for integration into the society that they reject.¹⁶

The following groups are the most vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion: ethnic minorities and immigrants; the homeless; children and families; ageing populations; the over-indebted and financially excluded; and those in need of health and social services.

¹³ This does not imply that all low-skilled immigrants are marginalised, only that there is a higher than average likelihood that they are.

¹⁴ MacDonald, Marsh, 2002.

¹⁵ Jahnukainen, 2007.

¹⁶ Buchanan, 2006.

2. Analysis of empirical evidence

There is a significant and growing literature on the co-existence of wealth and poverty in developed countries.

2.1 Academic literature

Academic literature from almost all branches of the social sciences addresses poverty and social exclusion: economics looks at the consequences of social exclusion for growth and development; sociology addresses marginalisation as a major challenge for rich, democratic societies; psychology investigates the role of externally-imposed exclusion versus self-exclusion.¹⁷ Certain authors tend also to identify a causality between the deterioration in the living standards of the worst-off members of all kinds of societies and the resurgence of free-market policies in the last decades.¹⁸ "Ethnic penalties" may stem from rather different sources, including discrimination by employers or self-exclusion processes; school-to-work transitions; and abandonment of job search sooner than nationals. The crucial questions for academic literature relate to the likelihood of an individual becoming poor or socially excluded. In specific studies the propensity for social exclusion is found to be (i) non-cyclical; (ii) much more prevalent among young adults in their early twenties than among teenagers; (iii) strongly dependent on family background; and (iv) independent of gender (in advanced countries), as pointed out for Norway.¹⁹

Understanding cross-country differences are another important element of academic research, studying structural characteristics, the incidence of benefits and taxes, the size of the system and the influence of the tax-benefit system on long-term behaviours and choices. Research tries to go beyond monitoring changes in poverty rates over time and to understand what gives rise to them, how much is directly due to tax-benefit policy changes versus other factors, what effects policy reforms (structural change) have and changes in the relationship between benefits/taxes and average original incomes (up-rating, inflation, earnings growth), changes in the distribution of original incomes and changes in individual/household characteristics (participation, unemployment etc, as well as household formation, fertility, etc.).²⁰

Academic research has pointed to a direct relationship between policies that redistribute cash income and measured outcomes. The risk-of-poverty rate after

¹⁷ Kalter, Kogan, 2006.

¹⁸ Jordan, 1996.

¹⁹ Raauma et al., 2009.

²⁰ Sutherland et al., 2008; Sutherland et al., 2009.

social transfers is self-evidently lower than before social transfers. But new evidence has increasingly recognised that redistribution and social protection can use modes other than cash; that activation policies have indirect as well as direct effects; and that low income is not always the same thing as poverty.

The basic conclusion that it is mainly education that helps eradicate poverty and contributes to the reintegration of socially excluded individuals is a general, interdisciplinary conclusion in the academic literature. Formal education has the longest track record, is standardised and its quality is increasingly assessed. Because of this it also plays a prominent role, is considered effective in building human resources and is appreciated in the labour market. However, recent policy initiatives suggest that adult education may be very effective, because unemployed and excluded individuals given a second chance in life are often highly motivated and react very positively to new opportunities. Similarly, informal modes of training, including on-the-job training and coaching, prove effective when social ties are developed between teacher and student. Informal training may have a higher impact on behavioural changes than on skills themselves and can, in that sense, prove invaluable for social inclusion. The problem with adult education and informal training is that they are difficult to compare and hence there are no generic quality standards. Their effectiveness ranges from almost negligible to very high. The reputation of such schemes is built up over longer periods of time in regional contexts and for this reason stability and repetition of successful schemes is strongly recommended.

Training and social networking in cultural and sports activities are mentioned as an original concept of social inclusion. However, no rigorous academic research is reported on the topic.

2.2 Policy documents and papers

Policy-related literature has also grown considerably in recent years. Policies are delivered in cycles: priority design, implementation and evaluation feed back into new design. Through this cycle, experiences accumulate and good practices can be identified and compared. International organisations have taken an active interest in poverty and exclusion. While the World Bank and most UN organisations are addressing poverty in the developing world, whose characteristics of mass illiteracy and unemployment make it totally different to developed countries, the OECD is looking at poverty and exclusion in high- and middle-income countries. The OECD's work focuses mainly on education and training, and on migrants. With regard to education, it finds a strong correlation between success in school and individual, as well as collective, success based on correlations outlined by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results. More specifically, the OECD strongly recommends education as

the best means to eradicate poverty in the short and long run, the general policy recommendation being that *"Governments should invest more money on children in the first six years of their lives to reduce social inequality and help all children, especially the most vulnerable, have happier lives"*.²¹ The OECD also confirms a tendency to self-discrimination in education. In most countries, girls and boys now show similar results in PISA, but a systematic assessment of gender differences shows that students are still being held back by their own gender-related perceptions.²² It also shows that exclusion of immigrants is likely to rise as they are now disproportionately affected by the ongoing economic downturn. This is especially the case for the many recent arrivals from the new EU MS.²³ The integration of immigrants is a particularly important issue in these challenging times as OECD countries grapple with the economic and financial crisis and the rapid rise of unemployment.²⁴ The organisation recommends that governments make better use of immigrants' skills; much greater emphasis needs to be put on helping recent immigrants learn the host-country language and become familiar with workplace practices. To be prepared for the future, *"governments need to act now to put proper policies in place to help satisfy labour needs partly through migration and enable the integration of migrants. Every OECD country should make this a priority. It is socially, politically, ethically and morally correct, but it is also an act of sheer economic rationality"*.²⁵

The EU has carried out several studies and adopted a wide range of policies and measures to support inclusion and diminish poverty.²⁶ These are best reflected in the Renewed Social Agenda (RSA), which is cross-cutting and multidimensional, covering areas from labour market policies to education, health, immigration and intercultural dialogue. Economic and social programmes at EU and national level are mutually reinforcing and complementary. The RSA is built around the three key goals of creating opportunities, providing access and demonstrating solidarity. Generating opportunities requires a continued effort to create more and better jobs and

²¹ OECD, 2009.

