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# Poverty Among Us

Sightseeing around Europe  
through the eyes of Caritas:  
listening, understanding and  
combating

Poverty

in the XXI<sup>th</sup> Century

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By Prof. Dr Erny Gillen

Zurich, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010



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## POVERTY AMONG US



Part A : An Analytical Approach



# Methodology & Approach

1 working group within the Task Force  
2010 made up of:

- 1 coordinator
- 4 members of the Caritas Europa Secretariat
- 5 representatives of different MOs
- 4 Academic & «Caritas Mainstreet » consultants

Contributions, interviews and a  
continuous feed-back on the text from  
more than half of the network of 48  
organisations in 44 (very different)

European countries

# Methodology & Approach

A circular dialogue between  
experience and theories

analytical approach + empirical approach

No figures but a common approach to  
be established

We know the poverty statistics and we have a lot of micro-  
information ourselves, at different levels;

As a network, we lack uniformity and capacity in data  
collection and analysis because of the lack of a common  
approach to poverty

We decided to - try to - establish  
one at European level

## Fact & figures from our work

- **THE NETWORK: 44 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES INVOLVED**
- **THE PEOPLE: ABOUT 50 PARTICIPANTS FROM 26 COUNTRIES**
- **THE TOOLS: INTERVIEWS, LIFE STORIES, BEST PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES**

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# CONTENTS OF THE PAPER:

*Poverty is a scandal...*

*How we dealt with it....*

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Open your eyes and look at poverty.  
Open your ears and listen to the  
voices of poor people.  
Open your heart and meet people.  
Open your mind and understand:  
we all are human persons!

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Open your eyes and look at poverty.  
Open your ears and listen to the voices of poor people.  
Open your heart and meet people.  
Open your mind and understand: we all are human persons!

The divide between the so-called poor people and those who are living in wealth is artificial and mainly man-made. The actual financial and economic crisis is deepening and sharpening that divide. This divide is harmful to the society as a whole and to each single person. Nobody should live in poverty because of unjust structures or unfair conditions. «Zero poverty» is our moral claim. Caritas therefore believes that our societies need a new framework in which human rights are fully acknowledged and protected not because of sheer legal necessity, but because of the recognised dignity of the human person who is the source and the end of all rights and obligations. We believe that every single person is an image of God.

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If you are going to open this paper you will find tools (part A) and stories (part B). Both are designed to be eye-openers to poverty in its diversity and multifaceted reality. Whether you choose to access the land of poverty through some proven analytical lenses or through real life stories, you will be guided by your own perception(s) and experience(s). Be open to convert your perspective(s) and test the approach chosen by those in our Caritas network who encounter poor people every day and those who study the phenomenon of poverty. We believe that every single person is a son or a daughter of God through Christ our Savior.

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Caritas in Europe wants to contribute to a new way to look at poverty. Poverty is more than a lack of wellbeing. It affects the person in its body, its soul and its life. It affects the community where he or she lives. We can't afford to lose a single person as a community of human beings. We have to repair unfair conditions from the past, avoid new injustices for the present and for future generation(s). This is what we commonly call responsibility. This principle of responsibility gives meaning and sense to our actions and behaviours beyond their most immediate and material impact. We and our fellow citizens are directly and indirectly affected by such actions and behaviours.

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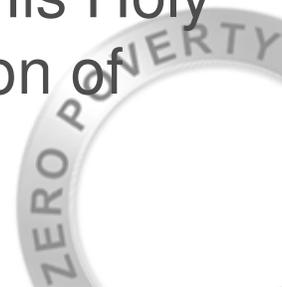


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But there are solutions, and they lay in our hands. Changes are possible. Caritas is a witness of changes in people who live in poverty and, still, succeed in crafting their lives and destinies. Through its work with poor people and through its advocacy efforts towards the public authorities, Caritas advocates for sustainable living conditions for all by proposing concrete actions. Living responsibility can change ours and the life within the “City”, “City” here refers to the organised community we are living in and which by now is becoming more and more global and interdependent. We believe that we are interlinked through His Holy Spirit and therefore living in a communion of human persons beyond any borders.

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Caritas as a charitable organisation of the Catholic Church does not differentiate between the people it serves and works with.

Proselytism is even contrary to its nature and its mission (cf *Deus Caritas Est*, 31, c).

Working with poor and ill people puts Caritas at the centre of the societal struggle between exclusion and inclusion. Inclusion is more than a key concept of the European Union which hopefully puts the fight against poverty among its priorities beyond the European Year of Combating Poverty in 2010.

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Inclusion is an obligation directly linked to human rights. Inclusion might be seen as another way to build communion. This means that a process of active inclusion cannot be a unilateral task assigned to those who are lacking resources or those who are providing resources. It is a task for the whole community or “City” and one could even argue that the fittest have the greater duty in this dynamic and reciprocal process.

