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PROFIT

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INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF INEQUALITIES**

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Project coordinator name:

WIELISŁAWA WARZYWODA-KRUSZYŃSKA

Project coordinator organisation name

UNIVERSITY OF LODZ

Project team

Following persons were involved in the project at various stages of its realization:

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| University of Lodz (PL) | Wielislawa Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Professor Ewa Rokicka, Professor Wojciech Woźniak Anna Rokicka Kamil Kruszyński Jolanta Grotowska-Leder, Professor Jerzy Krzyszkowski, Professor Anna Matuchniak-Krasuska, Professor Paweł Starosta, Professor Piotr Szukalski, PhD Tomasz Drabowicz Marta Petelewicz Magdalena Rek | Coordinator Vice-coordinator Research Fellow Secretary Administrative Officer Members of Coordinating Team Research Assistants |
| Research Centre 'Regional and Global Development' REGLO in Sofia (BG) | Elisaveta Ignatova, PhD Dragomir Draganov | Contractor Research Assistant |
| Justus-Liebig University Giessen (DE) | Dieter Eissel, Profesor Carmen Ludwig, Corinna Zakikhany | Contractor Research Assistants |
| University of Tartu (EE) | Dagmar Kutsar, Professor Avo Trumm Kairu Kasearu | Contractor Research Assistants |
| University of Turku (FI) | Harri Melin, Professor Pavi Naumanen | Contractor Research Assistant |
| University of Padova (IT) | Alisa Del Re, Professor Devi Sacchetto Valentina Longo Francesca Vianello | Contractor Research Assistants |
| Vytautas Magnus University of Kaunas (LH) | Kestutis Pukelis, Professor Inga Mikutaviciene Kristina Juraite Sonata Maciulskyte | Contractor Research Assistants |
| Loughborough University (UK) | Jeremy Leaman, PhD Christina Kokoroskou | Contractor Research Assistant |
| Free University Berlin (DE) University of Lodz (PL) University of Georgia (USA) | Nikolai Genov, Profesor Zdzislawa Janowska, Professor Lynda Henley Walters, Professor | Members of Advisory Bard |

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1. Background and Objectives of the Project

The project sought, primarily, to address the issues raised under the Research Area 2: *Options and choices for the development of knowledge-based society* and was particularly concerned with the topic of *the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities (Ilofi)*

Strategic goal of the project was to inform policy by developing an integrated understanding of how a knowledge-based society can promote the societal objectives of the EU of sustainable development, social and territorial cohesion and an improved quality of life.

The existence of intergenerational inheritance of inequalities is assumed to constrain the achievement of these objectives. Thus, the project team undertook a multidisciplinary comparative study of the intergenerational transmission of inequalities and of policies and practices aimed at overcoming it. The research was conducted in eight EU member states, representing different socio-economic, political and cultural environments. The sides participating in the project were selected deliberately to cover Western and Eastern countries, i.e. countries which were developed according to the capitalist mode of industrialism and those which were industrialised under the conditions of state socialism but which, after social and political upheavals at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, have been trying to find their way to market economy and democratic capitalism. The United Kingdom, Germany, Finland and Italy, being capitalist industrial societies, differ in regard to the type of social welfare regime (liberal, continental, Nordic and Latin-Rim – respectively). Post-socialist countries were selected to represent those which belonged to the Soviet Union (Estonia, Lithuania) and those which operated as separate states with national central administration and government (Bulgaria, Poland). Despite the similarities, there were important differences in social policy between these countries, for example in the educational systems, which could affect intergenerational mobility opportunities.

In identifying the challenges for society that are posed by the existence of intergenerational transmission of inequalities, the analysis sought to capture the factors and social mechanisms limiting/promoting social mobility for individuals from deprived communities and regions.

The analysis set out to identify the policies and practices especially at the local level, which can help to improve social mobility mechanisms. One medium-size town per country was selected to carry out field work among local stakeholders and social policy end-users (young adults 25-29 year old). Special attention was paid to three policies: educational, labour market and welfare policy. The gender dimension was seen as underpinning all aspects of the research. While comparing social mobility opportunities for men and women in deprived areas, the research aimed to contribute to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the mainstreaming approach and of the political commitment at the EU, national and local levels to promote gender equality.

The project was designed to extend the work of previous research done in the field, especially that initiated by the European Union, like the Joint Report on Social Inclusion (2002, 2004), Joint Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (2005, 2006, 2007), Youth and Unemployment etc. as well as those presented in the reports within the TSER Programme and the 5th FP concerned with Improving the Socio-economic Knowledge Base. It undertook cross-national comparisons and involved new empirical work with local policy-makers, executors and -users to examine the measures and methods used to counteract the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities and thus overcome its consequences.

The departure point of the project was an assumption that the Ilofi is a result of intersecting influences coming from the family of origin, community and society.

It is the social status and the efforts of the family which primarily define the opportunities of the offspring by means of economic, cultural and social resources. However, the process of transmission is modified by society (socio-economic-cultural context) and community (social capital and economic resources). Different policies and ways of conceptualizing the problem belong to this context and produce or counteract Ilofi. Among them, and of particular importance, are policies in the field of education, employment and social welfare.

The project focused on interrelations between policies and practices exercised at national (society) and the local (community) level in the process of overcoming Ilofi.

Specific objectives of the project were:

1. Developing a greater understanding of the socio-economic-cultural context within which intergenerational inheritance of inequalities (IofI) occurs and policy responses at the national level
2. Developing a greater understanding of policy responses at local level to overcome IofI
3. Identifying the relative importance of policy among the factors affecting social mobility of individuals
4. Assessing the transportability of policy solutions promoting social mobility chances at local level.

The project is contributing to the European social model in that it provides information about policy implementation at the lowest level of administration and governance. In European countries it is common practice that local authorities are responsible for delivering social services tailored to local needs.

However, knowledge is scarce about the measures and policy instruments applied in communities/municipalities to prevent or overcome the risk of poverty and the reproduction of inequality.

PROFIT is innovative in that:

- It implies a holistic approach, i.e. it covers national and local levels of policy making and implementation as well as policy evaluation by end-users.
- It tries, in contrast to cross-national comparisons, to compare endeavours to counteract IofI practiced in medium-size towns across Europe, serving as case studies. Thus, it provides the possibility of contextualizing the problems in the study.
- It combines different methods of gathering information and elaborating data: semi-structured interview, focus group interview, survey, in-depth interview.
- It covers different groups of people, with the purpose of gaining an understanding of the process rather than precisely estimating the incidence of inequality transmission from one generation to another in the towns in the study.
- It is focused on a specific age group of potential end-users being in their late twenties (25-29). While tracing their life course the project tries to detect the relative importance of different structures (family, peers, school) and policies (educational, labour market, welfare) for creating opportunities and constraints to their social mobility. This age cohort experienced the transition to adulthood at a time of radical social changes (system transformation in post-socialist countries, development of global capitalism and the knowledge society in western countries) which contributed to substantial alterations to both opportunities and constraints as compared with their parents' generation. At this point in their life cycle, nothing is definitive but, with caution, it is possible to predict their future achievements. Of particular interest are those young people who, having originated from low status families, became socially mobile and those who are not able to manage it.
- It applies action research and a mutual learning approach in terms of the engagement of stakeholders as key informants and reviewers of the research results. Seminars in each town gathering researchers and practitioners aimed at getting feedback on results, so that practitioners may think about solutions to social problems in a town as requiring a scientific approach and the support of the academic community.

2. Scientific Description of the Project Methodology

2.1 Organization of the research

To answer the research questions, the following sources of information were explored at the national level:

1. reviews of scientific literature elaborated by national PROFIT research teams
2. in-depth interviews with political, economic and social actors, conducted and analysed by national research teams (field work specifically designed for PROFIT purposes)
3. national official policy documents like National Action Plans against Poverty and Social Exclusion (NAPs) 2003, 2005 , Joint Memoranda 2002 (in the case of Central European States), Joint Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, 2006, 2007

4. synthetic reports elaborated by independent international research teams aimed at international comparisons, based on NAPs and other documents, while at the local (municipality) level:
5. focus group interviews with local stakeholders like local politicians (members of municipality councils), social services workers (front-liners: social workers, teachers, probation officers, priests, policemen, NGO staff etc) and executives in municipality social departments (of education, labour office/ job centres, social assistance etc) - (field work specifically designed for PROFIT purposes),
6. survey study among young adults (24-29 year olds) being permanent residents of selected towns on “Young Adults at Risk. Opportunities and Constraints on Social Mobility” (field work specifically designed for PROFIT purposes),
7. In-depth interviews with selected young adults living in a given town (field work specifically designed for PROFIT purposes).

Such a diversification of information sources is very useful because of the fragmentation of information provided by each of them. Scientific literature is not concerned with programmes and schemes implemented by national official bodies while official political documents are rather rarely based on scientific publications. Both national scientific literature and official documents are focused on national data and are not particularly interested in international comparisons. On the other hand, synthetic reports based on commonly agreed indicators offer a good opportunity to position countries in the study in the wider context of the European Union. Interviews with policy-makers and stakeholders enable researchers to confront opinions from both sides involved in a process aimed at overcoming the inheritance of inequality. Table 1 shows that more than 2 100 people were interviewed in the course of the Profit project.

Table 1. Numbers of respondents participating at various stages of the PROFIT research (number of female respondents in brackets)

| Countries/ towns under study | Interviews with top -level political and social actors | Focus group interviews with local stakeholders from given town | Survey with young adults from given town | In-depth interviews with young from given town |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Finland/ Pori | 14 (8) | 19 (13) | 258 (164) | 25 (13) |
| Italy/ Rovigo | 15 (8) | 16 (7) | 251 (121) | 29 (9) |
| Estonia/ Pärnu | 15 (7) | 20 (11) | 163 (98) | 15 (6) |
| Poland/ Tomaszów Maz. | 15 (8) | 30 (23) | 250 (121) | 30 (15) |
| United Kingdom/ Loughborough | 11 (3) | 27 (14) | 133 (54) | 15 (6) |
| Germany/ Giessen | 13 (8) | 19 (8) | 241 (104) | 15 (4) |
| Lithuania/ Jonava | 15 (9) | 21 (16) | 134 (75) | 20 (12) |
| Bulgaria/ Pernik | 14 (4) | 40 (22) | 250 (125) | 12 (6) |
| Total: | 112 | 198 | 1680 | 161 |

The realization of 11 workpackages contributed to the progress of the research. Among them three (WP2, WP5 and WP9) aimed at improving the research skills and competences of Research Assistants. All partners were involved in the whole process of the research. The work schedule was agreed between the partners. The methods and research tools were accepted in a process of mutual communication and findings were monitored and compared throughout the duration of the research. The sequence of workpackages was designed to gain knowledge in a cumulative manner.