²² OECD, 2009b.

²³ OECD, 2009c.

²⁴ OECD, 2009d.

²⁵ OECD, 2009e.

²⁶ COM(2008) 423, Green Paper on *Migration and Mobility: challenges for the EU education systems*; European Commission and Council of the European Union (2009), *Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2009*; European Centre for Minority Issues (2006), *The Aspect of Culture in the Social Inclusion of Ethnic Minorities*; SEC(2006) 410 and SEC (2006) 345, Commission Staff Working Documents on the *Implementation and Update Reports on 2003-2005 NAPS/Inclusion and Update Reports on 2004-2006 NAPS/Inclusion and the Evaluation of the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion - A Synthesis of Replies by Member States and other actors to an evaluation questionnaire on the Open Method of Co-ordination in the fields of social inclusion and adequate and sustainable pensions*; COM(2008) 359 on *A Common Immigration Policy for Europe: principles, actions and tools*; Decision 1098/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the *European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010)*.

increase welfare. It means dismantling barriers, facilitating mobility, fighting discrimination, fostering gender equality, supporting families and tackling new forms of social exclusion. To exploit opportunities, individuals need access – to education, health care, and social services of general interest. They should be able to actively participate and integrate into the societies in which they live. Those individuals and regions that cannot cope and are left behind by the rapid pace of change need support. The RSA is therefore a solidarity agenda too – stepping up efforts to fight poverty and social exclusion and to explore new ways to help individuals adjust to globalisation and technological change. To do so, the EU has to be innovative in the way it sets policy frameworks, in its legislation, in bringing people together for the exchange of best practice and in catalysing new approaches.

The RSA recognises that demographic change is driving societal change and needs innovative policy responses. Increased life expectancy is one of Europe's greatest achievements. But, combined with declining fertility, the ageing of Europe's population requires major changes to the way we live, work and prepare for retirement. The population in the 15-64 age group is projected to contract by 48 million by 2050, and the dependency ratio will double over the same period. Public social expenditure has to adapt flexibly to take account of Europe's ageing population and changing work patterns. Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of welfare systems, notably via improved incentives, better administration and evaluation, and the prioritisation of spending programmes has become crucial to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of European social models. The EU is working in partnership with the MS to address common challenges, supporting their efforts to ensure equity and financial sustainability, while also pushing through the necessary health and pension system reforms: "(...)The Council has recently invited the Commission and the Economic Policy Committee to refine the analysis of social expenditure and the reforms necessary to ensure equity, efficiency and effectiveness".²⁷

Immigration is making a significant contribution to employment, growth and prosperity in the EU. Demand for migrants, particularly those with specific skills, is likely to increase over the coming years due to demographic change and labour market shortages in certain sectors and regions. The MS have also recognised the importance of joint action at EU level to address challenges linked to immigration and integration.

²⁷ European Commission (2008).

2.3 Drivers of social exclusion and poverty

Academic and policy conclusions converge in their findings on the drivers of poverty and social exclusion. In general these drivers include the macro factors of demographic change, the labour market and social policy.²⁸

Social exclusion is in part a function of *demographic change*. In a period of high birth rates, when young people reach working age, if there are not enough jobs, the unemployment rate will increase and thereby the risk of social exclusion. With an ageing population there will be more people on low retirement incomes, and with a high lone-parent population, there will be more children living on benefits unless mothers can be helped to enter the employment market.²⁹

Globalisation pressures and international inequalities have increased migration flows. In earlier decades immigration concerned mainly regions at the core of Europe and particularly Germany's large cities. The situation rapidly changed during the 1990s. In most regions, the share of foreigners has reached between 4% and 8% of the total population. This figure is likely to increase in the future, despite announcements of regulatory changes. Although there are no precise data available, illegal migration, which is at the core of social exclusion, is tending to grow, particularly in some European coastal regions.

Increasing income inequalities over the past decade and the economic crisis are further factors causing poverty to increase in the EU. Negative growth rates and reduced social transfers will affect the number of poor; as unemployment rates rise, the proportion of long-term unemployed, who are likely to be marginalised, will also increase. However, no matter how serious the economic crisis, it is a driver that is nevertheless expected to be of shorter duration than the other impacts mentioned above. Finally, numbers of ethnic minorities and people with disabilities are likely to remain stable or even decrease, whereas numbers of drug addicts and alcohol abusers vary among regions.

²⁸ Bradshaw, Kemp, Baldwin, & Rowe, 2004.

²⁹ Buchanan, 2006.

3. Overview of main findings

3.1 Types of approach

Measures in the social field are primarily the responsibility of the MS. The EU plays an active role by providing additional funding and ensuring the exchange of good practice through open coordination. With the adoption of the RSA, the focus has shifted to empowering and enabling individuals to realise their potential, while at the same time helping those who are unable to do so. This is leading to a shift from fund transfer as a key measure to a more active approach providing individuals with the social attitudes and skills that allow them to integrate into society and the labour market.

The range of approaches used in the regions of Europe can be grouped into two main, somewhat complementary, policy groups. The first group includes long-term, patient policies, which are used to tackle social inclusion early in life, diminishing the likelihood that citizens will spend periods of their lives poor and socially excluded. The advantage of such preventive efforts is that social losses are minimised and over time these policies are likely to have a lower cost. However, the disadvantage is that they do not resolve immediate problems. As a consequence and because of scarce means, the tendency is to adopt policies with a more narrow focus addressing immediate problems (the second main group).

3.1.1 Long-term, patient policies

The literature tends to agree that a longer-term approach is needed to achieve results. Tackling social exclusion in childhood is important because of its longer-term consequences. There are important continuities between disadvantages in childhood and a range of adverse outcomes in adulthood.³⁰ International evidence, for example from the United States, supported by findings in the UK, has suggested that good-quality provision in the early years can have a positive impact on children's educational achievement and long-term development.³¹ Children with access to pre-school education do significantly better at school at the age of seven than children who stay at home.³² Other studies point out that pupil guidance is a complex issue about which various stakeholders have different perceptions and express strong opinions. It is also clear that the provision of effective school-based pupil support has implications for a number of government initiatives that aim to raise attainment, reduce absenteeism, improve social inclusion, mainstream pupils/young people with

³⁰ e.g. Hobcraft, 2003; Buchanan, 2006.