Enabling others to live to their full potential is contributing to the full and true development of all persons and to the whole person (Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 14; Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 11). Empowerment of the poor in the end means also empowerment of the whole community and the “City”.

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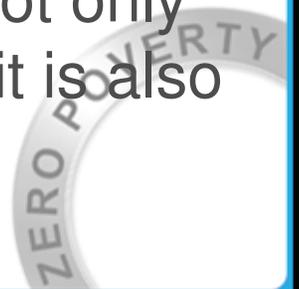
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Recognising the poor as fellow citizens who contribute to building the «City» in the same way as all those who consider themselves self-supporting or independent people is to recognise that we all are in need of one another. The scientific approach chosen in this paper leads to the same conclusion.

Sociologically speaking, we are not abstract monads. We are part of a society and we are building the future of that same society by our actions and omissions, by our behaviour and our silence. Mutual interdependency or solidarity should not be undermined by those who feel secure or beyond any risks. Not only can this change quickly but, above all, it is also a fundamental anthropological error.

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Recognition is both given and received. Only those who are open to receive recognition can share it later. It is a source in which we are born to contribute continuously. Recognition means gratitude. Caritas is a place of gratitude. Many people in need express their gratitude to those who are able to help – albeit as professionals or as volunteers. This gratitude mirrors the real challenge of the “formation of the heart” (Deus Caritas Est, 31, a). Nobody is at the starting point of the source of recognition and gratitude. Everything starts with «Deus caritas est» as our Pope Benedict XVI summarises. God is the source and the end of all human beings and of all our undertakings.

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I extend my personal gratitude to those who have worked hard in order to produce this poverty concept paper: Patrizia Cappelletti, Hubert Cornudet, Seán Healy, Carlo Knöpfel, Sébastien Mora Delgado, Adriana Opromolla, Paolo Pezzana, Miriam Pikaar, Robert Urbé, Gabriela Sonnleitner and Simone Villiger, and to the people behind the pages of wisdom and praxis, of science and reflection, who have shared their lives and experiences, especially in the empirical part. May their work be recognised in our Caritas network and beyond as an attempt to lay new foundations for the ways we look at poverty.

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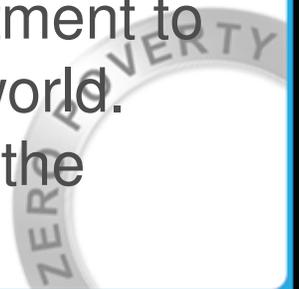


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This concept paper is the foundation of a series of specific papers which will develop particular themes and concerns within the broad field of poverty. Together those papers want to build a resource “library” for social workers, politicians, decision-makers and researchers. Each paper was elaborated by a group of experts and approved by the Social Policy Commission of Caritas Europa. Thank you to all those who have contributed within the task forces, the commission and the secretariat general in Brussels to this result, which has received the valuable sponsorship of the European Commission under its program PROGRESS. May the Year 2010 be a renewed commitment to combating poverty in Europe and in the world. May «zero poverty» become the claim of the whole «City»!

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Five steps & Five words

**LISTEN!**

**THINK!**

**LEARN!**

**CHANGE!**

**LET'S MOVE  
TOGETHER!**

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**LISTEN**

*“The economic crisis has forced about a million people to migrate elsewhere. Those who return cannot find a job or other opportunities of social integration. Many people show signs of depression that affect the well-being of the whole family, the community, the society to a greater extent...” (ALBANIA)*



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“Absolut gesehen, nimmt der weltweite Reichtum zu, doch die Ungleichheiten vergrößern sich. In den reichen Ländern verarmen neue Gesellschaftsklassen, und es entstehen neue Formen der Armut. In ärmeren Regionen erfreuen sich einige Gruppen einer Art verschwenderischer und konsumorientierter Überentwicklung, die in unannehmbarem Kontrast zu anhaltenden Situationen entmenschlichenden Elends steht.”

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Quelle: Caritas in veritate Nr 22

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## LISTEN



*“Many asylum seekers arrive in Athens every day. They escape Afghanistan, cross Turkey and land in Greece, but their dream is to reach Austria. We provide food, clothes, but we cannot help them all. Many of them think that Europe is a paradise. They spend all their money to reach their destination, but are caught on their way. To go on is then impossible, they can't go back either, because they could be killed! They often ask me: “Who am I? What will I do?”. I can't answer... These people are caught in limbo”* (GREECE)

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## Listening to poverty: welfare & well-being...(1)

*In short, we considered poverty as a **lack of well-being***

*Many multi-dimensional factors produce well-being, but when considering the **structural social factors**, we find three basic conditions:*

- The possibility for all people to **manage daily life for themselves and their families**. This includes spending on food, housing, health, mobility and societal participation.
- The possibility for all people to **protect themselves against social risks** such as unemployment, sickness, accidents and disability.
- The possibility for all people to **guarantee their living conditions in case of retirement** by (social) insurances and/or by saving for their old age.

