



Information and Project Development Workshop:

The European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion: EFSC joint action and projects of EFSC member organizations

13th May 2009

EFSC, Square Vergote 34, B-1030 Brussels

SUMMARY REPORT

On the 13th of May 2009, EFSC organised an Information and Project Development Workshop in preparation for the European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The workshop aimed at providing EFSC members with the necessary information for successfully addressing the National Implementing Bodies and for applying for the funding assigned to the European Year 2010; at the same time, it was aimed at collectively defining the main features and priorities of a co-ordinated project of EFSC member organisations at EU level in order to maximise the exchange and coherence among members' proposals as well as their effectiveness in a European perspective.

Reinhold Müller, Director of EFSC, presented the aims of the workshop while highlighting the importance of seizing the opportunity of the Year to sensitise Member States on the issue of the social inclusion of the most marginalised groups of children, particularly street children. An early lobbying addressed to the National Implementing Bodies (NIBs) for the Year would be important in achieving this goal and thus contribute to concretely realising the European Year's objectives. He encouraged the members to present their authentic inputs to their national authorities, reminding them of their responsibility to also consider the appropriate input of NGOs for the European Year. He presented the activities that EFSC foresaw in preparation of the Year, such as, aside from organising the workshop, a fact sheet on the situation of street children in the countries where it has members and a publication containing street children stories. The fact sheet will contain basic data on the situation of street children thus setting the basis for a European Report on Street Children, which has already encountered the encouragement of the Vice-President of the Commission, Mr. Barrot, on the occasion of the last Child Rights Forum on 09.12.08. The publication on street children stories will focus on significant examples of successful rehabilitation, with the additional purpose of raising awareness and identifying successful elements of a rehabilitation strategy.

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MEP Marie Panayatopoulos-Cassiotou intervened in the workshop, expressing her commitment towards making the Year a successful tool for the OMC on Social Inclusion, and in particular, for the eradication of child poverty and social exclusion. She suggested that the limited budget available in each country may require focussing the actions on some groups. She also expressed her satisfaction with the fact that Greece has prioritised the child poverty issue, as should become public after the submission of the Member States' national programmes to the European Commission, for which the deadline is the 15th of May 2009.

Marie-Anne Paraskevas, Policy Officer in the Social Inclusion Unit and part of the task force on the European Year 2010 in the European Commission, presented the priorities of the Year, i.e. recognition of rights of the people experiencing poverty, shared responsibility and participation in fighting poverty, cohesion engaging actors traditionally not included in the fight against poverty, and commitment and definite actions by the EU and Member States. She also presented the different priority policy areas, which include **fighting child poverty, combating discrimination and promoting the social inclusion of migrants and minorities**, which Member States remain free to adapt to their national contexts.

As to Mrs. Panayatopoulos-Cassiotou's remark concerning the budget available to Member States, she stressed that the European Year 2010 has received by the Commission the highest budget ever assigned to a European Year 2010, that is, 17 million € (of which a maximum of 9 million should be used for Member-States level activities and 8 million for EU-level activities). The funding available for Member States level activities must be matched by Member States' contributions of equal amount. Therefore around 18 million should become available for national activities. The Commission has allocated the funding in proportion to the population, slightly revising the percentage allocation to make sure that a minimum of 120.000 € was accorded to each. No direct funding is available at EU level for NGOs. She presented the events foreseen by the Commission, in particular the Commission's Opening Conference, the Meeting of people experiencing poverty, the International Day for Combating poverty, and the Closing Event. She also presented the roadmap for Member States' actions: after the presentation of the national programmes on the 15th of May and the Commission's approval of the National Programmes by July 2009, Member States will issue their calls for proposals in September 2009 so that the results of the evaluations will be available 2-3 months later. The contract between the Commission and the NIBs will be signed in December 2009. She suggested that nationally active NGOs address their recommendations and advocacy messages to the NIBs rather than the Year's steering group.

The European Commission will prepare an overview of the national programmes in each Member State. **Mrs. Paraskevas** made clear that projects funded by the Year's budget must be clearly targeted towards raising awareness in the priority areas of the European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion, to which the current context of the economic downturn may contribute by showing that everyone can be touched by poverty. She also reported that, as the Commission's contribution must be matched by each Member State by at least an equal sum, some Member States have informed the European Commission that they will not be able to earmark a corresponding amount, so

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the total funding available at national level may be reduced. She provided all those present with an updated list of the NIBs.