³¹ Sylva et al., 2004; Gregg & Washbrook, 2003.

³² Sylva et al., 2004; Buchanan, 2006.

additional learning needs, provide individualised learning plans, ease the transition from school to employment, reduce youth crime, and improve the urban environment.³³ Some researchers claim that schooling can be improved through measures at the level of teachers rather than the pupils. Psychologists address the matter from a more global perspective. Teaching positive social cognitions can have beneficial self-regulatory outcomes in response to threats to social integration and performance in a school context.³⁴

The ways in which policies address the problem differ. It is, for instance, argued that approaches aimed at reducing social exclusion in school or early childhood classrooms are typically targeted at changing the behaviour of the rejected or isolated child, and do nothing to address the exclusionary behaviour of the peer group. An alternative approach is to alter the classroom climate to discourage social exclusion.³⁵ Many measures of this type are reported from the UK, but there is increasing evidence from other MS as well.³⁶ Since the 1990s, cultural diversity in Spanish classrooms has increased notably with the arrival of students of immigrant origin. This fact, together with the EU discourses about consideration of cultural differences, has contributed to the appearance in Spain, and particularly in Catalonia, of an intercultural discourse from exclusion to incorporation in the school and the classroom, passing through segregationist measures.³⁷

Another area where long term approaches are effective is the fight against stereotypes and prejudices. Social exclusion is identified as being the result of the reluctance of society to integrate citizens who are willing to adapt and accommodate. Xenophobia and racism, reluctance to employ convicted or disabled people but also milder forms of preconceptions based on the roles of men and women in professional life, deprive certain segments of the population of access to the labour market. But some evidence does show that these people can prove to be excellent workers. Working against deeply-rooted narrow-mindedness takes a long time, occasionally more than a generation. In certain regions such prejudices are more deeply rooted than in others. The means to address them include awareness-raising campaigns, the broader role of the media, good practices and systematic collection of evidence. In most cases such misconceptions exist and are addressed at national level, but in regions where certain excluded (or potentially excluded) populations are highly concentrated, campaigns can take on a local character.

³³ Wilson et al., 2007.

³⁴ Bochaca, 2006.

³⁵ Harrist, Bradley, 2003.

³⁶ Wilson et al., 2007; Harrist, Bradley, 2003; Buchanan, 2006; Chan, Goldthorpe, 2007.

³⁷ Bochaca, 2006.

Two serious problems are associated with this type of long-term approach: the difficulty of identifying and attributing results to specific measures and the influence of political doctrines in such approaches.

3.1.2 Policies with a more narrow focus

Long-term patient policies are costly and need time to prove themselves. Meanwhile, governments have to tackle the immediate problems. The most common approaches observed for these types of measure are:

(i) Access to various forms of education (formal or otherwise)

Formal and informal, and long- and short-term training are the most often encountered measures to fight poverty and social exclusion. In narrow-focus policies they are usually short-term and envisage specific skills demanded in the market. Concrete measures may be divided between measures to prepare educational strategies/material and measures that actually implement training. If employers cooperate, the schemes are likely to be more successful. Inclusive programmes set as their aims: helping to build a competitive economy and inclusive society by creating opportunities for everyone to develop their learning; releasing people's potential to make the most of themselves; and achieving excellence in standards of education and levels of skills.³⁸ This last aspect is especially important given that the literature cites high levels of attainment among disadvantaged groups as related to the high value placed on education by their parents.³⁹

But more individualised, shorter-term and narrow-focus forms of education are also very common. The challenge with this type of measure is to identify and match the abilities of individuals with the needs of the local market.

(ii) Counselling/mentoring

The role of counselling is generally accepted although its efficiency is controversial. However, experiments suggest that "identity capital" – comprising educational, social, and psychological resources – is a great advantage when it comes to entering and staying in employment. It addresses young people who leave full-time education at the minimum age of 16 and then spend a substantial period not in education, employment or training (e.g. because of poor educational achievement, but also as a result of inner-city living for boys and lack of parental interest in their education for girls). For young men the

³⁸ Buchanan, 2006.

³⁹ Buchanan, 2006.

consequences lie mainly in subsequent poor labour market experience. For young women, the majority of whom are teenage mothers, the damaging effects extend to the psychological domain as well. Effective counselling targeted at high-risk groups is needed to help young people avoid these damaging effects and make a successful transition to adult life.⁴⁰

Escape from social exclusion is particularly difficult for children and parents who have been rendered hopeless through discrimination, poor social conditions, community norms that may encourage low expectations, and domestic violence and child abuse, as well as for parents who worry that their children, because of their circumstances, will repeat the tragedies of their own lives. For this group of parents and children, it may not be enough to reduce the structural risks of social exclusion or to present new opportunities for education and training; given their experience, they will argue "these are not for me". People in this group need more support to take control of their lives, to develop the necessary skills, and to rediscover hope. This may explain the relative success of some of the mentoring schemes in education.⁴¹

(iii) Social networking

Socially excluded citizens develop their own self-exclusion and avoid interaction with other members of society. Before trying to offer them any type of training it is important to gain their trust. A variety of ways of promoting social networking have been studied, from filling stations to internet cafes. The socially excluded or people likely to be excluded in later life are expected to benefit significantly from being integrated into a culturally challenging community.⁴² There are several approaches to the analysis of cultural construction of sociability. Access to formal care services may be one particular form of social networking.

(iv) Cultural and sports events

Although in general the role of culture and sport is appreciated, cultural programmes usually prioritise the role of the culture over the role of social inclusion.⁴³

Using the arts to test arguments about the relationship between social stratification and cultural consumption can be helpful in examining the character of different social types, using a regression analysis that includes a range of

⁴⁰ Bynner, Parsons 2002.

⁴¹ Buchanan, 2006.

⁴² Lægren, 2002.