*We call this complex : **SOCIAL WELFARE***

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## Absolute Armut

Das Einkommen in Geld oder Naturalien reicht nicht für die Befriedigung der Grundbedürfnisse wie Nahrung, Trinkwasser, Kleidung und Obdach aus.



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Quelle: Hast du nichts, dann bis Du nichts?, Ursula Nothelle-Wildfeuer (Hrsg), Lambertus Verlag, Jesu Seligpreisung der Armen und die Caritas, Text von Klaus Baumann



## Relative Armut

Bezeichnet die soziale Benachteiligung im Vergleich zum durchschnittlichen Lebensstandard einer Bevölkerung. „Relativ“ bezieht sich primär auf die eigene Bevölkerung. Sekundär kann diese Armut auch sehr „relativ“ sein, weil diese statistische Armutslinie einer bestimmten Gesellschaft im internationalen Vergleich schon Reichtum bedeuten kann.



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## Neue Armut

Wird die Armutssituation von meist arbeitslosen gesellschaftlichen Randgruppen genannt, deren Abgleiten in absolute Armut durch das (in der Regel von staatlichen Vorgaben gewährleistete) soziale Netz verhindert wird.



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## Tertiäre Armut

Diese Bezeichnung steht für eine Situation, die nicht aus der „objektiven“ (d.h.: ökonomisch-strukturellen) Lebenslage resultiert, sondern aus sozialer und kultureller Deprivation (zu denken wäre etwa an verschiedene Erscheinungsformen von sozialer Isolation und Vereinsamung, auf die auch Mt 25,31-46 hinweist: krank, gefangen, fremd).



# Politische und kulturelle Armut

Zur Armut als „Mangel an lebenswerten Gütern und Dienstleistungen“ gehören auch die „politische Armut“ (verstanden als Mangel an Rechtssicherheit und Partizipation) und die „kulturelle Armut“ (verstanden als Verlust kultureller Identität und Erosion von sinnstiftenden Traditionsbeständen einschließlich Bildung).



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra



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**Aktuell** **Themen** Regional International Infothek Dienstleistungen Institutionen

Bundesamt für Statistik > Themen > 17 - Politik > Wahlen > Indikatoren > Nationalrat > **Wahlbeteiligung**

## Wahlen – Indikatoren Wahlbeteiligung

Quelle:  
<http://www.bfs.admin.ch>

### Wahlbeteiligung in %

1971-2007

Wahljahr	Wahlberechtigte	Wählende *	Wahlbeteiligung
1971	3'549'426	2'018'077	56.9
1975	3'735'037	1'955'740	52.4
1979	3'864'285	1'856'651	48.0
1983	4'068'940	1'989'960	48.9
1987	4'214'595	1'958'456	46.5
1991	4'510'521	2'076'901	46.0
1995	4'596'209	1'940'622	42.2
1999	4'628'782	2'004'408	43.3
2003	4'779'733	2'161'921	45.2
2007	4'915'563	2'373'071	48.3

\* Eingelegte Wahlzettel

BFS/Statistik der Nationalratswahlen



Arapahoe



Chippewa



Cheyenne



Quelle: Hast du nichts, dann bis Du nichts?, Ursula Nothelle-Wildfeuer (Hrsg), Lambertus Verlag, Jesu Seligpreisung der Armen und die Caritas, Text von Klaus Baumann

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## *Why is there poverty?*

**THINK**

*“There are too many factors... There is an inter-generational transmission: if you are born in a poor family, the chance that you will lead a life in poverty is much higher than for another person. This means that it doesn't depend on you! Secondly, there are structural issues: the social insurance system, the labour market, and housing are not equally accessible to all. In the long term, a poor person will tend to remain so”*

(MALTA)

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## **Thinking about poverty and well-being**

*The social welfare needed for well-being requires sources; we find them especially:*

- i) In **paid productive employment** in the labour market;
- ii) In the **solidarity within the family** and primary networks;
- iii) In the support provided by the **welfare state**.

*All 3 affected by social, economic and demographic transformations .*

*Listening to the poor with an analytical tool, you will better understand how:*

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[www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr](http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr)