WP1, WP3 and W4 comprised activities connected with the review of scientific literature and official governmental documents in order to analyse whether and in which way the problem of the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities is dealt with. An important part of this stage of the study was conducting in-depth interviews with top-level-actors (political, social, and economic) to reveal how they conceptualize and perceive Ilofl. In the project an assumption has been made that the way top level politicians, as members of Parliament and representatives of political parties, think about the reproduction of inequality and how it constitutes a ‘cultural’ factor that may determine policy measures aimed at overcoming Ilofl.

WP6, WP7, WP8 were composed of activities connected with field work carried out in selected medium-size towns located in each country in the study. Methodology and respective research tools were

designed to conduct focus group interviews with local stakeholders and survey and in-depth interviews among local social policy end-users, being young adults aged 25-29.

WP10 and WP11 aimed at disseminating project results in the towns in the study. Having collected and analysed data from all stages, national research teams organised seminars to present the results of the study to the town authorities and other stakeholders, in order to receive feedback and to agree on an example of good practice to be presented during the dissemination conference in Spała, Poland. In Spała the conditions for transferability of activities, projects and measures working in particular towns to towns in other countries were discussed by town representatives and academics.

The division of labour between the Coordinating Team located at the coordination institution, the national research teams and the Advisory Board was clear and fully respected.

The Coordinating Team, composed of five scholars working for the University of Łódź, was mainly responsible for designing drafts of the research tools, for conducting comparative analyses, commenting on national reports, elaborating drafts of consolidated annual activity reports and for disseminating results in a form of dissemination conference.

Partners/national research teams were responsible for all activities undertaken in the framework of the project in a given country, first of all for selecting literature and respective official documents published in national language, for selecting a town for the study to be located there, for selecting respondents, conducting interviews, analysing data, elaborating reports from particular stages of the research, for disseminating the knowledge produced in the form of seminars with local stakeholders, press releases and publications.

Advisory board members were commenting on periodic activity reports and actively participated in meetings of the consortium, particularly those aimed at the consideration of the content of particular research tools and results. Their contribution to the project cannot to be overestimated.

2.2 Methodological issues

In the project a multi-disciplinary international research team was engaged, applying a multi-methods research strategy. Sociologists prevailed among the researchers with political economists, social policy scholars, social psychologists and educational specialists contributing essentially to the project. Such a composition of researchers was an essential factor, assuring a complex approach to the topic. The scientific competencies of members of Advisory Board supplemented and increased the research ability of the international research team. One of AB member is an academic specialising in child and family development, a second is an outstanding scholar focusing on system transformation in post-socialist countries and on ethnic minorities; the main field of interest of the third AB member, combining academic and political activities (former member of both Lower and Higher Chamber of Polish Parliament, elected member of city council and concurrently elected member of provincial council), is labour market policies and the practical implementation of social policy measures.

A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was applied. The project was carried out as a set of case studies based on the same assumptions and methods. Its relevance was perceived first of all in the contextualization of the problem. The literature review revealed that intergenerational inheritance of inequalities is a topic scarcely approached by scholars and politicians. There is a lack of knowledge concerning how policy makers and social service managers and providers conceptualise the problem and what measures and programmes they perceive as appropriate to overcome it. Qualitative methods were commonly accepted as the best method to detect and describe the perceptions and expectations of politicians and municipal stakeholders. To estimate roughly the extent of inequality transmission across generations, a small-scale survey was conducted among young adults living in the towns in the study. Survey respondents constituted a reservoir for selecting people from low status families to reveal the impact of different institutions, including local policies and practices, on their life course and their social achievements. Giving voice to those who are potential clients of programmes and measures had the objective of improving their social and economic mobility. The project delivered information on the implementation potential of these policy instruments.

The field work was an action research in that research findings were presented to local authorities and stakeholders in a given town to get feedback and discuss current best practice to present one example to an international audience during the project dissemination conference. The purpose of the exchange of examples of good practice was to inspire other towns to make use of projects which worked elsewhere. Discussion with councillors and other local stakeholders was aimed at increasing their interest in the problem and providing them with reliable knowledge about the problem in their towns.

2.2.1 Selection of country cases

The research was conducted in eight EU member states, representing different socio-economic, political and cultural environments. They covered countries of ‘western’ Europe and of central and eastern Europe, i.e. countries which were developed according to the capitalist mode of industrialism and those which were industrialised under the conditions of state socialism but after the social and political upheavals at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s have been trying to move towards a market economy and democratic capitalism. The United Kingdom, Germany, Finland and Italy, as capitalist industrial societies, differ in regard to the type of social welfare regime (liberal, continental, Nordic and Latin-Rim – respectively). Post-socialist countries were selected to represent those which had belonged to the Soviet Union (Estonia, Lithuania) and those which operated as separate states with a national central administration and government (Bulgaria, Poland). Despite the similarities embedded in a common socialist past, there were important differences in social policy between these countries, for example in the educational systems, which could affect intergenerational mobility opportunities.

2.2.2 Selection of town cases

In each country in the study the national research team selected one medium-size town (35,000 to 80,000 inhabitants) serving as an administrative centre for surrounding villages and smaller towns and having a social infrastructure for providing social services, like a labour office, social welfare agencies, educational institutions, health care institutions etc. The town was assumed to suffer from some kind of disadvantages (unemployment, poverty, low employment etc) more than other towns of that size in the country.

The task of selecting towns “suffering from disadvantages” was a challenging one. Despite unification of numerous statistical indicators at the level of European Union and national states, statistical data available at the local level is very often scarce or incomparable. For example, it is sometimes collected at the level of the district which hampers the comparison of various social indicators at the level of the municipality.

In such a situation national research teams had to select a town using information from different sources to justify this decision. In consequence, the following towns were selected:

Table 2. Description of towns

| Towns in the study | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Country | Town | Population | Unemployment (in %) | Ethnic minorities (in %) |
| Poland | Tomaszów Mazowiecki | 67.218 | 23,9% | Less than 1% |
| Bulgaria | Pernik | 81.674 | 8,8% | 5-6% |
| Germany | Giessen | 72.519 | 10,9% | 13,3% |
| Estonia | Pärnu | 43.528 | 4,3% | 25% |
| Finland | Pori | 76.144 | 14,7% | 1,3% |
| Italy | Rovigo | 50.883 | 6,42% | 3,8% |
| Lithuania | Jonava | 34.800 | 6,8 % | 13,8% |
| United Kingdom | Loughborough | 55.492 | 4,9% | 10,8% |

All the towns had undergone massive deindustrialization in the past decades. In Western countries it could be dated back to the seventies and eighties (Pori, Loughborough), while in post-socialist countries that

process appeared in the nineties as one of the crucial results of the systemic transformation of national economies.

Moreover, particular towns have to cope with various problems deriving from national, regional and local specificities. There is also a differentiation connected with different delegations of rights and responsibilities to the local level of administration, defined in national legislative acts.

However, all the selected towns are equipped with a set of various institutions which are responsible for implementing social policy defined at the national level or for projecting and realising their own strategies and actions in the sphere of social policy.

Tomaszów Mazowiecki - Poland

Tomaszów Mazowiecki is located in central Poland in Łódzkie *voivodeship*. It is the capital town of Tomaszów Mazowiecki *poviat* and a seat of urban and rural *gmina*. Currently it has approximately 68 thousand inhabitants.

Since the 19th century, Tomaszów Mazowiecki was one of the most important centres of the textile industry in the Łódź Industrial Region – the biggest industrial region in Poland.

Since 1989, the *poviat* of Tomaszów Mazowiecki has been included in the list of regions most endangered by structural unemployment. At the end of June 2005 the unemployment rate was as high as 23.8% compared to an average of 18.7% for Poland as a whole.

Tomaszów Mazowiecki, like the whole region of Łódź, was affected by mass unemployment after the collapse of the textile industry in Poland. The dominant role of the specific kind of industrial monoculture – in the situation of rapid economic change - was very disadvantageous. It led to deep, structural changes in the social and economic sphere, i.e. mass poverty and housing problems.

The turning-point in the history of the town occurred in the nineties, when the chemical fibres factory Wistom was closed. Wistom used to be the biggest employer in the town. In the eighties it employed approximately 12 thousand people, which means that every third adult inhabitant of town was an employee of Wistom.

Pernik - Bulgaria

The Bulgarian research team selected the town of Pernik, which fully corresponds to the criteria of the PROFIT project. The town is situated in the Western part of Bulgaria about 30 km from Sofia and is the administrative centre of the Pernik district. Pernik was one of the leading industrial centres after the Second World War with well-developed iron-working, coal mining, energy production, machine-building, chemical and construction industry. The economic and political reforms after 1989 changed Pernik from a heavily industrialised community with permanent shortages of labour into a region suffering a deep economic depression and experiencing severe labour market problems. Nowadays, the town is facing very serious problems because of economic restructuring, long-term unemployment and widespread poverty. The background of this development is the questionable pattern of privatisation, together with the general adaptation of the Bulgarian economy to global trends and to the challenges of European integration. Long-term unemployment and low incomes are the main current problems in the town.

Giessen – Germany

Giessen is a town in the German federal state (Bundesland) of Hesse, capital of both the district of Giessen and the administrative region of Giessen. The population is approximately 71,000, with an additional 22,000 university students.