⁴³ Mason, McCarthy 2006.

demographic and stratification variables. The social types are more strongly differentiated by status than by class or income. Education is still more important than status, although the extent to which it should be interpreted as a stratification variable is questionable.⁴⁴ There are, however, very interesting examples to study. Integrating the distinct cultures of foreign resident youths is a challenge for Swiss political and educational institutions. An empirical survey of pupils and teachers in selected schools of the city and metropolitan area of Zurich investigated the potential of leisure activities in urban forests and public green spaces to facilitate social interaction between Swiss and immigrant young people. Patterns of socialising and making friends in these outdoor locations were found to differ depending on age, school level, gender and the percentage of immigrants in each residential area. Public urban green spaces were found to play an important role for children and youths in making contacts and friends across cultures, which is considered a pre-requisite for social inclusion.⁴⁵

Sport as a means of social networking is not found as a concrete measure in European countries but seems to be used in developing countries by donors to attract the young generation. Sport is covered below under chapter 5.

3.2 Types of beneficiaries

The main types of beneficiaries needing action and targeted measures by the public sector or NGOs include children, young people, and migrants. However, older workers and other vulnerable groups may also require support and are targeted by specific measures; areas where action is taken include:

- The employment rate and employability of older workers. This is a priority in countries with an ageing population, but it will be an increasing problem for most regions, as people live longer and social security rules are tending to raise the pension age. The basic feature of attracting senior people to work is to combine economic incentives with characteristics that make work more attractive. Finland is a model case in that respect, using a combination of measures for promoting health and functional capacity and making work more attractive.⁴⁶
- The inclusion of groups with special problems. These are very diverse groups, usually small minorities (ex-convicts, the mentally ill, former drug users and alcoholics, etc.) facing strong discrimination from the communities where they live and very likely to be discriminated against. Because of their

⁴⁴ Chan, Goldthorpe, 2007.

⁴⁵ Seeland et al., 2009.

⁴⁶ Parjanne, Hussi 2007.

small numbers, in most regions they tend to be neglected. In addition they may need special treatment; long-term policies to reverse prejudices seem more effective in this case.

There is no general pattern in Europe of measures addressing one type of beneficiary or more. A trade-off between focus on the one hand and economies of scale and visibility on the other suggests that this decision depends on funding and problems in each region.

3.3 Actors promoting/financing measures

Actors taking measures to fight against poverty and social exclusion generally include:

- national, regional and local authorities, usually by providing funds and often also delivery mechanisms;
- NGOs and volunteers, offering free time and skills;
- companies, through cooperation in hiring people (temporarily or on a longer-term basis) but also in training unskilled and semi-skilled workers.

Cooperation between the above actors is often observed and besides pooling resources it also benefits the schemes through complementarities.

4. Good practice

4.1 Methodological remarks

Some 120 national and regional programmes were reviewed at EU level to select a set of interesting examples of good practice for regions wishing to replicate them. As all of the examples were reported by their authorities as demonstrating good practice,⁴⁷ the selection was based on the following criteria:

- Only regional measures are reported. In some cases national schemes are interesting, but they are likely to be difficult to replicate at regional level. For this reason direct fund transfers in the form of unemployment allowances were not taken into consideration.
- Overall, examples of good practice addressing all types of poor and marginalised people were considered. In many cases support schemes address one specific category only, those addressing more than one category of beneficiaries being fewer in number.
- In terms of type of approach, both formal and informal training but also counselling/coaching were considered. The latter takes the form of informal training that makes a point of teaching how to adopt certain values and adapt to the behavioural rules of society.
- In terms of age, pre-school, school-age, active and retirement ages were distinguished.
- In terms of scheme management, both public and NGOs were considered.
- In terms of countries, while an effort was made to select examples from as many countries as possible, some MS seem to have a longer or more publicly available track record with combating poverty and social exclusion. They offer the most original examples of measures and are hence over-represented in the selection below.

⁴⁷In going through the programmes reviewed, it was noted that in general, when the administrative capacity of a region is limited, only less ambitious measures are adopted, which include conferences and guidelines without any concrete aims and measurable targets. However, reporting of bad practice is constrained by lack of access to confidential evaluation reports and/or lack of evidence that poor performance was due to shortages in design/implementation of the measure rather than to the setting of overly ambitious goals.

- Different ranges of budget are also described, so as to give regional authorities with different means ideas on what type of action to take.
- One trans-regional project is described to give an overview of how regions can join forces in the battle against social exclusion.

The examples below are presented in alphabetical order by country; they all relate to the field of education and training. A separate chapter (chapter 5) is dedicated to initiatives in the field of sport and culture.

4.2 Examples of good practice

Title	Credit account for people affected by poverty/persons without cash
Location	Austria. Cities of Vienna, Innsbruck, Salzburg, Graz, Klagenfurt
Field(s) of action	Training poor citizens to manage their income - immediate results
Reference	Austrian report on strategies for social protection and social inclusion 2008-2010

Reintegration of unemployed or socially excluded people into normal economic life through monitoring based on the opening of a bank account.

A bank, volunteers and NGOs have joined forces to help unemployed people to demonstrate to the banking system that they are able to manage their very low income (allowances or donations) and thus be reliable enough to open an account, often a requirement for getting a job or becoming involved in other activities. People with very low income and no access to the formal banking system are asked to participate in an NGO-run support programme, open a temporary account, to which their income is transferred, and use this account for their regular payments. People agreeing to participate in such a scheme and the subsequent monitoring are offered professional counselling by social workers and bank clerks, who support them in planning their household budgets. This helps the account-holders to regain control over their finances. Additional services such as a low-cost household insurance are offered. At the end of an agreed period, the customer has learned how to work with the banking system and may open an account with a regular bank.

Main lessons for transferability

It is important to make sure that clients with financial problems would be willing to accept the offer and do not see it as another case of discrimination. The role of volunteers is crucial. Initial appraisals show high participation levels and often successful transition to the formal banking system.

Title	“Mummy learns German” at nurseries and schools in Vienna
Location	Austria, Vienna.
Field(s) of action	Educating migrant mothers - immediate and long-term effects
Reference	Austrian report on strategies for social protection and social inclusion 2008-2010

Integration of immigrant mothers through language and social networking to help them and their children integrate in their country of residence.