Fintan Farrell, Director of EAPN, suggested to nationally active NGOs to not only consider the direct contributions administered by the NIBs for financing their activities under the Year, but to also consider other budgets available in their respective countries that are linked to the 2010 objectives and priorities. He encouraged NGOs to address their claims to their NIBs and to take an active role in developing contents for the communication strategy of the Year. In preparation for the Year, EAPN will develop joint political messages, support its members at the national level and organise a Week of broadcasting on poverty issues. Each country will be under the spotlight for one week through specific Focus Weeks. Two European Weeks will be organised in correspondence with the Commission's Meeting of people experiencing poverty in Spring and the International Day for Combating poverty in October. He supported the idea of a website accessed by 40-50 EU-level organisations gathering information about the activities carried out in the framework of the Year in order to better inform locally active NGOs and provide them with the opportunity to use shared slogans and logos.

After these presentations, a variety of proposals were made, during which a round of EFSC member organisations presented their project ideas in their respective national context .

Bernadette Gelsei from Megallo Group, Hungary, presented a number of suggestions to overcome the stigma against child drug addicts through the coordinated action of ministries, educational institutions, patient centres, low-threshold services and drug rehabilitation centres in the organisation of a series of events, a media campaign and a website. The events could foresee meetings but also sport events. The media campaign could include interviews on the radio, short ads on commercial and national television stations, documentary films, as well as internet-based media such as Youtube. The website could include user-friendly information for the drug addicts and short clips and ads for raising awareness.

Sònia Valente from Instituto de Apoio à Criança, Portugal, presented four interrelated and complementary project areas. In the field of Awareness Raising, IAC suggests building on the media success and contacts made with the prominent TV anchorwoman Fatima Campos-Ferreira at the European Forum on Street Children 2008 in Lisbon. For presenting the children's perspective, IAC suggests a short animation film meant to protect children from overexposure. In the field of Social Marketing, IAC suggests exploiting existing connections with the media and the organisation of national and international seminars. In the field of lobbying, it was proposed to use EFSC's Joint Declaration, adopted at the Lisbon Forum, on making street children a priority of the European Year 2010 for addressing relevant messages to decision-makers. Finally, as for the field of Promoting Active Child Participation, IAC proposes the use of digital stories as a means of giving a voice to the children through their own perspectives, such as by giving them a camera and the opportunity to picture their world.

Ton Hendriks, photographer in the **Global Street Child Project**, portraying the situation of street children worldwide, also intervened by presenting his work and his approach that children should not be victimised but rather asked to present themselves

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as they are; that means to offer them the opportunity to authentically present their lives and wishes. This helps to convey an individualised image of each child, which is important in overcoming the extremely low self-esteem these children may have because they are often ashamed about their living conditions. He suggested developing a reportage on street children in Europe and a travelling exhibition of photos of street children in different European countries. The debate following the presentation highlighted the importance of overcoming an exclusively pitiful approach towards these children in favour of a solidarity approach. Mr. Hendriks also suggested integrating the reportage in a website where the photos of the marginalized children would be linked with their stories and with key advocacy messages. Also the option of digital postcards to be sent to key institutional counterparts was presented as a possible advocacy instrument.

Martyn Weeds from PPP, UK also presented a proposal focussing on the involvement of children in producing a short film of their stories and their experiences of poverty, to be disseminated in the National Television, Radio and Newspapers on the basis of developing key recommendations. These recommendations would be presented in meetings with institutional counterparts at the political level, and their responses would be tracked for ensuring long-term accountability. PPP proposes building in the UK context a network which ensures achieving the Year's objectives through the expertise of three organisations: PPP to ensure child participation, the Child Poverty Action Group to adapt policy messages to the national context, and the media consultancy Chompollion to get the right message to the media.

Cédric Foussard on behalf of **Diagrama Belgique and Fundacion Diagrama Spain**, exposed Diagrama's willingness to present recommendations to the National Implementing Bodies and to seek moral support from the Year for the activities they will carry out during 2010, as well as their interest in fostering an information network for sharing information about the activities that each organisation will carry out during the Year.

Sabine Lavoipierre from Les Francas, France said that the organisation is planning to ask support to the European Year 2010 for the activities planned by Les Francas over a longer term. On the occasion of the European Year they will try to intensify the work with children in the streets and carry out a series of seminars providing information about what poverty is like today and trying to find out what good practices can be identified from the activities of the local and national organisations that are part of Les Francas. This should at the same time contribute to strengthen the contacts with the international partners. EFSC and Les Francas have already taken steps to organise in 2010 a conference on youth riots, whose main protagonists are often young people from the second or third generation of migrants whose main claims are related to respect and equal recognition rather than to employment or economic wealth.