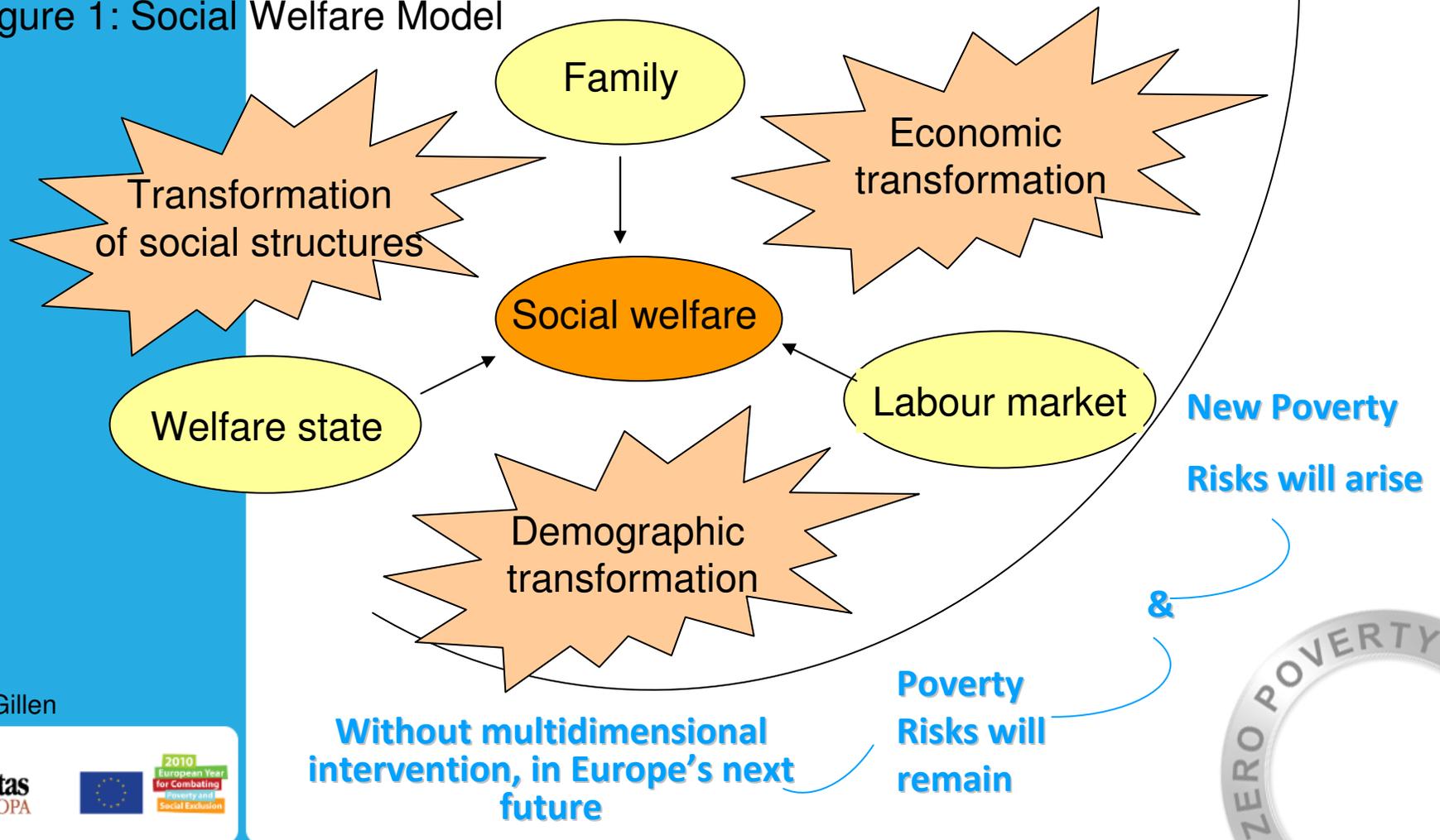


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## A first tool: An analytical model

Figure 1: Social Welfare Model



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## *What can we do now?*

### **LEARN**

*We have observed a poor area along the border and studied 70-odd villages with their populations' needs and especially their opportunities. We have tried to understand the potential of this territory and its population and have transformed this study in a community development project. There is no land without future, only land without projects..." (PORTUGAL)*

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**What  
can we  
do now?  
LEARN**

*“We go on site with home care services, we enter people’s homes, their private lives. It is the only service that approaches people in their environment. What are these people’s expectations? At times, it is only medical counselling, at times they only want you to stay there with them... You have the possibility to become their hands, thoughts and voices ...”*