The rationale for this project is that if immigrant parents do not integrate into their host country, not only they but also their children will risk being socially excluded. Thus special training is foreseen for immigrant and refugee mothers with low or no school education who have been in Austria for several years and failed to acquire German language skills. Having lost self-confidence over the years and with no financial means, they are unlikely to make an effort to learn the language. Formal lessons in a relaxed atmosphere are considered to be a good motivation. The language courses take place at nurseries and schools across Vienna and because premises are available the cost for the city, which is financing the initiative, is relatively low. A significant by-product of this measure is the establishment of social contacts, which help develop a favourable attitude towards the country of residence. 60.8% of participants think that they have been "quite" or "very" successful in acquiring and consolidating a basic knowledge of the German language. Slightly more than 50% also perceived improvements in speaking, writing, reading and listening comprehension. The course teachers stated that they perceived an increase in the contacts between the mothers with the teachers, the school administration and the headmaster's office (58.8%).

Main lessons for transferability

The contacts made with education experts and other parents at the course venues (nurseries/schools) as well as participation in parents' evenings, parents' forums, and events at nurseries and schools, are crucial elements for success. The low cost makes this measure easily transferable to other regions with high immigrant populations.

Title	Forward
Location	Denmark
Field(s) of action	Training combined with pilot employment scheme for drug and alcohol abusers – immediate effect
Reference	Danish report on strategies for social protection and social inclusion 2008-2010

Systematic initiative to ensure work or education for abusers when they have successfully completed their treatment

Drug and alcohol abusers face exclusion problems even after they are cured, for a variety of reasons: they have no self-confidence and no skills, and they face prejudices. This measure tries to address all these problems by coordinating treatment, traineeship and education with the aim of preventing relapse, while ensuring development and maintenance of participants' personal, social and professional competences. As participant motivation and risk of relapse are the most important elements, the initiative starts with work on self-esteem and will normally comprise counselling to prevent participants from relapsing. The measure is organised by an NGO at regional level. As 66% of the participants on the programme either found work or started some form of education, the success rate exceeded expectations. The integration of these people is expected to bring about a gradual reduction in prejudices in local society.

Main lessons for transferability

The main criteria for success when trying to reintegrate drug or alcohol abusers into society include patience (it takes time to convince people to participate in such programmes) but also altering the belief of abusers and the system/authorities that the situation is hopeless.

Title	Training-employment for young unemployed people
Location	France, Region: Bourgogne – immediate action
Field(s) of action	Training and employment of young unemployed people between 18-25 years – immediate action
Reference	Bourgogne Conseil Régional website , 2006 France report on " Trends, recent developments, active inclusion and minimum resources "

A cooperation agreement is signed between the Regional Authority, which is funding the initiative, and local companies to offer training and potential employment opportunities to unemployed people with basic skills but a background that hampers their employment prospects

This is a measure launched by the Regional Authority of Bourgogne and implemented in cooperation with local companies. It is one among a package of 27 measures with a budget of EUR 23 million to help address the effects of the crisis, which has created 4000 additional jobless people in the region within one year. The rationale behind the measure is that some unemployed young people have certain basic skills but are unable to access the labour market because of their social or cultural background. These people are, in principle, perfectly capable of being integrated in the regional economy if given the chance. In order to use their skills and test their performance, a number of local companies (bigger ones in general) offer up to six months of paid employment; during the pilot phase the participating companies undertake to train participants to improve their skills and subsequently to support them in finding a permanent position, if possible within the company, or otherwise elsewhere. Under the cooperation agreement the region pays the salary of the employee during the agreed period. Eligible unemployed people can apply for the scheme, while the process of selecting candidates and identifying and matching skills is undertaken by the local employment agency.

Main lessons on transferability

The main criterion for success with this measure is the *agreement between the regional authority and the local companies*, which takes the form of a formal contract between them. While the region can provide funding, companies offer the practical training needed to prepare people with very basic skills to become useful and productive in the current labour market.

Title	“Experience has a Future” programme
Location	Germany, Hesse
Field(s) of action	Retraining older unemployed people to re-enter the labour market – immediate action
Reference	German report on strategies for social protection and social inclusion 2008-2010

Training and compulsory insurable employment for older unemployed people.

The objectives of this initiative, which is implemented with the cooperation of a national agency, the regional government and a foundation (Randstad Foundation) are to maintain the professional knowledge and experiences of older unemployed people in working life, to prevent a drift into long-term unemployment and to offer a springboard for re-entry into the primary employment market through a period of employment subject to national insurance contributions. It is intended to combat the common prejudice of personnel managers that older workers represent potential problems. The initiative foresees: recruitment of participants by employment agencies; 4-week training with an educational establishment (financed by the Federal Employment Agency); 2-month placement in non-profit-making places of employment obtained by Hesse within the territory of the *Land*; 18-month compulsorily insurable employment (financed by Hesse) consisting of 12 months in local placements followed by 6-month placements by the personnel service agencies appointed by Randstad Foundation in jobs on the free market, with a view to reintegration into the employment market. The employment rate for people over 50 has started rising again in the region.

Main lessons for transferability

Getting older people into the labour market is very difficult and requires a systematic and individualised approach. Cooperation between different players, bringing together different skills, is helpful.

Title	Training unemployed people without vocational qualifications to obtain recognised vocational qualifications (QAB programme)
Location	Germany, Saxony
Field(s) of action	Training in modular form for unskilled unemployed people – immediate effect
Reference	German report on strategies for social protection and social inclusion 2008-2010

State support to obtain marketable vocational qualifications

The programme, organised by the State Ministry, adopts an individual approach to obtaining qualifications. Comprehensive discussions and tests are carried out with each participant in a one-week period of skills assessment, following which an opinion is given to each participant, containing a qualification recommendation in at least one vocational field based on personal aptitude. The training is in modular form and the qualifications obtained are certified. People who drop out before the end of the programme but receive a few certified training modules count as ‘successful’ participants, so that the funds invested in their training have at least added some value to their skills. Participation was a success, with dropout rates of only 5-10 %.