It is one of the most affected towns in Hesse when it comes to poverty. Particularly long-term unemployed, single parent families, immigrants and families with three or more children are highly affected by poverty. One third of all families living in Giessen are single parent families, which is far above the average for Germany. 13,5 % of the total population are immigrants from 148 different nations. In comparison with other middle-seized towns in Hesse and Germany, this clearly is above an average rate. Most of the immigrants (27.5 %) have a Turkish migration background (data from the Giessen local poverty report, published in 2002). The number of long-term unemployed, submitted under the new regulation of the labour market policy, increased in 2006 by about 6 percent **up to 19.500** in the labour district of Giessen.

In Giessen four main disadvantaged residential areas exist with a concentration of social exclusion.

Pärnu - Estonia

It was particularly difficult to select an Estonian town which would meet the agreed criteria. In Estonia, there are five towns, with a population over 40 000 people. The biggest city is Tallinn, with a population of 401 502. The second-largest town is Tartu with about 100 000 inhabitants.

According to population and serious deprivation, Kohtla-Järve and Narva fit the sampling requirements, but are not typical Estonian cities because of the great concentration of non-Estonian population (in Kohtla-Järve approximately only 20% of population are Estonians and in Narva less than 5%). Structural economic changes in these towns are very different from the rest of Estonia. What is of particular importance is that potential respondents do not have a command of Estonian language. Therefore the Estonian team decided to carry out the study in Pärnu, where about $\frac{3}{4}$ of residents are Estonians, followed by Russians with 15%. 10% of the population belongs to the other ethnic groups.

Pärnu is located on the coast of the Baltic Sea. It is a resort town with 44 thousand residents, where both tourism and environmentally friendly industry is being developed.

In 2004, Pärnu had 4,343 registered companies; of these 2,178 are sole proprietors. Actively operating are 1,834 institutions and companies. The majority of companies operate in the fields of wholesaling and retailing, finance, real estate and business services, and other service fields. The largest employers are the Pärnu Hospital, Pärnu Linen Factory, and Viisnurk (wood and furniture industry).

In general, Pärnu could not be defined as a 'deprived area' characterised by high levels of unemployment or poverty. The rate of registered unemployment for the city in 2004 was 1.8%, the same figure for Estonia was almost twice as high – 3.2%. The level of poverty in the Pärnu region is also lower than the average for Estonia, and the income of the population is comparable with incomes of residents of other biggest towns – Tallinn and Tartu.

Pori - Finland

The Finnish field study was conducted in the city of Pori, which is situated on the Western coast of Finland. The city of Pori is the tenth largest town in the country and the centre of Satakunta region. In 2004 there were 76,152 residents in the city. Before economic restructuring began in the late 1970s, Pori used to be one of the most industrialised cities in the country. Presently, approximately one fifth (21 %) of labour force in Pori is employed in the manufacturing sector (including mining, electricity and water supply) that is only a slightly bigger share than the largest single category of services, health and social services, which accounts for 18 per cent of jobs. In recent years the unemployment rate in Pori has been around 15-18 per cent, which is clearly higher than the national average, 8-10 per cent.

The city of Pori is not the most deprived area in Finland at the moment. However, as the city has a rather long history with a relatively high rate of unemployment, it has often served as an experimental environment for various projects aimed at improving the prospects of unemployed people and young people in particular. Therefore, it is assumed here that the stakeholders in Pori share a stock of experience and know-how on combating the evils and the damage that persistent high unemployment produces for the families that are affected by it.

Rovigo - Italy

Rovigo is a town of 50,000 inhabitants, located in the north east of Italy. The town is a part of a rich and developed region (Veneto), but it is relatively deprived in economic and social terms, suffering from the economic crisis that has affected Italy since 2001. Between 1999 and 2002 the town of Rovigo was involved in an experimental and innovative project called "Reddito minimo di inserimento" (Minimum Income for Placement) in order to fight against poverty and social exclusion. The project involved 39 municipalities in Italy and Rovigo was one among 5 towns chosen in Northern Italy. The unemployment rate in Rovigo is 6.42% (Istat 2001), the female unemployment rate is 8.93%, while the average rate for the region Veneto is 4.11%. Rovigo is affected heavily by youth unemployment (22.01%) that is twice as high as in the whole region (11.02%).

Jonava - Lithuania

Jonava is a middle-sized town, inhabited by 34,695 people, located in the central part of Lithuania. The town population is quite homogeneous : 86.2 % Lithuanian, 9,4 % Russian, 1,4 % Polish, 0,8 % Ukrainian, 0,7 % Belorussian, 1,5 % other nationalities. Jonava has been an industrial town since Soviet times. A significant part of the employed work in the industrial sector (27,8 %), followed by education, construction and market sectors. AB "Achema" is the biggest producer of nitrogen fertiliser in Lithuania and the largest factory of this kind in the Baltic countries. The company plays an important role in the town's

development, in population growth, and the creation of new jobs. The overall unemployment rate in the town is 6.8% and corresponds to the general unemployment rate within the country. A decline in the number of low skilled workers and an increase of skilled employees represent positive tendencies in the workforce in Jonava. The cost of flats, houses and construction sites are quite low compared with other country regions. It creates favourable conditions for people, especially for the poverty-stricken, to move from other towns, mostly from Kaunas – second largest town in Lithuania. However, according to the official statistics, emigration exceeded immigration in Jonava city in 2005, as 945 people left, while 847 arrived (Kaunas Territory Statistics Department, 2006).

Loughborough - United Kingdom

The Borough of Charnwood in Leicestershire, central England, has a population of some 155,000; its largest conurbation is Loughborough with a population of around 57,000, increased by around 15,000 during term-time due to the student population attending Loughborough University, bringing the population to over 70,000 inhabitants. According to the 2001 Census, the Black and Minority Ethnic Population in the town was 13.4%. However, the current influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe in the East Midlands region has, undoubtedly, contributed to this figure increasing, although specific Loughborough statistics are not yet available.

Until the 1980s, economic activity and employment was concentrated in textile manufacturing (hosiery and knitwear) and light engineering; by the end of the 1990s both industries had virtually disappeared, leaving one large pharmaceutical company (Astra Zeneca) and one much reduced engineering works, together with a much expanded service sector, dominated by the now biggest employer, Loughborough University. The University has shifted the weight of the local economy from low-skill, manufacturing jobs, to high-skill, service sector jobs, reflecting the overall sectoral development of advanced industrialized economies. The reliance on the University to provide employment, has, on the one hand contributed to the relatively low levels of unemployment in the town (2.3% by July 2006) but on the other has limited the opportunities of the low-skilled workforce, which tends to be concentrated in run-down estates. It also influenced the housing situation in the town, being currently one of main social problems in Loughborough. In the Borough of Charnwood, poverty and social problems tend to be concentrated in certain areas. There are significant disparities between the population of particular wards and between particular Super Output Areas (statistical unit). Significant pockets of poverty could be found among these areas, home to mainly low-skilled workforce and ethnic minorities.

The selected towns are considered as case studies. Generalization about results covering other towns or a country as a whole is therefore not possible. Comparisons between towns serve as exemplifications of the problem in the study.

2.2.3 Interviews with top-level actors (political, economical, social)

(See: Creswell 2003; Denzin, Lincoln (eds.) 2002; Ezzy 2002; Gubrium, Holstein (eds.) 2002, Odendahl, Shaw 2002; Patton 2002; Ragin 1987; Rist 1994; Silverman 1997; Somekh, B., Lewin, C. (eds.) 2005)

Investigation carried out among actors being top-level politicians and representing central economic and social institutions were carefully designed. Persons selected for interview were sent in advance the “Invitation Letter” signed by project coordinator explaining the purpose of the project and its main objectives. Then s/he was contacted by telephone or e-mail to make an appointment. The interview was semi-structured and focused. Face-to-face interviews prevailed but in some cases telephone interview had to be accepted. Interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The interview was divided into three sections consisting of a set of questions/problems to be discussed:

- A. Perception of intergenerational inheritance of social inequalities and its relative importance among/in relation to other social problems (How Ilofi is perceived and whether it is regarded as a social problem in a given country?)
- B. Perception of opportunities and ways of overcoming Ilofi (Who copes with inheritance of inequalities and how?)
- C. Perception of the impact of applied programmes and policies for overcoming Ilofi.

In the section *Perception of inheritance of social inequalities and its relative importance among/ in relation to other social problems* an interviewer was to identify politicians' opinions concerning the following problems:

- Groups/categories of young people, who have the greatest, and the most restricted opportunity to obtain high social status. Justification.
- Importance of the transmission of poverty and low education, in comparison with other social problems.
- Factors and processes generating Ilofl.
- The impact of ICT development on transmission of inequalities.
- The impact of European integration on inequalities (*i.e. imposition of EU law, legislative and political processes, socio-economic changes, migration etc.*).
- Prospects of Ilofl in a given country –reduction/persistence/increase. Reasons and consequences.

In the section *Perception of opportunities and ways of overcoming Ilofl* an interviewer was to identify politicians' opinions concerning the following problems:

- The relative responsibility of the EU/state/local government/family/church/NGOs for reducing Ilofl. The real state of affairs and the desired one. (*To whom the responsibility is ascribed and to whom it should be?*)
- Cooperation and networking of these bodies in reducing Ilofl (*special attention should be paid to relations between central and local government and between public and private (NGOs) bodies.*)
- Factors that influence policymaking aimed at improving opportunities and combating Ilofl (*i.e. political swings, budgetary restrictions, knowledge deficits etc.*)
- Impact of group interest conflict (*i.e. business vs. work, rich vs. poor, workers vs. farmers, elderly vs. young, natives vs. immigrants etc.*) on the reduction/persistence/increase of Ilofl. (*Which groups of interest are privileged and which are ignored by current government and how it affects Ilofl*)
- Changes and improvements needed in the political sphere to reduce Ilofl.

In the section *Perception of impact of applied programmes and policies on reducing/persistence/increase Ilofl* an interviewer was to identify opinions concerning education, labour market and welfare policies:

Educational policy

- Educational policy and its impact on Ilofl. Efficacy of current educational policy in equalising opportunities (*i.e., access to the best schools, public and non-public schools, life-long learning etc.*).
- Compensation programmes and their impact on equalising educational opportunities of young learners. Expected and unexpected (*e.g. stigmatisation, dependency attitudes among the target categories, etc.*) outcomes of these programmes. Efficacy of these programmes.
- Accuracy of covering by these programmes (*Social groups and categories that should and should not be specially supported*).
- Improvements needed to increase the effectiveness of educational policy in equalising the opportunities.