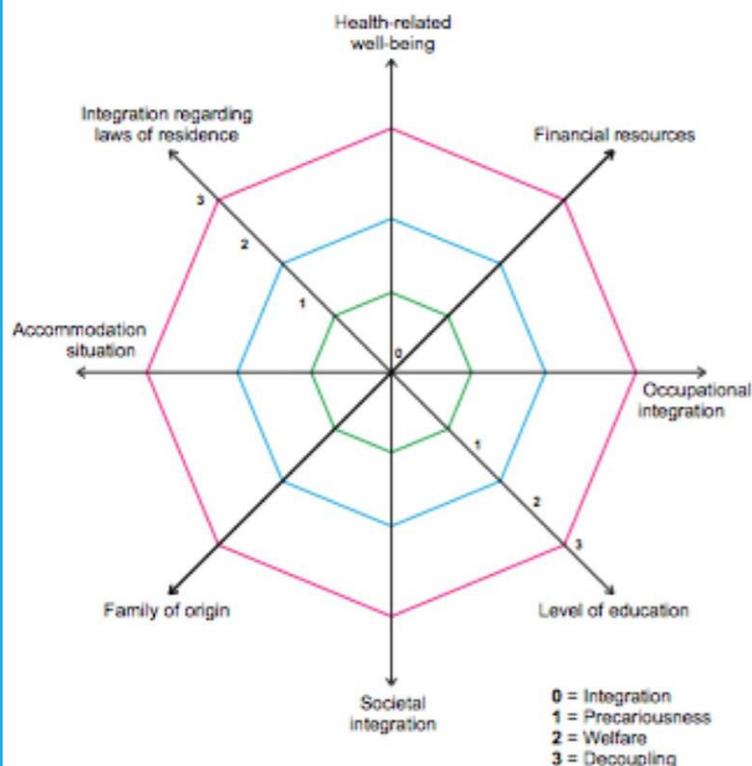
*(BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA)*

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## Beyond material poverty: a second tool for multidimensional assessment

Figure 2: Dimensions of Poverty



*A multidimensional grid of 8 axes  
to assess situations,  
discover poverty and its roots (even in  
yourself),  
conduct the right interventions,  
save precious resources...*

*On the **Caritas Zurich** website you can assess your own  
situation through this grid, by answering 40 questions.  
Using a similar model as an assessment tool for all  
Caritas services would be an advancement in our  
activities as a network*

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## Wie gut sind Sie in unsere Gesellschaft integriert?

Finden Sie's heraus mit unserem 10 Minuten Online-Test. In unserem Online-Test verwenden wir ein Modell mit acht verschiedenen Ausprägungen gesellschaftlicher Integration. Diese reichen von finanziellen Ressourcen über berufliche Integration und Bildungsnähe bis zum gesundheitlichen Wohlbefinden. Die Integration kann in allen Dimensionen sehr unterschiedlich sein. Im Modell unterscheiden wir darum vier Zonen:

0=Die Zone der vollständigen Integration; wer sich hier befindet, ist integriert. 1=Die Zone der Prekarität; hier stehen Menschen in heiklen Lebenssituationen.

2=Die Zone der Fürsorge, in welcher sich Menschen mit regelmässiger Unterstützung im Alltag befinden

3=Die Zone der Entkoppelung, in der die staatliche Hilfe nicht mehr greift.

Das Modell dient zur Veranschaulichung, wie gut eine Person oder ein Haushalt integriert ist. Dazu wird der Integrationsgrad auf jeder Achse eingetragen. Verbindet man die Werte miteinander, entsteht ein Gitternetz bild in Form eines Achtecks.

Je grösser die weisse Fläche, desto geringer die gesellschaftliche Integration.

PS: Ihre Daten werden anonymisiert und nicht gespeichert.

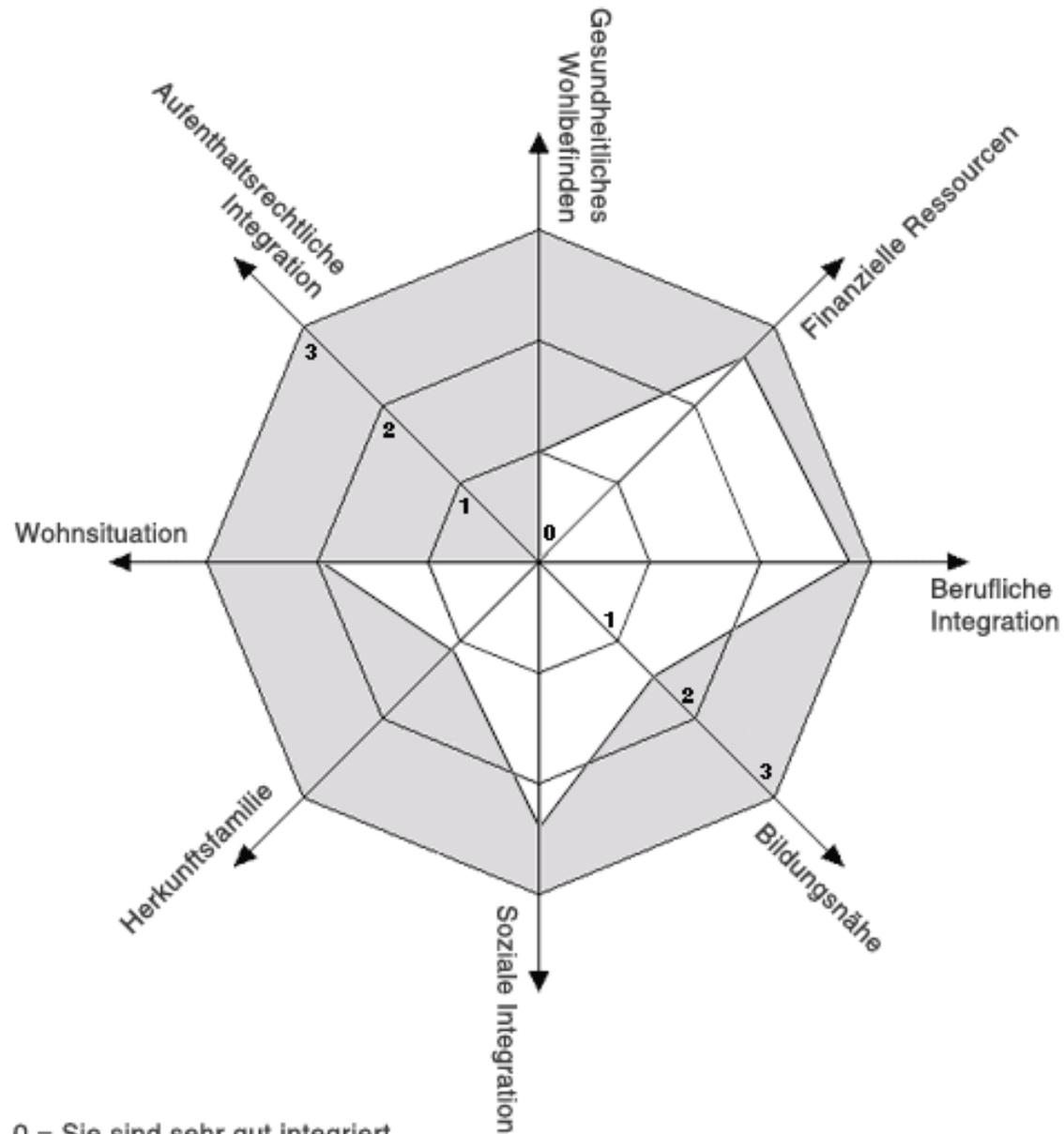
Wir wünschen Ihnen spannende Erkenntnisse beim Testen unseres Integrationsmodells!