Main lessons for transferability

Selecting the right qualifications is important because employment opportunities ultimately depend on the market. Office workers, salesperson, assistant registered nurse, specialist warehouse keeper, geriatric nurse, chef, housekeeper, painter, varnisher, machine mechanic and media designer were the most successful training courses.

Title	InPact
Location	Germany, Rhineland-Palatinate
Field(s) of action	Educating and training immigrants – immediate action and long term
Reference	German report on strategies for social protection and social inclusion 2008-2010

Supporting immigrant families with integrating and following the education progress of their children.

The programme is sponsored by a consultant working together with regional bodies and research organisations. Its primary objective is to empower immigrant organisations and to raise the awareness and motivation of immigrant parents in relation to the value of education and skills but also to raise awareness among firms as to the economic potential of skilled immigrants. The means used included a series of seminars, training of "multipliers" who could then replicate trainings, setting up a website and on-line database for the curricula of skilled immigrant workers, printing a guide with information on recognition of school-leaving and educational qualifications, and vocational training diplomas.

Main lessons for transferability

Emphasis has to be given to the training of trainers to achieve multiplier effects. If larger populations are targeted, multimedia material and management tools need to be developed.

Title	DP9 EQUAL: Integrating disadvantaged people into employment
Location	Ireland, Border, Midlands and Western Region
Field(s) of action	Training of inactive young, unemployed people – immediate action
Reference	European Social Fund projects search engine web page

Designing and implementing an occupational guidance strategy

This is a strategic programme with the objective of building the capacity of partner organisations to create a "system change" in response to the European Employment Guidelines; piloting a support scheme and occupational guidance strategy for clients beginning to make an unemployment payment application, with a particular focus on younger people (under 25) with little or no employment experience and lone parents; developing tools to assist individual, occupational progression plans to integrate the unemployed into labour market measures.

Main lessons for transferability

Occupational guidance strategy, occupational progression plans and a psychometric package were the main tools used in the project.

Title	Clare Lifelong Learning Network
Location	Ireland, County Clare
Field(s) of action	Training a variety of poor and disadvantaged people – immediate action
Reference	European Social Fund projects search engine web page , Clare Lifelong Learning Network (CLLN) homepage

Development of an innovative lifelong learning system using ICT

The programme is very broad, addressing women, the low-skilled, people with disabilities, older people, migrants, ethnic minorities and early-school leavers. Its aim is to develop an innovative lifelong learning system by creating a formal structure of promoter collaboration and using ICT to develop alternative modes of programme delivery. This will enable a wide variety of community groups, voluntary organisations and state agencies to collaborate in the provision of a continuum of lifelong learning opportunities for learners in County Clare. Measures include creation of networks, development of curricula and learning plans, an ICT strategy, an interactive website and support for the development of quality assurance schemes.

Main lessons for transferability

Addressing larger populations makes support measures costly and complex, so the necessary resources and inputs are necessary.

Title	Starting a new life after serving time
Location	Italy, Sardinia Region
Field(s) of action	Training former prisoners for reintegration into professional life – immediate action
Reference	Project summary sheet, ENAIP website

Prisoners face severe difficulties in reintegrating into professional life after serving time, due both to low qualifications and lack of direction in their working lives. Early training can help avoid problems for them and society.

The basic rationale behind this type of project is that ex-prisoners are not easily incorporated into the labour market after serving time. There is a high likelihood of them becoming socially excluded and re-offending, and they need to be prepared in advance for their reintegration. The Sardinia region and Enaip Sardegna, a regional network of training institutions, put together two courses offering prisoners professional qualifications in mechanics and food technology. The courses, aimed in particular at those in the final phase of detention and close to re-entering working life, were introduced at Is Arenas prison following an initiative by the prison authorities and the local police chief. Courses were offered to 29 inmates nearing the end of their sentences at a total cost of EUR 260 000 for approximately two years. In addition to providing professional skills, the training was also designed to help individuals readapt to society generally. Five out of the 15 prisoners following the mechanics course obtained the final qualification, while the others were unable to finish due to ending their sentence or moving to another prison. Similarly, five out of the 14 food technology students were able to complete their course. The project intends to monitor the progress of the former prisoners over the next two years.

Main lessons on policies/policy measures

Ex-prisoners, like people with mental health problems, are minorities and their problems are very difficult to handle. Identifying the right skills for them and monitoring their progress well beyond the period of training is important for their reintegration.

Title	Local traditions and flavours revive a rural economy
Location	Portugal, Northern Portugal Region
Field(s) of action	Training women in rural regions – immediate action
Reference	Project summary sheet

Support to a cooperative in the region to reverse economic decline by capitalising on the growing consumer demand for traditional recipes and methods of production

The rationale behind this project is that women can enter the labour market by using their skills for traditional recipes and taking advantage of the increasing relevance of health foods. The region of Northwest Portugal is characterised by small-scale farms that combine the production of cereals, fruit and vegetables with cattle breeding. Because of increasing competition from large-scale, mechanised agriculture, many farmers have abandoned farming over the last few decades. VALDELIMA, a multifunctional agricultural cooperative, saw an opportunity to use high-quality produce from the region and to add value through the production of traditional marmalades and jams, as well as liqueurs and spirits. The measure, costing EUR 136 157 for one year, involved training 12 women over 14 months. The course focused on traditional recipes, health and safety, conservation and transformation techniques, basic accounting, and promotion and selling strategies. Of the 11 women that completed the course, two now work in VALDELIMA and others were encouraged to start up their own new businesses. VALDELIMA now has two shops and an on-line sales outlet together with other local producers.

Main lessons on policies/policy measures

Measures do not need to be implemented by the public sector; in some cases cooperatives and other business entities are more appropriate for ensuring the long-term viability of projects. Selling traditional products is more complex than just replicating traditional knowledge and extensive training is needed to get quality certification.