Labour market policy

- Labour market policy and its impact on Ilofl. Efficacy of current labour market policy in improving opportunities on the labour market.
- Special programmes and their impact on improving employment opportunities of young people. Expected and unexpected (*e.g. stigmatisation, dependency attitudes among target categories, etc.*) outcomes of these programmes. Efficacy of these programmes.
- Accuracy of covering by these programmes. (*Social groups and categories that should and should not be specially supported*).
- Possible ways of increasing the effectiveness of labour market policy in improving opportunities for young people (*i.e. state intervention, cooperation between public and non-public sector, fiscal policy, labour law, etc.*)

Welfare policy (for needy people)

- Welfare policy and its impact on Ilofi. Efficacy of this policy in improving life opportunities.
- Specific programmes (*i.e. for children coming from poor families, single-parent families, families with many children or families of immigrant origin*) and their impact on improving life opportunities.
- Expected and unexpected (*e.g. stigmatisation, dependency attitudes among the target categories, etc.*) outcomes of these programmes. Efficacy of these programmes.
- Accuracy of covering by these programmes (*Social groups and categories that should and should not be specially supported*).
- Ways to improve the efficacy of welfare policy in equalising the life opportunities of needy people (*i.e. changes in tax policy, family and health care policy etc. and its impact on Ilofi*).

Interviews lasted between 20 and 140 minutes. They were recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions in national languages are deposited by partners who provided coordinator with reports in English.

2.2.4 Study conducted in selected towns

- Focus group interviews with local stakeholders
- Surveys among young adults on “Young Adults at Risk. Constraints and Opportunities to Social Mobility”
- In-depth interviews among young adults from originally low status families: “Young Adults telling their stories”
- Dissemination seminar among local stakeholders.

2.2.4.1 Focus group interviews with local stakeholders

(See: Alexander, Becker 1978; Babbie 2004; Creswell 2003; Denzin, Lincoln (eds.) 2002; Ezzy 2002; Finch 1987; Kitzinger 2004; Kreuger 1988; Morgan 1988; Morgan 1996; Ragin 1987; Rist 1994; Silverman (ed.) 1997; Stewart, Shamdasani 1990)

To achieve a better understanding of local policies and practices contributing to overcoming Ilofi, a contextual analysis was performed on the basis of focus group interviews and town and local activity descriptions. The following instruments were elaborated for this purpose:

- Scenarios of focus group interview, including scenario of a vignette
- Town description form
- Local activity description form

The study approached two groups of respondents (local stakeholders being key informants):

1. those who formulate local policies, called “**Local politicians**”: municipal councillors and representatives of political parties acting at the local level.
2. those who implement policies in everyday practice:
 - a. “**managers**” of local institutions operating in the field of social policy, namely: civil servants, head teachers, directors of departments in social administration, managers of labour offices, directors of social assistance centres;
 - b. “**Front-liners**”: social workers, teachers - tutors, policemen, probation officers, job advisors, school psychologists, all those who deal in their everyday work with the families endangered by the inheritance of poverty and low social status.
 - c. “**Non-governmental actors**”: representatives of charity organisations, service providers, religious organizations, employers’ organizations or trade unions.

Interviews were conducted separately for each sub-group to avoid subordination of relations between participants.

National research teams employed different strategies to approach respondents and make them cooperate, like prior contact with town authorities, with municipal officers, personal contacts of researcher with potential respondents who recommended other professionals and NGO representatives etc. In all towns the municipal authorities were interested in the research and supportive with reference to organizational issues. Interviews were held in different places: in municipal buildings, in university rooms, in rented rooms.

Prior to the interview respondents were provided with a letter of invitation. They were informed of the project's objectives, the institution responsible for carrying out the research and the topics to be discussed.

Focus group interview was concentrated on following issues:

1. To explore whether the phenomenon of the transmission of low social status (understood in terms of poor education, low income, low skills, high risk of unemployment) and poverty from one generation to another is present in the town where you live and work?
2. What is the extent of this phenomenon?
3. To which groups does this apply? Is it just the fate of particular people or are there larger social groups affected by inequality/poverty inheritance? (e.g. women, immigrants, unemployed, disabled etc.)
4. Why is this so? What are the reasons for the reproduction of low social status in the next generation?
5. What, if any, policy measures (ongoing programme or individual projects) exist in your town, aimed at preventing the transmission of inequalities or improving the opportunities of children and teenagers from disadvantaged families?
6. Which of them are good examples? Which of them should be continued, which of them should be improved? Why? (*Special attention should be paid to three fields: education, labour market and welfare; who initiates, organizes, finances and implements these measures?*)
7. What could be done, using currently available local resources (human, organisational etc), in order to prevent children from being poor when they grow up? What kind of actions could be undertaken? Who (which institutions, organizations, people) should deal with these problems? And what would you prefer to do?
8. Leaving aside various limitations faced by the local government and institutions you work for, what could be done to counteract the risk of inheritance of low social status? What actions should be undertaken and by whom?
9. What should be done to improve cooperation between central government and local authorities in combating the transmission of poverty and low social status?

Vignette technique has been used as well, to exemplify the process of inheritance of inequalities and poverty. Stories about typical needy family from each town under study were developed by the researchers. Participants in focus groups were reacting to them, describing possible ways of supportive interventions.

Usually the members of the national research teams served as moderators of the focus group interviews. In some cases this function was performed by other academics working for a given university who were supported by members of the Profit research team.

Each interview lasted approximately 120 minutes. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions in national languages are deposited with partners who provided coordinator with reports in English. Altogether 198 persons participated in focus group interviews.

Town description form was designed to describe towns in the study, taking into account the following issues: population (gender, ethnicity, age, and education), employment and economic activity of the population, unemployment, 10 largest enterprises in the town, municipal budget, housing, social welfare, education and culture, civil society, communication and new technologies.

Town description forms were filled in by national research teams using information published on websites, statistical year books, official reports elaborated by local authorities for different purposes etc.

Local activity form was designed to describe social activities which are/were in operation in the town and are considered by local stakeholders to have an impact on the improvement of education and/or life and work opportunities of town inhabitants. Each activity was considered a project, and methods used in project management to phase its implementation were applied for activity description.

Local activity forms were filled in by local leaders of these activities (project, programme, measure) These activities were mostly mentioned during focus group interviews or – in some cases – they were recommended by managers of social services providers.

2.2.4.2 Survey on “Young adults at risk. Opportunities and Constraints to Social Mobility”

(See: Babbie 2004, 1990; Creswell 2003; Fowler 1995; Frankfort-Nachmias, Nachmias 1996; Ragin 1987; Somekh, Lewin 2005)

The small-scale and low-budget survey based on a questionnaire, designed by the PROFIT team, on “Young Adults at Risk. Opportunities and Constraints to Social Mobility” was assumed to provide rough estimations of intergenerational social and economic mobility of young adults and the impact of policy on their achievements to date. The sample was expected to cover 250 people aged 25-29 being permanent residents of a given town, selected from the general inhabitants’ register.

The questionnaire consisted of 72 questions and was divided into several parts to facilitate the description of the family of origin and impact of policy on the social position of respondents and his/her achievements to date. (“Family of origin” meant family in which the respondent grew up, no matter whether the parents were married and no matter if one parent was a formal or informal step-parent.)

The first part consisted of questions concerning the respondent’s parental family. S/he was asked to recall what her/his family was like when s/he was approximately 14 years old. The idea was to gain information about the respondent’s family of origin when s/he was at the lower secondary school level. A focus of interest was household composition, financial situation, housing and education, employment and occupational location of parents etc.

The second part consisted of questions concerning the respondent’s performance in school, parents’ attitude toward the respondent’s education, the satisfaction of different needs by parents, getting financial support and services provided for free etc.

The third part involved questions about transition from school to work and respondent’s current living and working situation. The respondent was also asked about his/her involvement in political activities.

Before the survey was started local newspapers provided information about the research in some towns (Tomaszow, Pernik, Rovigo) to make the town inhabitants familiar with the Profit project and to accept invitations to participate in research. Would-be respondents were provided with information on the project’s objectives, the institution responsible for carrying out the research, topics of the interview etc. by post. Face-to-face interviews prevailed but, for organizational and financial reasons, in Finland respondents were sent the questionnaire (slightly modified) by post. Altogether 1681 questionnaires were collected.

Interviews were conducted in national languages and the collected questionnaires are deposited with national research teams. The coordinating team elaborated coding cards and national research teams have created databases in Excel or SPSS. Calculations were conducted by the coordinator. The results for particular towns were a matter of discussion among all project partners.

2.2.4.3 In-depth interviews on “Young adults telling stories about...”

(See: Babbie 2004; Denzin, Lincoln 2002; Ezzy 2002; Gubrium, Holstein 2002; Patton 2002; Silverman, D (ed) 1997; Somekh, B., Lewin, C. (eds.) 2005)

The aim of this qualitative research was to answer the following questions:

- If and how young people perceive the impact of various policies (educational, labour market, welfare policy) on the course of their lives (social mobility)?
- How they evaluate policies (support/constraint), as compared with other factors (family, peers, one’s own endeavors and activities), shaping their biography?

Of particular interest was the importance of policies and informal networks (family, peers, significant “others”) at transition points in a life course of an individual, namely:

- transition from obligatory (primary) school to intermediate/ secondary level
- transition from school to work
- transition from parental family to an independent household.

The respondents were to be selected among the survey interviewees. They were expected to originate from families of low social status, defined by:

1. father’s and mother’s education (**low**)

2. father's and mother's work career (**experience of unemployment**)
3. dependence on social welfare (**social assistance recipients**)
4. the material status of the family (**perceived as low**)

Selected group of respondents should comprise:

1. those who in comparison with their parents experienced upward social mobility
2. those who have not experienced upward social mobility (considered as those who inherited parents' low social position, have no higher social position than their parents used to have)

As upwardly mobile persons were defined those who:

1. have achieved a higher level of education than their parents
2. are in employment while their parents were/are unemployed
3. perceive their own material position to be better/higher in comparison with their parents.