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- 0 = Sie sind sehr gut integriert.  
1 = Ihre Integration weist Lücken auf.  
2 = Der Grad Ihrer Integration ist problematisch.  
3 = Sie sind weitgehend nicht integriert.

<http://www.integrationstest.ch>

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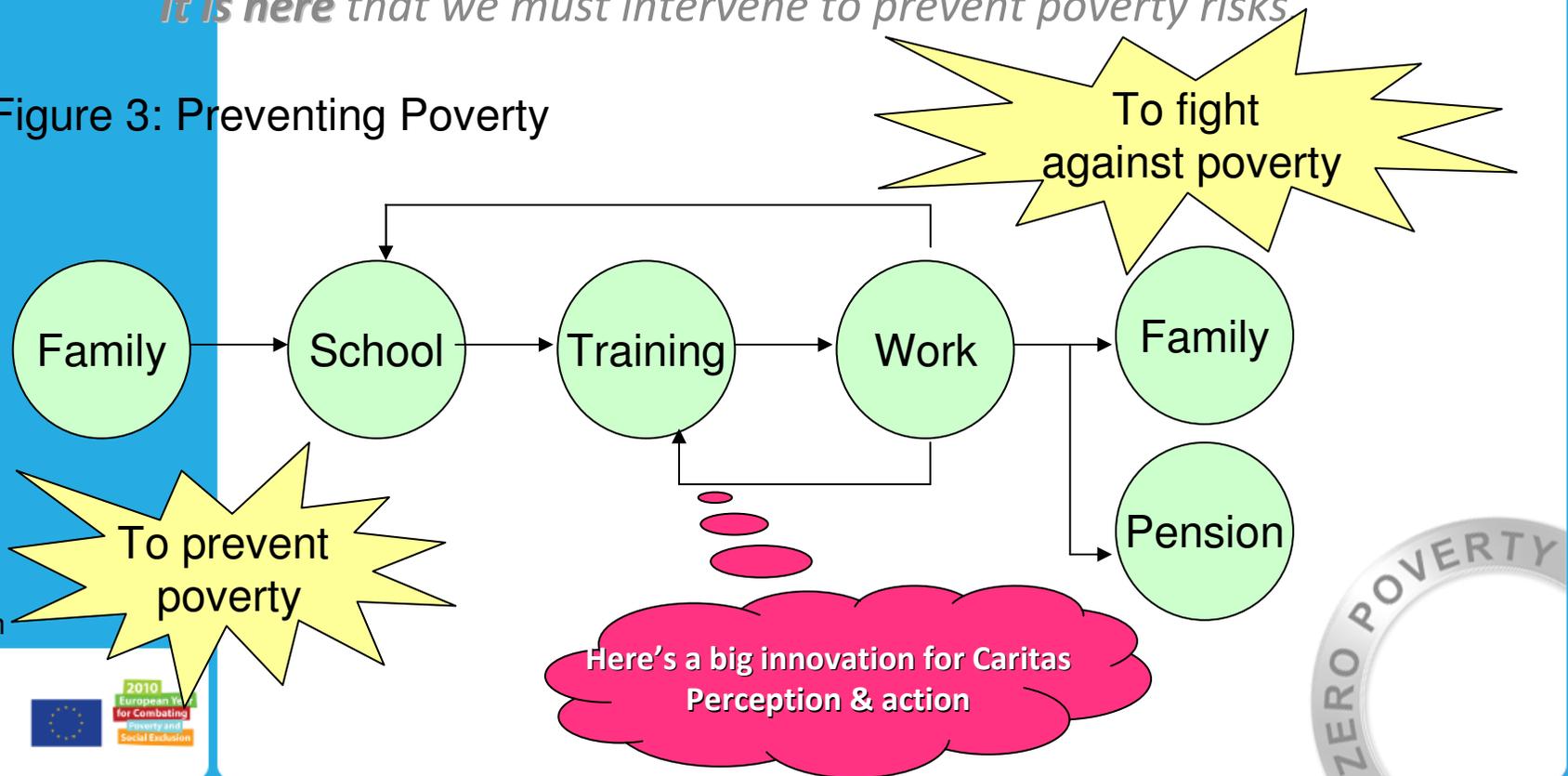
# Poverty in the life cycle: to prevent is better than to fight against