Mihai-Florin Rosca from the Romanian Foundation for Children, Community and Family, Romania, proposed an awareness raising campaign against giving money to child beggars, showing the risk that money given directly to children who are not under the care of an adult may easily be spent for drugs or benefit to criminal networks who misuse these children. The message should be: instead of giving the money to the child, give it to the care organisations. Giving money to child beggars will not solve the

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problem, but enlarge it. This could be linked to the above-mentioned message “no pity, but solidarity”.

Erki Korp from the Tallinn Centre for Children at Risk, Estonia, stressed that the Year should contribute to form networks to share information on a sustainable basis about how to combat poverty. On the occasion of the Year, a support campaign with SMS loans to organisations combating poverty of children should be launched. Parallel to this, a sensitisation campaign for families should highlight that most children who are drug addicts come from lone-parent households. The awareness raising campaign should, in the case of Estonia, focus on transferring information to the Russian-speaking community through an appropriate connection with the media.

Mariana Pisarska from the Alliance for Children and Youth, Bulgaria, also presented several foreseen awareness-raising actions, which could be applied to the Year’s framework. The movie that has been developed for the national TV could be used once again to raise awareness about the situation of street children. An exhibition could be organised in co-operation between the photographer, psychologists and social workers on the activities with children in the street. Children could also be involved in artistic activities such as a theatre play to be presented on the occasion of the Year, which has also the important value of showing them that they have talents. The European Year should be used as an occasion to sensitise the business community about the importance of employing rehabilitated street children, as the willingness is often in place but information is missing about what to expect from these children and how to properly work with them. Discussion Forums where experts from the social field meet with politicians could also be organised.

Michal Smigielski on behalf of the Society of the Friends of Children (TPD), Poland presented the proposal of organising a football championship to be financed by the Fortis Bank in order to consolidate the image of TPD’s Local Development Centers to allow children to find their talents. Not only children in care of TPD, but also external ones will be involved in the championship. Media attention could be raised through TPD’s contacts with the BBC, ie. Dominique Hipkins, who has already collected material about children in the streets.

At the end of this overview of the members’ proposals for the Year, **Reinhold Müller summarised the key points of the discussion in view of a joint awareness raising campaign of EFSC with its members for the European Year 2010.**

First, he recalled the main deadlines for the upcoming months:

- **29th of May 2009:** last date for delivering the satisfaction questionnaire in case it was not completed and delivered during the seminar;
- **1st of June 2009:** deadline for delivering EFSC the state of affairs in the nomination of the NIBs in each country and information about the National Programmes, in light of possible project applications;
- **15th of June 2009:** deadline for sending EFSC a written short summary of the ideas presented during the workshop (no more than 2 pages).
- The calls for proposals for the European Year 2010 at the national level are expected to be issued in **September 2009.**

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- EFSC member organisations will have the opportunity to discuss the project developments for the European Year 2010 in **October 2009**, on the occasion of the EFSC workshop on the NAPs to be held in Brussels.
- EFSC will prepare in the coming months the structure of the factsheet on the situation of street children in each country where member organizations are present. In order to prepare the publication of the street children stories, which is included in EFSC`s work programme 2009, it would be helpful if member organizations could start identifying some stories out of their work experience by the end of June 2009.

Referring to the discussion on the project proposals, Reinhold Müller observed the value that combining each organisation`s contacts with the civil society and the media can add to achieving strong awareness raising on the occasion of the Year. At the same time EFSC member organizations remain free to decide whether they want to invest resources and time in a specific awareness-raising project or to go on with their ordinarily planned activities. He underlined the main message that emerged from the discussion: “no pity, but solidarity”, which should permeate EFSC awareness raising activities. This should not lead us to ignore the primary role that pity and empathy play for creating sustainable actions of solidarity, but we should not limit ourselves to this. Tactic either The activities will, as mentioned in most proposals, address those who are traditionally not targeted by these actions, and provide a space for children to raise their voices. Excluded children should be included in the process and the use of the media should be systematised. He recalled that the best way to fight against poverty is by providing employment opportunities and that the authorities should consider preventive action and social intervention as an investment in social cohesion, which is cheaper and more effective than sanctioning. He stressed the role of the family and the civil responsibility of each citizen in protecting vulnerable children from poverty and social exclusion, particularly through voluntary work.

Those present agreed on the above-mentioned points and to be part of EFSC task force for the European Year 2010. EFSC would support starting a common action on the European Year 2010 and showing commonalities and specificities of the different national contexts. This would maximise the European value added by such actions and allow a flexible adaptation to the changing patterns of the street children phenomenon.

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Square Vergote, 34 - 1030 Brussels - Belgium
tel +32 (0)2 347.78 48 - fax +32 (0)2 347.79.46 - e-mail info@enscw.org - www.efsc-eu.org