The interview was designed as a combination of biographical interview and a focused interview. Therefore, it was the free and spontaneous narration of the respondent which was to deliver answers to the investigative questions, supported by questions referring to the impact of policy measures on the respondent's biography.

The introduction to the interview was as follows:

People's life courses are different, some people follow their parents' path of life, others perform better than their parents, yet another group of people achieves even less than their parents. How is it in your case? Please tell me about your life course up to the present moment, paying attention to situations, institutions and people who had both a positive and negative impact on the course of your life.

The interviewer asked questions, if needed, which can help to identify:

- the impact of the family of origin on the respondent's social mobility and life course,
- the impact of institutions (educational labour market institutions, welfare institutions, NGOs..., etc.) on the respondent's social mobility and life course.

Altogether 161 in-depth interviews were collected in towns in the study.

Interviews were carried out in national languages. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions in national languages are deposited with the contractors, who elaborated data with support of NVIVO7 software. The Coordinator was provided with reports in English.

2.2.4.4 Policy learning case studies

National research teams organized seminars aimed at achieving two objectives:

- to provide local authorities and other stakeholders with results of the study conducted in a given town in the course of the project realization and to gain their feedback.
- to select an example of commonly accepted good practice to present at the PROFIT project dissemination conference in Spała, Poland.

National research teams provided stakeholders with information about:

1. whether the problem of social inequalities inheritance is recognized (if yes in what way) by the representatives of local authorities, social service employees and NGO representatives in a given town
2. what is the extent of low social status inheritance there
3. what social categories of citizens prone to transmit poverty to the next generations were identified
4. what measures were undertaken to prevent the inheritance of social inequalities in a given town.

Usually municipal officers working for social departments helped to invite seminar participants and provided them with leaflets in advance. Interviewees to Focus Group Interviews, carried out in the second year of the project, were invited first of all. In some cases, as in Giessen, project results were presented and discussed among a larger audience. The occasion was the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the foundation providing stipends for worse-off students. There was also a conference involving a larger audience, held in Jonava.

For good practice to be selected for presentation at the dissemination conference in Spała the following criteria were taken into account:

1. being successful (that it provides positive results for a specific objective)
2. being innovative (innovative means providing new or different solutions to existing ones in the territory, sector or collectivity. Solutions can be completely new or incorporated by transference from other contexts. Innovation can be found in the process (measures, contents, methods, approaches, tools), in the object (new areas of interest, new social groups) or in the context (adaptation or improvement of the current conditions, starting-up of networks);
3. having a possible multiplier effect or transference to other areas (either horizontally, i.e. visible, communicable, shareable (dissemination) and/or vertically, i.e. integrated and applicable to systems and regulations);
4. being sustainable (sustainable means that it is self-supporting):
 - a) having created a need,
 - b) being assumed as a service, and/or
 - c) being able to produce improvements for society.

2.2.5 Challenges faced by the research team

Conducting field work occurred to be a very challenging task. In Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Lithuania and Poland study was carried out outside the city where members of research teams work and live. Therefore it was time-consuming to contact local authorities and respondents during the research. However, what is more important, there were substantial differences between countries in the degree to which top-level-actors; local stakeholders and young respondents were approachable. These differences seem to be embedded in different “political cultures”, different understandings of “personal data protection” and different approaches to of social research.

With regard to top-level actors (mainly politicians) three types of communication styles and relations between top politicians and research teams could be distinguished:

- semi-spontaneous readiness (post-socialist countries)
- procedural correctness (Finland, Germany, Italy)
- reserved relations (Britain)

In post-socialist countries, the new political elite emerging in the 1990s was to a large extent composed of intellectuals. Some of them were serving as ministers in subsequent governments and nowadays are elected members of Parliament. It is also common among them to work as academic teachers, mainly in the social sciences. Participating in research and sharing opinions with other researchers belongs to their everyday experience. This could provide an explanation why in Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland it was a relatively easy task for researchers to get access to top-level politicians. They were ready to devote their time to answering questions also because the project was commissioned by the European Commission, highly valued among politicians in new member states.

In developed democracies there are differences regarding “political culture”. A clear dividing line can be drawn between Finland and other countries. In Finland, public officers, including top-level politicians felt obliged to take part in research aimed at improving the policy making process. This is why it was an easy task for Finnish researchers to approach respective respondents. It was also possible in Italy for research team to approach members of Parliament and high level party representatives but they were ready to devote only very limited time to answering questions and were very focused on issues belonging to their competency field. In Germany, the research team was mainly limited to members of the Regional (Land) Parliament and federal party representatives. However, it succeeded in interviewing the female federal minister in charge of family and youth affairs. In Britain, no politician active at the central political level was interviewed. It might be to some extent a result of national election campaign, which consumed time and interest of desirable politicians. In this country civil servants were approachable for researchers and prevailed among the respondents. Therefore, the British research team decided to include into report respective information coming from TV and press interviews with top politicians.

For the field work carried out in municipalities other difficulties arose:

1. For some countries (particularly for Estonia) it was really challenging to select a town meeting agreed criteria for conducting of the study.

2. It was difficult for research teams to interview local stakeholders who claimed to be very busy. It happened that some who accepted invitation to participate in group interviews failed to turn up. One can have an impression that it was the first time for them to be asked to participate in social research. In fact, it is not very often for people living in relatively small towns to meet academics and work with them.
3. Other problems arose while the survey study was organized.
 - Following agreed procedure of respondents' selection occurred impossible for German, British, Italian and Bulgarian research teams. Town administrators in Giessen, Loughborough, Rovigo and Pernik refused researchers access to the address list of permanent residents. They claimed that it would violate the law on personal data protection. In such a situation quota sampling had to be applied in these towns.
 - In Poland, Lithuania and Estonia research teams received the permission of the Ministry of Administration to gain access to a general register and representative samples were selected. But the response rate was low. It was difficult to complete interviews because of absence of respondents in the town. Being registered as permanent inhabitants of a given town very many young people were not available there for various reasons. Some of them *de facto* out-migrated to Western countries for work, some were studying in other towns, and some refused to answer questions. Therefore, to collect the planned number of questionnaires, researchers employed a mix of selection methods, including visiting places where young people spend leisure-time to get respondents. Despite strong attempts in Parnu, Loughborough and Jonava they failed to collect 250 questionnaires.
 - In some towns (especially in Loughborough and Giessen) would-be respondents wanted to receive financial compensation for time they would devote to answering questions. It constrained the realisation of this stage of research, as no financial means have been reserved in the project budget for purposes of this kind.
4. In-depth interviews were planned to be conducted among survey respondents from originally low social status families who accepted an invitation to participate in this stage of the study. However, the number of potential respondents selected among survey samples differed between towns because:
 - Countries in the study used to have differentiated school systems with more or less selective transitions to secondary school. In consequence, in some countries secondary education was a standard for the parents' generation while in others – the most popular level was vocational education, considered below secondary school level. Therefore, in the former the number of respondents from “less educated” families, defined as below “secondary school graduation”, was small and in the latter - high. The same applies to unemployment. Results from countries which had experienced high waves of unemployment at different times where the parental generation was affected by unemployment when children were teenagers differed from those in countries where this had not been the case.
 - Respondents meeting criteria of having originated from “low social status” family in given towns were very difficult to approach, because:
 - a. they did not accept invitations to participate in this stage of study
 - b. having expressed interest earlier they changed their minds when interviewer arrived
 - c. they were simply absent when interviewer arrived after an earlier appointment with a respondent
 - d. they moved somewhere after participating in the survey.

Despite all the difficulties, conducting the field work has strengthened the conviction of the PROFIT research team that to obtain knowledge about the solution of social problems, information is needed about dealing with problems in communities and municipalities. It is there that people live and satisfy their needs. Mobilizing all bodies to counteract poverty, as stated in official EU documents, requires close attention to the functioning of communities.

The Profit project showed that it is very challenging to approach real people. They are not always willing to take part in research. Sometimes, particularly in post-socialist countries, they felt afraid that research would reveal their professional shortcomings or – in a case of policy end-users - would reveal their limited endeavours of being upward mobile. For local authorities, the research results may confirm that they are doing well or on the contrary that social problems are not a focus of their concern. Time is needed to

recognize that solving social problems requires a scientific approach and cooperation between local authorities, social actors and researchers.

The Profit project showed that social reality is changing very fast, particularly in post-socialist countries, as a result of their accession to the European Union. When the project was launched no one could predict mass out-emigration that made the research team lower the number of respondents in some towns.

2.2.6 Methods training

Research assistants were provided with the opportunity to improve their research skills and competences while participating in three workshops held: in Sofia, Tartu and Łódź, scheduled as WP 2, WP 5 and WP9.

Workshop in Sofia (WP2) was aimed at providing RAs with methodological skills necessary in comparative quantitative research. Responsibility for this activity was attached to the Bulgarian and Finnish partner while the tools were designed by the Coordinating Team in consultation with the project partners. Research assistants were participating in lectures, seminars and workshops delivered by outstanding scholars in the framework of a Summer School organized by REGLO in cooperation with UNESCO and PROFIT. Workshops covered communication and interpretation issues unavoidable in comparative studies. Questions connected with statistical data collection were discussed too.

WP5 was aimed at providing RAs with methodological skills necessary to conduct qualitative research, especially the focus group interview and vignette. The Estonian partner is particularly advanced in qualitative methods and thus took the responsibility for providing training on designing specific tools and procedures needed for the project. Lectures and a three-day-workshop were held in Tartu in May 2005. RAs working for all national research teams participated in this event. As an empirical example, the draft of a scenario for the focus group interview and a vignette designed by the Coordinating Team was discussed. RAs from each participating country received the training.