*We have learnt that poverty risks often pop up during life transitions.*

*A third very simple tool reminds us of when and where people need to feel secure.*

*It is here that we must intervene to prevent poverty risks.*

Figure 3: Preventing Poverty



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## **CHANGE** *cultural views*

*“I don't think that many people understand what poverty is. I find it hard to imagine myself as being so poor as not to be able to buy me coffee , for instance... Things that we take for granted ...”*

*(UNITED KINGDOM)*

© Erny Gillen



## Change our paradigms

*From repairing to preventing:*

*social expenditure is not a mere cost but an  
**investment!***

*Neither **fault** nor **choice**:*

*When poverty affects **freedom** the priority is  
**empowerment***

*Poverty **matters for everybody***

*Public institutions play a central role but there is a  
**share of responsibility (and risk) for everyone***

*Paid employment is not all: there is **value in every  
person** and it is up to the society to use it to its  
**advantage, not vice-versa***

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# **CHANGE**

## ***politics & economics***

*“We have to fuel the political will! It is not a matter of services but of investing more in education...In the access to housing... To the labour market... In the participation of the poor...”*

**(MALTA)**

© Erny Gillen



## Change our priorities

*Much more investments in **securing transitions** all along the life cycle.*

*Stop the **intergenerational transmission of poverty**.*

*Much more investments in **child care facilities** and education.*

*A general scheme of « **active inclusion** » where adequate income, lifelong learning and high quality social services are **affordable for all**, not only for the potential workers*

*Tools and incentives to include the dignity of the human person in every **impact assessment** of policies, measures and political choices*

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## **CHANGE** *society & lifestyle*

*“On the one hand, poverty can be an individual issue, because everyone has to fight for their rights, try and work for a normal life. But, on the other hand, it also depends on the whole society. If society doesn’t offer anything, doesn’t treat you with respect, with dignity, even if you have the strength to fight, you will remain poor ...”*

*(SERBIA)*

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could you turn  
biscuits into  
bicycles this Lent?

Give up biscuits during Lent and the money you save could go to providing a bike for a volunteer. Two wheels means they can reach children who have lost their parents and are struggling to cope alone.



Get involved *give it up!*

- Give something up and donate the money to CAFOD
- Tell all your family and friends about *give it up!* and ask them to join you
- Look out for the envelopes in your Parish
- Go to the website for ideas and information [cafod.org.uk/giveitup](http://cafod.org.uk/giveitup)

CAFOD, Romero Close, Stockwell Road, London, SW9 9TY Phone number: 020 7733 7900 Registered Charity no. 285776 R28108

**CAFOD**  
Just one world

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**Where  
Love & Solidarity  
meet  
Rights & Justice**

*Change in society and lifestyles  
becomes possible and can drive us  
away from poverty only if lasting  
social bonds become central*

*Not only in sociology, but also in  
politics and economics*

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## *You are **NOT ALONE***

*On May 28, 2009, 21.600 pupils ran three times around the world collecting donations for children in need. They collected about 400.000 Euro for Caritas projects. Youngsters who ran the race said: “The idea behind this event is great! Many people running together for a social purpose. Almost everyone can make a contribution, even small.”*

*(AUSTRIA)*

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## Papstbesuch Caritas Internationalis 14.2.2010



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2010  
European Year  
for Combating  
Poverty and  
Social Exclusion

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Im Rahmen des europäischen Jahres zur Bekämpfung von Armut und sozialer Ausgrenzung

## Verbundenheit zeigen

Erzbischof Mgr. Fernand Franck besuchte gestern Mittag das „Centre de l'Oseraie“ in Kopstal



Zur Erinnerung an seinen Besuch wurde Erzbischof Mgr. Fernand Franck eine selbst angefertigte Kohlezeichnung überreicht.