Title	Lugo, Abriendo Caminos (Opening Pathways)
Location	Spain, pilot project in the City of Lugo, later replicated in eight other Spanish regions.
Field(s) of action	Training and business start-up for a range of people with special needs – immediate action
Reference	Project summary sheet , Concello de Lugo website

In a city with particularly high unemployment services, provision of services to a wide range of people with special needs together with training or microcredit measures

The rationale of the project is that there are plenty of employment opportunities in the area of social services which often do not require high levels of formal qualifications. The total funding for one year was EUR 1 198 733. During the first year, 210 people were involved in the programme, of whom 194 completed the training and 93 found work. Around 90% of the participants were women, and nearly 18% were over 45. The training courses primarily focused on the delivery of social services to people with special needs, such as children, the elderly, the sick, or people with disabilities. Besides training and counselling services, the Opening Pathways programme also offered participants advice on how to become self-employed or how to set up a business. To help them get started, the City of Lugo teamed up with a local financial institution to provide microloans to local enterprises created as a result of the programme. Three such enterprises have now been established, mainly offering services to the elderly – a growing niche market due to the city’s ageing population. In March 2003 the Council launched its second programme, offering 13 new courses in a range of professions for which local and regional demand is growing. New initiatives were also launched, including three pilot projects aimed at creating enterprises that provide home-care services, and activities to support teleworking for people with disabilities.

Main lessons for transferability

Creating skills and finding employment opportunities for poor and unskilled people in the area of social services is a promising area because such people appear willing to work in this sector. Partnerships with banks to provide microcredit are also important to the success of such a programme, combining training with harnessing of entrepreneurship in an area of high emerging demand.

Title	Toolkits for gender equality
Location	Sweden, Gävleborg County
Field(s) of action	Educating the community on female employment – long-term project
Reference	Project summary sheet, Länsstyrelsen Gävleborg website

Female employment suffers from the stereotype than men are more suitable for certain jobs. An awareness-raising campaign can help overcome these prejudices.

The rationale behind this measure is that in the long term it pays off to invest in challenging age-old beliefs about the roles of women and men in the labour market and in society. Involving partners from all the local municipalities, the county council, the private sector and academia, this project, costing EUR 2 202 353 for three years, developed training programmes and other tools to raise awareness and change behaviour. The project aim is to persuade key players (i.e. those that have a wide sphere of influence such as politicians, teachers, employment advisors, executives and recruitment agencies) that the situation needs to change. The project also helps them to take action. Some 250 people have already participated in an introductory training programme; it starts by providing the facts – the history behind the statistics – and then takes participants through a process of internal reflection to help them understand how they adopt traditional stereotypes. Focus groups are developing training sessions targeted at different professions, such as doctors, teachers and healthcare professionals, as well as a film on gender stereotypes. It is expected that participants in the initial training sessions will act as leverage and create a multiplier effect.

Main lessons for transferability

It is important to combine immediate action with measures aimed at changing long-term behaviours. However, this can only succeed if regional authorities are willing to invest in measures that require patience, and it is difficult to prove the direct impact of such measures.

Title	Integrating immigrants into the Swedish workforce
Location	Sweden, Blekinge County
Field(s) of action	Learning through work placement and coaching – immediate action with potential longer-term effects
Reference	Project summary sheet

The target of the project, costing EUR 368 000 per year, was to integrate immigrants into the labour market, providing interpreting services for employers and participants as well as other tailor-made services. Two people worked full-time with the immigrants and saw each participant individually to get a good understanding of their needs. Together, they devised a personal employment plan for the participant to follow. The individual was accompanied by a coach to their work placement and then to their new place of work to support them through the difficult early stages of finding, and staying in, a new job. The work placements were varied, from manual work in fish processing to learning structural design. The attempt to boost self-confidence worked. Around 130 immigrants took part in the scheme, 101 found work and four started a restaurant business or opened a shop.

Main lessons on policies/policy measures

Standard placement services for immigrants are inadequate because there is a need for an interface between employers and employees if they are from different cultural background. For such a measure to succeed, important input is needed from support organisations, going beyond simple technical matching tools to address the individual mentality and behaviour of employers and employees.

Title	Edinburgh women's training course (EWTC), a launchpad for employment in Scotland
Location	UK, Edinburgh
Field(s) of action	Training unemployed women – immediate target action
Reference	Project summary sheet

Unemployed or very low-paid unskilled women are helped to access the labour market via access to a job or qualification

The measure addresses mainly women who wish to return to work after a break or those who wish to combine work with childcare. The rationale is that, while they are willing and able to contribute to the household and regional economy, their qualifications are not recognised or are outdated. EWTC has been running since 1988 and has continued without interruption because of its proven track record in getting women back to work and building self-confidence. For the first four years it had EUR 875 000 of funding, with co-financing from the European Social Fund, the City of Edinburgh Council and Edinburgh's Telford College. The process is strictly selective: around 100 women apply each year for just 30 places. Candidates must live in Edinburgh, have low, no or outdated qualifications, and be unemployed or in casual low-paid work. Many students are single parents or older women returning to work. They are trained in skills required by the market (this has evolved over the years from electronics to hardware and multimedia). The course offers different training modules leading to up to 14 different qualifications recognised by the Scottish Qualification Authority and the European Computer Driving Licence. A 10-week work placement completes the course, providing a practical opportunity to implement the skills learnt. Evaluations point to a success rate of 75% of graduates finding employment, becoming self-employed or going into higher education.

Main lessons of transferability

For high success rates, programmes may need to be very selective and disappoint a significant share of applicants. For programmes that include training, it is important to have some kind of formal qualification recognition. The longevity of successful programmes gives them a special status and creates trust and visibility for applicants.

Title	CASE - Cities Against Social Exclusion
Location	Cooperation between nine cities from five MS
Field(s) of action	Training authorities to improve social inclusion schemes – long-term project
Reference	Project summary sheet

Setting up of a partnership between European cities through which they can learn from each other how best to fight social exclusion

This is a measure aimed at intense informal training of cities' administrations wishing to focus on the fight against social exclusion (Olomouc-Czech Republic, Komarno-Slovakia, Krakow-Poland, Gelsenkirchen and Hamburg-Germany, Arad and Pécs-Romania). The scope was to identify examples of good practice and develop innovative and multidisciplinary methods and solutions for improving social exclusion in the partner cities, in particular focusing on areas that have suffered most from economic transition and segregation processes in the past. Models for dealing with segregation and social exclusion were developed and applied in all CASE cities and tested for their transferability to other cities.