Within WP9 RAs were provided with methodological skills to elaborate qualitative data. NVivo7 Qualitative Text Analysis Software was selected as the methodological tool for elaborating data from in-depth interviews conducted within the WP8. The coordinator took responsibility for organizing the training in NVivo7 which was held at the University of Łódź 7 – 9 December 2006. An authorized QSR International (NVivo7 producer and distributor) trainer, Professor Henrik Gahmberg, University of Vaasa, Finland, was hired to deliver the training tailored specifically to PROFIT project needs. The training was conducted in the form of a three-day computer workshop for 13 RAs representing all national research teams. Prior to the training all RAs were asked to download the trial version of the software from the QSR site and familiarize themselves with the tutorials and other scientific material provided by the coordinator. Another requirement was to have at least 3 in-depth interviews transcribed in order to have ready empirical data to elaborate during the workshop. Each participant received the certificate signed by the Prof. Gahmberg and the Coordinator.

3. Scientific overview of the project results

Conceptualizing the Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities

Inequalities in general and their reproduction across generations, specifically, have attracted little attention from researchers in countries under scrutiny for at least two recent decades. There are manifold overlapping reasons behind this state of the affairs as deduced from national reports based on literature reviews. Among them there are scientific, cognitive and ideological reasons.

With regard to scientific reasons, it is important to mention the change in social sciences paradigms. A conviction that in contemporary, developed societies social classes are ‘dead’ (Pakulski 1993; Clark, Lipset 1991) and no longer play an important role in determining individuals’ attainments partly explains the lack of interest in inequality inheritance. A belief that the equal opportunity principle is in operation and that societies more or less adhere to the principle of meritocracy could discourage researchers from looking into whether some categories or groups of people have difficulties gaining access to given social positions. If it is

assumed that it is only an individuals' efforts that determine her or his attainments, it appears to be useless to devote research time and money to search for the reproduction of inequalities. Equal access to social positions by definition could not be inherited. Not only opportunities but also risks are said to be attached to everyone no matter what is his/her education and occupational position.

Another reason for the undermining of interest in social inequalities was a change of research focus that could have been observed during the 1990s in sociology and other related disciplines. Since then research interests focused on various kinds of differences instead of on inequalities. The question of how to maintain a social order that would allow for diversity instead of transcending or annihilating it preoccupied many social thinkers and scientists and for some time became a predominant subject of academic debates. To use Nancy Fraser's (1995) words there was a shift in research and political interests from issues of redistribution to problems of recognition (of various groups and social categories' rights). While without doubt such a change was positive, as it enabled previously marginalised and silenced groups to (re)gain their voice and bring their issues openly into the public debate, it had some negative side-effects, too. The focus on keeping differences obscured the problem of (still alive) inequalities. They have not received as much academic attention as they should have.

There is also one purely ideological factor contributing to the scarcity of the literature on the Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities (IIoI). The rise of neo-liberalism, with its conviction that the inequality is an inevitable (and to some extent positive/ functional) feature of the free-market society (Hayek 1988, Friedman 1962), is at least partially responsible for the lack of research (and the literature) on the IIoI. If the healthy economy requires no state (or public) intervention, even if certain groups are marginalised in the market and their economic situation worsens, then it seems quite obvious that there is no sense in investigating into the ways some market-produced inequalities could be overcome. As stated by Dieter Eissel (2005b) in his PROFIT report:

The majority of politicians and capital organisations favour the tools of an unfettered market economy. They refuse to organise a redistributive policy from the wealthier persons to the poor ones, saying that in this case Germany will lose its attractiveness for capital investments in the new global harder competition.

Studies concerned with child poverty (UNICEF 2005, 2007), the persistence of poverty (Atkinson 2003) and intergenerational social mobility (Piketty 2000; Rokicka, Starosta 2004) are casting light on the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities. Child poverty is perceived as the predictor of the persistence of poverty and has become a matter of concern of the European Union. In 2006 child-mainstreaming was introduced to monitor improvements in children's well-being in all member states (Commission of the European Communities 2006).

In the United Kingdom, the problem of child poverty and the persistence of poverty have been systematically investigated (Flaherty, Veit-Wilson, Dornan 2004; HM Treasury 2003, 2004). There is a long tradition there of research focusing on poverty and in fact it is only UK where data monitoring life achievements of individuals in their life course (when they were teenagers, adults in their thirties and forties) are available. Scholars in this country may feel satisfied that the government prioritised the problem and converted it into a strategic objective of the New Labour government.

Finland seems to be the only country where, apart from poverty inheritance (Airio & Niemelä, 2002, 2004), also the inheritance of unemployment was approached.

In Germany poverty in general and child poverty specifically is also a matter of research concern (Klocke, Hurrelmann 1998). In Poland, Lithuania, Estonia and Bulgaria there are also studies providing information about the extent of child poverty but the time dimension is mostly lacking (see: European Studies on Inequalities and Social Cohesion 2005, vol. 1,2; Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 2005).

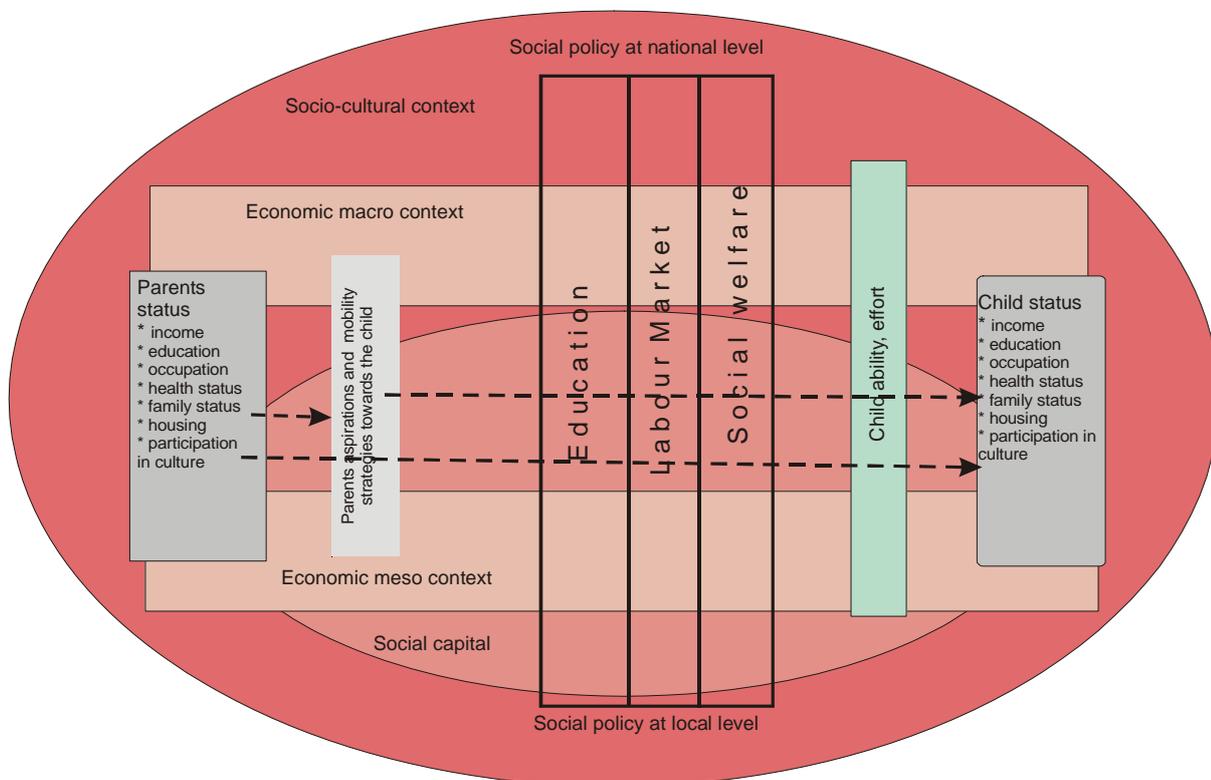
The sociology of childhood (Jenks 2005, Mayall 2002) provides a new impetus for child poverty studies recently. Giving a voice to children living in poverty, it deepens knowledge about the process leading to the persistence of poverty.

While studies on poverty and child poverty are concerned with **the risk** of poverty/inequality inheritance, studies on intergenerational social/economic mobility produce findings about **outcomes** of the process. Both approaches are prone to some inaccuracies. The former, because the final outcome of the process, though highly predictable, is not known. How many children living under conditions of poverty will be poor as adults is beyond precise prediction. The latter, because retrospective data may suffer inaccuracies of recall. It can happen that people asked about their living conditions during childhood or, what is more

common in studies on social mobility, when they were teenagers, provide researchers with the wrong assessment. They can do it deliberately or because an assessment is sensitive to the current social and material situation of individuals. However, when trying to find out the importance of policy measures on the life course/ social mobility of people, the second approach is more appropriate.

In the PROFIT project the **intergenerational inheritance of inequalities (IofI)** is conceptualized as a process of transmission of different disadvantages (material, social, cultural etc) from one generation to another resulting in restricted social and economic mobility of people born in low-status families. Its most severe form and at the same time the indicator is the intergenerational transmission of poverty. The persistence of IofI means the violation of key values accepted in the European Union, particularly the principles of equal opportunity. Therefore, external (extra-familial) interventions are accepted as supporting the upward mobility of disadvantaged individuals and groups. In this respect it is essential for political leaders to commit themselves to ensuring the well-being of the next generation. For a better understanding of the process of the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities, an analytical model was developed as follows:

Figure 1. Analytical model of explanation of the Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities



There is no doubt that families play the most important role in a process of the intergenerational transmission of different kinds of capital (material, social, cultural) between generations, mostly from parents to children (Bourdieu, Passeron 1990, Moore 2001; Breen, Goldthorpe 1999). The “silver spoon, plastic spoon” hypothesis has been positively verified in many studies. However, the process of transmission proceeds in the wider social environment constituted by community (meso level) and society (macro level), which may be important “players”. Both community and society may intervene to prevent the continuation of disadvantages across generations using resources, measures, and capital at their disposal. In European societies particularly three policies (educational, labour market and welfare) are considered key measures to break up the process of the intergenerational transmission of inequalities. But countries in this study differ in terms of how widespread the risk is, which resources and what capital they can deploy, and how much politicians are conscious of and willing to intervene in the process of reproducing inequalities.