(FOTOS: CLAUDE HARTZ)

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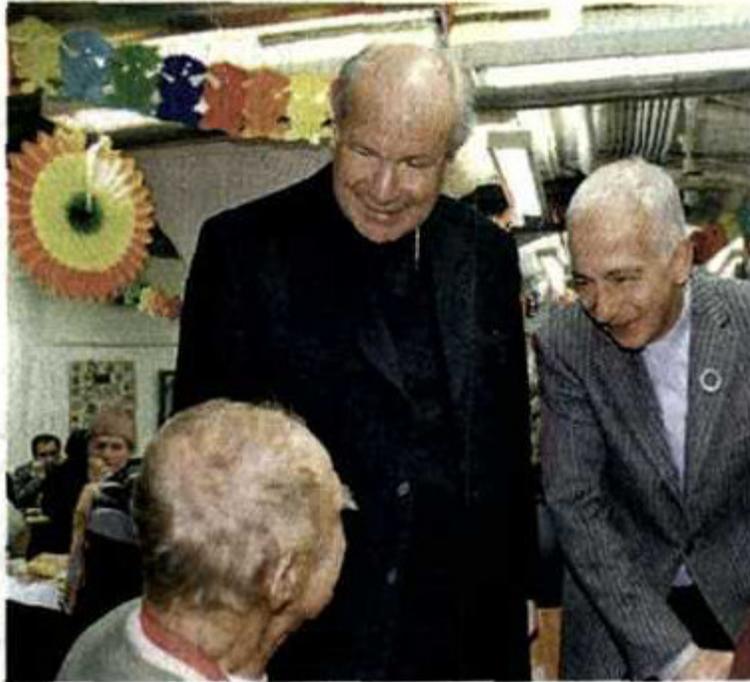


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## **ÖSTERREICH KOMPAKT**



**Kardinal Schönborn und Caritas-Direktor Landau besuchten Obdachlose in der „Gruff“.** Bild: SN

### **Kardinal Schönborn im Obdachlosenzentrum „Gruff“**

WIEN (SN). Wie Papst Benedikt XVI. in Rom und andere Bischöfe in ganz Europa hat auch Kardinal Christoph Schönborn am Sonntag eine Caritas-Einrichtung besucht, die „Gruff“, das Obdachlosenzentrum in Wien. Damit leistete er seinen Beitrag zur

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**ZERO  
POVERTY  
ACT  
NOW**

[www.zeropoverty.org](http://www.zeropoverty.org)

## **Social Participation**

*Our practices and experiences at local, national  
and EU level showed us that*

*you are not alone if you don't feel alone,*

*and*

*you don't feel alone if you are **recognized** by others*

*and you have the possibility*

*to take part with them in **social life**.*

*The best way to prevent poverty,  
and the best way to fight against it,*

***is social participation.***

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POVERTY  
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NOW**

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***You are NOT ALONE***



**SO, LET US ACT TOGETHER!  
LET US STOP POVERTY! STARTING  
FROM NOW. STARTING FROM YOU.**

© Erny Gillen



**2010**  
European Year  
for Combating  
Poverty and  
Social Exclusion



# ZERO POVERTY ACT NOW

Zero Poverty - a community of people who want to make a difference - is a campaign for greater social justice. These are difficult times. Many are suffering. With a common effort however, something can be done to support the most vulnerable and lobby for change. A different Europe is possible: let's ACT NOW!



**ABOUT  
ACTIVISTS  
FACTS  
MISSIONS  
MASHUP**

language

Username: \*

Password: \*

**REGISTER**



← ONGOING INITIATIVES →



## ACT NOW



## SIGN THE PETITION AGAINST POVERTY

We, people in Europe,

Consider Poverty to be everybody's concern. European, national, regional and local decision-makers, together with citizens, are responsible for recognising, understanding poverty and acting against it. In this common effort, solidarity must be a long-lasting commitment and together with justice and the common good - a fundamental principle.

We commit to engage our time, skills and energy in the political, civic and personal sphere to fighting poverty and building an inclusive society. Thus, in this European Year against Poverty and Exclusion, we urge our decision makers and politicians to commit to the following goals:

- 1) Eradicate child poverty in Europe

### SIGN THE PETITION

**2984** people signed

**latest** Jan Damen, Netherlands  
PATRAS Liliana, Romania  
Philippe Blasen, Luxembourg  
adina balan, Romania

[Sign the Petition](#)

### MISSIONS **3445**



**ZERO  
POVERTY  
ACT  
NOW**

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Thank you for your  
attention!

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