Main lessons of transferability

Interregional cooperation makes sense mainly for the identification and transfer of best practice. In order to maximise the effectiveness of measures, training the administration and organisations that deal with social exclusion is as important as training the people themselves.

5. Culture and sport as tools of social integration

In the context of this report, measures are defined as concrete initiatives of authorities or organised groups with a specific budget and a defined primary objective of combating poverty and promoting social inclusion. The examples of good practice reported in Chapter 4 were selected on the basis of this definition. However, measures can also be interpreted in a broader sense and include approaches with different primary objectives that may prove very helpful in addressing social inclusion. This concerns mainly initiatives in the areas of sport and culture, which are increasingly suggested as an indirect but effective means of promoting inclusion. However, there are few concrete initiatives undertaken and generally these neither have explicit performance indicators nor are monitored by the authorities, which probably has to do with their indirect and long-term effect. Nevertheless, they are particularly interesting as a topic of emerging relevance and the approaches are worth trying out.

5.1 Culture

The European Commission specifically draws the attention of the MS to the role that services, including the cultural sector, can play in alleviating the risk of exclusion; it has argued that MS should develop, for the benefit of people at risk of exclusion, services and accompanying measures that allow effective access to education, justice and other public and private services, such as culture, sport and leisure. However, an extensive report noted that these strategies do not make a strong link between culture, the cultural sector and social exclusion: *"Vague formulations of the relevance of culture and cultural dialogue may be found but operationalisation of cultural policies as auxiliary measures to social inclusion policies do not exist in the strategies evaluated. Consequently, goals and targets are not set and cultural indicators are not developed. Most interestingly it is claimed that supporting folklore contributes to rather than alleviates prejudices and stereotypes"*.⁴⁸

The city of Lyon provides an example cultural policy being put at the service of neighbourhood social development through the creation of a cultural cooperation task force. The task force allows those involved in social development to work with the cultural department (which, in turn, is working in close co-operation with the regional development department of the city of Lyon, co-financed and co-mandated by the government and the region) to put local residents at the heart of cultural initiatives. The task force implements the

⁴⁸ European Centre for Minority Issues (2006).

cultural component of the urban social cohesion contract (Lyon CUCS), common cultural policies dealing with general questions of urban and social development, and a Cultural Cooperation Charter, which now involves 20 large cultural institutions that make a major contribution to social development. As a result, the Opera, Municipal library, Museum of Contemporary Art, Lyon National Orchestra, museums, various theatres and other institutions all took part in thematic and regional schemes, integrated or otherwise within the CUCS (cultural diversity, memories and life experiences, urban culture, cultural practices of residents, culture and social inclusion, etc.). As regards financing, the Charter has made use of common entitlements through the internal reallocation of a part of each body's budget. In 2008, the budget assigned to neighbourhood cultural projects stood at 0.45% of the city's cultural budget, compared with 0.3% until then, which represents an increase of 50%.⁴⁹

5.2 Sport

Similarly, there are efforts to address the problems of groups in danger of exclusion through sports policy, but this is not a sphere where the primary objective is to support inclusion. The Nice Declaration underlines that *"sporting activity should be accessible to every man and woman, with due regard for individual aspirations and possibilities"*. It also recognises that *"for the physically or mentally disabled, the practice of physical and sporting activities provides a particularly favourable opening for the development of individual talent, rehabilitation, social integration and solidarity and, as such, should be encouraged"*.⁵⁰ But sport and inclusiveness represent a right rather than a measure.

For instance, recent major strategies in Scotland have focused on raising levels of participation in sport specifically and physical activity more generally. Sport 21, Scotland's national strategy for sport, emphasises that age should not be a barrier to participation and that older people represent a priority due to their current significant under-representation in such activities.⁵¹

A small number of local authorities and other public bodies in the UK have invested in inland waterway community projects – not externally evaluated – to deliver social benefits. Small-scale cases have addressed children excluded from school; people leaving prison; previously housebound women gaining employment; offenders carrying out community service orders; people with mental health problems; and young people from multi-ethnic backgrounds.⁵²

⁴⁹ [Site du Contrat Urbain de Cohésion Sociale \(CUCS\)](#)

⁵⁰ European Council (2000).

⁵¹ [UK Sport Development info website](#)

⁵² [IWAC \(2009\)](#)

6. Conclusions

Poverty and social exclusion are a serious problem in the EU MS, and are more concentrated in certain cities and regions than in others. This is likely to be aggravated in the short run due to the current economic crisis, and in the longer run due to demographic trends, which show an increase in the share of the population likely to be unemployed, low paid or socially excluded. The elderly, the unemployed, immigrants and lone-parent families are the most vulnerable categories.

When in the past academic research demonstrated the importance for society of supporting vulnerable groups, national policies ensured the transfer of resources as a form of solidarity. However, more recent academic research, policy experimentation and recommendations of international organisations have shifted emphasis from transfer of funds to active inclusion policies, aimed at giving the poor and excluded the means and skills to be employed and integrated into economic and social life. In this active inclusion approach, policy proximity matters and the regions are called upon to play a much more active role. The EU has recently developed key documents recommending such approaches.

Active policies at regional level need to be focused, to analyse the local situation and to address specific population segments. Long-term approaches aimed at changing attitudes and prejudices in society and at improving the trust and willingness of individuals to integrate are more effective. However, as they are costly and their outcomes are unclear (not easy to attribute results to measures) they are less frequently encountered and are complemented by measures geared towards immediate results. Formal and informal training in various forms proves to be an invaluable tool here.

Good practice suggests that training may be targeted at individual groups or at more vulnerable groups under broader schemes. What matters is the behavioural dimension, gaining trust and the quality of training provided. Success is based on cooperation between authorities, NGOs and companies willing to be directly involved in on-the-job training and to pilot the employment of poor and unemployed people. Interregional cooperation to share good practice is a good way of training the organisations involved in ways of reducing poverty and social exclusion.

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