3.1 Project findings in comparative perspective

Project findings are structured around the following questions:

- Whether the socio-economic-cultural context may “produce” the risk of the intergenerational transmission of inequalities in given countries;
- How top level political and social actors, who may contribute to policy-making at the national level, conceptualise Ilofl and its “producers”;
- How local stakeholders (operating in medium-sized towns) perceive the Ilofl, its incidence and possibilities for overcoming Ilofl offered by programmes, measures and action undertaken in a given town;
- How young adults living in towns in the study perceive the impact of different structures (family, school, work etc) and policies (education, labour market, welfare) on their social mobility up until now.

3.1.1 Socio-economic and cultural context as a risk factor for Ilofl in given countries

The countries in this study differ in many respects: population, economic standing, social policy model (social welfare regimes), social structure composition etc. These factors constitute the structural framework within which the intergenerational transmission of inequalities proceeds. It is assumed that because of these differences, a risk of Ilofl will differ between countries as will its “producers”/determinants.

The socio-economic-cultural context is defined as composed of structural and cultural factors operating at both national and municipal level as shown below. Its components have been operationalised in the PROFIT project as follows:

Table 3. Structural and cultural context of Ilofl transmission

| Administrative level | Structural factors | Cultural factors |
|----------------------|---|---|
| National | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National social structure composition • Socio-economic standing; • Poverty patterns and social problems’ composition • Division of responsibility between central and local government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top-level policy makers’ and executors’ ways of thinking about inequality reproduction and its overcoming |
| Local (municipality) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic situation • Town’s social structure composition; • Social infrastructure and resources; • Programmes, projects implemented | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local politicians’ and other stakeholders’ ways of thinking about inequality reproduction and its overcoming; • Social trust potential |

Structural and cultural factors acting in each country as mediating variables in the process of intergenerational inheritance of inequalities are the result of a unique history and culture of a given society. But for some of them similar structural and cultural patterns may be revealed.

3.1.2 Structural determinants of the risk of Ilofl

The main conclusion drawn from scientific literature and official governmental documents’ reviews is that structural factors differ substantially between countries in the study. This means that the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities occurs in different structural environments that may impact on

social groups being vulnerable and on possible social interventions to be implemented. The dividing line is set mostly between post-socialist and Western countries, however not always and not in each dimension.

Social structure composition

To gain a better understanding about the process of inequality inheritance it is useful to think about changes in social structure as a factor contributing to the risk of poverty and to the possibility of upward mobility.

Though in all countries in the study, except Italy, the national research teams reported some changes in social structure in recent decades, it is only post-socialist countries that have undergone a fundamental qualitative alteration in their composition.

In Finland the reason for the transformation of the social structure is advancement in the transition to a knowledge-based society. As stated by Harri Melin and Paivi Naumanen (2005: 8) in their PROFIT report:

During the last 20 years most important change has been the growth of the middle class. In occupational terms this means the increasing number of different managerial groups and experts. At the same time the share of the working class has declined... The decline of unskilled workers is quite big too... The social structure in Finland today is far less flexible than it was in the late 1960s. There is considerably less mobility between the generations. As a result of the economic recession in the early 1990s, career mobility is also fairly limited. People remain in the same positions for much longer than before, holding on to what they have: for most wage earners there is simply nowhere to go in terms of more attractive options. Thus, the demand in the labour market is narrowly focused on a specific segment. Informational work is very distinctly a middle-class phenomenon. It requires extensive education and a wide range of cultural skills, both of which are typically middle-class assets.

In the United Kingdom increasing employment and lower unemployment due in part to the New Deal policy, implemented by Blair's government, has increased the number of workers, notably in the service sector, and in Germany as result of the "Hartz reforms" a deterioration of the social situation of the unemployed and changes in class relations is predicted. According to Dieter Eissel (2005: 55) PROFIT report:

Currently the "so-called Hartz-reforms" - called after the head of a commission concerning the future labour agenda - from the beginning of the year 2005 will lead to another harsh cut in the income position of jobless people. In the end this downward process shifting from the Bismarckian system of social security to the British system of workfare will produce another half a million more children (or plus 50%) living under the poverty line (see reports of Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband Deutschland).

The social structure in all post-socialist countries in the study is in a process of re-crystallization because of system transformation and accelerating technological changes. System transformation is a reason of:

- avoidance of political determinants of social structure, operating in state-socialism
- creation of newly implemented regulations and opportunities of a political and economic provenance
- existence of "alternative" informal channels of social mobility provided by the 'grey economy' and criminal activity.

Political determinants of social structure composition having operated in state socialism were manifold:

- Firstly, it was a specific division of labour among countries belonging to the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance resulting in particular countries developing certain industries and developing others less intensively. (For example, Poland was required to develop heavy industry and Bulgaria agricultural production and informatics sector.) It translated into disproportionate employment in particular industrial sectors and branches in a given country or even in the development of industry in countries and places where there were no economic reasons for this. As stated by one Estonian PROFIT researcher:

...the industry of the former Soviet Union ... has produced products not for Estonia, from the raw materials of non-Estonian origin by the hands of workers emigrated from the other regions of the Soviet Union (Kutsar, Trumm, Kasearu 2005: 12).

It is very likely that in each post-socialist country examples could be given of political reasons for locating industrial plants in a given region or town. In Poland, for example, a huge steel industry

(Nowa Huta) was located close to Cracow with the purpose of increasing the share of industrial workers in the city population with the intention of “improving” the social structure composition in the region defined as opposing the socialist regime.

- Secondly, different political clout was attached to particular segments of the social structure. The system symbolically privileged workers. Working class and especially workers in large industrial plants were considered the most important part of society.

Concomitant with the socialist ideology of dictatorship of the proletariat, the socialist redistribution policy intentionally favoured the main constituents of the socialistic regime: the working class - states Chunlei Wang (2002: 27), commenting on the distorted relationship between education and income in Poland before system transformation.

- Thirdly, political criteria, like party membership, were supportive of locating people in the social structure. There was a set of managerial positions which required candidates to be accepted by respective units of the communist party. It was known as the *nomenklatura* system,

being a structural implementation of directive-distributive management at both the national and the regional level...In the everyday functioning of state socialism, nomenklatura was a structural arrangement through which the communist party ensured that ‘appropriate’ people would be placed in important positions and that they then carried out the party directives efficiently and effectively. The nomenklatura was a quasi-class (Słomczyński 2002: 15). On the basis of the publication by Titma, Tooding & Tuma (2004), Kutsar, Trumm, Kasearu (2005: 12-13) claim: The membership of the Communist party enhanced career prospects significantly. For this reason, many career-orientated people were party members without any ideological commitment.

The collapse of the socialist system contributed to the avoidance of the above-mentioned political determinants of social structure composition. Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland were affected by its demise, albeit not in the same way and to the same extent. In all of these countries the *nomenklatura* system and – in consequence – the *nomenklatura* class equipped with political power disappeared.

The break-up of economic relations within the countries belonging earlier to the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, low competitiveness of products, and lack of experience to operate within a globalized market contributed to recession in particular countries, bankruptcies of large industrial and agricultural plants and in consequence to changes in the quantitative and proportional share of employees, and – particular – industrial workers in the social structure. In each country mass unemployment has been produced, and in some, like Poland, the unemployed constitute a large stable segment of the social structure whose size is weakly affected by economic growth. At the same time the working class lost its position as the “leading force” in society. As David Ost (2005: 12) states:

...by breaking with communism’s privileging of political capital and linking advancement to possession of cultural and economic capital, which workers lacked, post communism inexorably brought about this dramatic decline in the standing of labour.

Chunlei Wang (2002: 5) comments:

The working class as a whole experienced downward structural mobility. Losing support from the former socialist government, the fates of workers are subject to the manipulation of the unpredictable “invisible hand” of the market.

Since whole branches and localities failed to adjust to market rules, not only unskilled workers but also highly educated specialists lost their previous social status. Bulgarian PROFIT researchers report, using data from Ivan Szelenyi’s book (2002: 21):

In 2002 about 55 per cent of the people with high education confirmed that they did not have enough money for new clothes. The percentage of Bulgarians with secondary education is almost the same – 59 per cent.

It made scientists think about social structure as being horizontally rather than vertically arranged, with winners and losers as its parts. Elisaveta Ignatova (2005: 10) continues:

the transition divided Bulgarian society into a tiny layer of successful individuals and a vast majority of losers who typically define themselves as poor people.

The privatization of state-owned factories, banks, agricultural plants and real estate was said to be the best way for these countries to develop and large industrial plants were sold as a set or bit by bit. A weak state

was believed to enable a quick transition towards a market economy. Private ownership of the means of production, the mass media, of financial institutions, land and houses is protected by law. It helped private businesses financed by foreign and domestic capital to flourish, sometimes accumulated illegally. The Haves and Have-Nots appeared to constitute new elements in the social structure.

Coexistence of private and public systems in the economy complicates the social stratification in that there are different mechanisms for the social location of individuals and their remuneration. Despite market regulation of wages and salaries, new political criteria for the creation of the social structure were introduced, setting for example ceilings on wages and salaries in the public sector or providing special pensions regulations for particular branches or institutions.

Not only a formal but also an “alternative” informal, “black” market of production, trade and labour has developed to avoid the payment of tax and to accelerate capital accumulation.

The mechanisms of social mobility existing in state socialism ceased to work and new mechanism has not crystallized yet. Thus, as it is stated in Lithuanian PROFIT by the researchers on the basis of a publication by Taljunaite (2000: 62):

classical criteria of social stratification including occupation, education and income are not enough to identify the social status of an individual. In order to better understand social differentiation in a transitional society, one has to take into account such factors as <extent of privacy, forms of ownership, real material status, legality of sources of income, how consistent are social relations, sphere and type of activity etc. (Ignatova 2005)

This idea has been expressed by Elisaveta Ignatova (2005) in the PROFIT report as follows:

The prevalent mechanisms for social stratification as a process are “invisible” since they are fully or partly illegitimate and there is not enough empirical evidence for them. Despite the fact that the share of constantly involved people is not too big; the results of their activities are very significant. If the researcher ignores the importance of that part of the Bulgarian population, the analysis becomes unbalanced and partial. The participants of this thin layer have similar characteristics:

- *Extremely high income, earned in illegal ways, by avoiding official legislation, by different forms of corruption, by unconscious bargains;*
- *Luxury life style – expensive flats and big country houses, luxury cars, education in Western countries for their children and so on;*
- *Great influence over the decision-makers in economy, politics and culture;*
- *Their fast enrichment became possible because of secret and informal deals involving public property. As a result, the wealth of these people is the direct cause for the enormous poverty among the majority of the Bulgarian citizens (Tilkidjiev, 2002: 103).*

Therefore, it is hard to identify and classify this “invisible layer”. Moreover, the group itself is rather heterogeneous and includes people with “suspicious” business – imports, trade in weapons, prostitution. It consists of former nomenclature members and their close associates, of corrupted politicians and state employees using their positions for unfair and informal deals. Other members of the group are representatives of informal small and medium-sized business, entrepreneurs from the “grey economy”. Consequently, to clarify the quantitative and qualitative parameters of the conflict between official, formal stratification and non-official, informal social structure is one of the most serious challenges facing Bulgarian scientists.

Thus, it is not only problematic for the social sciences but also for ordinary people to compare the social structure emerging during the transformation with that in the state-socialist period. Both scientists and ordinary people were trained to conceptualise the social structure as composed of the working class, (working) intelligentsia and the peasant class. Currently sociologists are trying to adopt the stratification scheme, and people are confused as to how to identify their own social positions. It is difficult to compare generations acting within different socio-economic-cultural contexts (Giza-Poleszczuk 2004). The short time span for observation is also an obstacle.

Despite similarities in social structure the rebuilding of each post-socialist country is following its own path that is determined by specific peculiarities embedded in its history, demography, culture and, what is very important, in a manner which avoids state socialism.

In the Baltic countries the collapse of state socialism was connected with the rebirth of independent nation states which resulted in the opening of mobility prospects in newly established institutions and structures. As stated by Kairi Kasearu (2005), PROFIT researchers

...many new structures were created after Estonia regained its independence and in these structures there was mostly a need for young and educated people.

However, in these countries specific peculiarities may also result from the fact that the development of the infrastructure in particular regions and towns during the Soviet system was dependant on politically prescribed criteria as well as from a population policy aimed at the intermingling of nations and ethnic groups. The change of the official language has excluded representatives of national minorities from managerial positions and sometimes even their children from public education. Kairi Kasearu reports referring to Asari (2002) and Titma (1999):

Compared to the 80s, the non-Estonians are now working in lower occupational positions and the possibility of them being unemployed is higher than for Estonians. Non-Estonians' unemployment rate in 1999 was 17% and Estonians' rate was 10% (Social Trends 2:52). In Estonian society, the proportion of Estonians tend to be higher in upper occupational strata, non-Estonians are relatively more represented among skilled workers. For example a study by Asari (2002) showed that the Estonians have better opportunities to work as a manager or a top specialist than non-Estonians. The reason is that the transition period weakened the positions of non-Estonians in the Estonian society. However, more important characteristics than ethnicity are citizenship and the ability to speak the Estonian language. According to Asari, the ability to speak Estonian and Estonian citizenship are creating better opportunities to participate in the labour market. Language ability is a condition of working in several occupations both in the private and public sector. The achievement of higher education in Estonian universities is also hindered by insufficient language skills.

In Bulgaria specific conditions for shaping the social structure are the result of:

- dramatic changes in population as a result of negative population growth and emigration:

Having in mind the mass emigration, which amounted to some 700,000 emigrants during the period between 1989 and 2000, the negative population growth cannot be reversed in the foreseeable future...The emigration of people of an economically active age is a strong negative factor for the development of the work force. Bulgaria ranks 91st among 102 countries in terms of brain drain, as a survey of the International Economic Forum says (www.dnevnik.bg). The seriousness of the economic collapse of the nation can be seen in the decrease of the age cohort below working age. (Demography, economic and social insurance, 2001: 27; Statistical Reference Book, 2004: 13) (Ignatova 2005)

- the re-privatization of agriculture land

the situation in the villages and generally in the agricultural sector is unfavourable. The major reason for the problems is the very strategy of re-privatization of agricultural land since most landowners live in towns. Also, the privatized land is divided into close to four million small plots. This state of ownership does not allow technological and economic efficiency of agricultural production. That is why nearly one-third of the arable land is currently not used for agricultural production. The rest is not used efficiently most of the time. So, agriculture is currently no remedy against unemployment and poverty (Ignatova 2005)

- a strong feeling of status inconsistency or even of “relegation” or “status loss”

the recent social stratification system in Bulgaria is a result of the struggle between the pressure of low consumer abilities and people's aspirations to “hold” their social status... about 86 per cent of the households of the people at the “real bottom” have their own houses and 58 per cent have their own agricultural land. But it is paradoxical that despite their high property status, the modern technical achievements – computer, mobile phone, microwave oven - are inaccessible to these people (about 30% of cases) Ignatova (2005). It is a well known thesis in sociology that “discrepancies between rank positions in different dimensions

themselves have implications for an individual's psychological well-being, social attitudes and actions, and these implications are generally taken to be adverse. (Swift, Adam, Marshall, Gordon 1999: 26)

In Poland *differentia specifica* of social structure rebuilding are connected not only with the existence, during the period of state socialism, of such social segments and institutions which were absent in other countries but also with the specific manner of avoiding state socialism. These specific social segments were, apart from the nomenklatura...

2) the **heavy- industry working class**, initially a political slogan but soon becoming a distinct segment of the population and an important political force in the communist state, 3) **the peasantry**, defined by their individual ownership of arable land, yet dependant on state-controlled access to agricultural equipment and involved in the state distributive system of agricultural products, 4) **employees in redundant bureaucratic positions**, actually representing hidden unemployment; 5) **active organizers of the informal economy**; and 6) **semi-institutionalized opposition** to the mainstream, communist-regime supported, organization of life (Słomczyński 2002:15).

Though transformation to democratic capitalism is a result of reforms designed by political elites using a top-down strategy, the collapse of the socialist system in Poland was due to previous prodigious political activity of the working class having constituted a major part of the *Solidarity* movement. Strong trade unions in heavy industries were able after 1989 to organize strikes and demonstrations against privatization as well as negotiate conditions of lay-offs. In contrast, the workforce in agricultural state-owned plants was weak and not organized. Thus this kind of state-owned plant was dissolved on the basis of an Act of Parliament which initiated a process of underclass-formation in geographically and socially isolated rural settlements. Since political elites representing the communist party and semi-institutionalized opposition decided the rules of replacement of the last communist government by the first non-communist one, communist party members were permitted to hold their occupational positions. It prevented the destruction of management abilities in many plants and institutions. On the other hand, members of the nomenklatura class, who were dismissed, are said to have converted their political assets into economic ones, constituting a new capitalist class. During the transformation also members of the new political elite converted into an economic elite as well. Apart from these two categories the active organizers of the informal economy became members of a newly emerging social category of entrepreneurs. The existence of small farming moderated poverty among dismissed workers originating from rural families through the provision of food and other agricultural products.

It seems that the above mentioned peculiarities of the social structure in connection with the ethnic homogeneity of Poland contributed to relatively short period for achieving a achieve recovery of the national economy. But it happened at the cost of growing social inequalities and of delayed modernisation.

In all post-socialist countries changes in social structure composition are also due to the rapid development of information and communication technologies (see: Genov 1999a, 1999b) that, together with the restructuring of the economy, requires a well educated and highly skilled workforce. Those who for various reasons cannot adapt themselves to entrepreneurs' expectations are marginalised.

Findings regarding the social structure as a structural factor for the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities can be summarized as follows:

1. Changes in social structure of post-socialist countries concern both the criteria for locating individuals in social positions and locating particular strata in the stratification system.
2. At the same time, different stratification criteria are in operation that makes individuals confused. It is status inconsistency that concerns first of all education and income/wealth, occupation and income/wealth, education and occupation
3. There are at the same time opportunities and constraints for social mobility. Opportunities are offered to those who are young and better-educated. But even those meeting these criteria had difficulties in getting a job because of a shortage of job vacancies. It resulted in extra-meritocratic criteria operating.
4. Accession to the EU changed the situation, particularly remarkably in Poland. Rough estimations say that more than 1 million Poles went abroad to seek work).

3.1.3 Socio-economic standing of countries in the study

It is a commonly known fact that living standards in all post-socialist countries, including those in the study, is lower than the European Union average and lower than in particular Western countries in the study. In Bulgaria, Estonia and Lithuania real GDP is still below 1989 levels (European Commission, The social situation in the European Union 2004: 20), when it was already low. At the same time income inequalities, as measured by the Gini coefficient, have been increasing, and in Bulgaria and Estonia are higher than in all Western countries in the study, while in Lithuania and Poland they are higher than in all countries in the study except the United Kingdom. Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland as whole countries are regions with less than 75% of the EU-25 average income.

A country's wealth determines the level of social expenditure on education, health care, housing, social benefits etc. Post-socialist countries spend less than the EU-average on social protection. It is also the case in Italy, the United Kingdom and Finland. In Germany the share of social protection expenditure in GDP is higher than the EU- average. While Estonia and Lithuania spend less than 15% of GDP, Germany spends approximately 30% on social security. The expenditure expressed in PPS per head reveals the gap between post-socialist and their western counterparts. Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland spend less than 2000 Euros per capita on social protection whereas the United Kingdom, being leader in this respect among countries in this study, spends more than 7000 Euros per capita (European Commission, The social situation in the European Union 2004: 20). It means that central state, regional and municipal support for worse-off categories is on the low side in Eastern countries and sometimes is only of symbolic significance. As stated by Elisaveta Ignatova (2005) in the Bulgarian PROFIT report:

large groups of the Bulgarian population suffer from the inefficient functioning of social assistance schemes, which have to manage the distribution of rather scarce resources. Only parts of those living in poverty on social assistance or on low salaries/wages are actually able to reduce the probability of inherited poverty. More precisely, the coverage of the social assistance schemes is so low that it preconditions inheritance of poverty. Even when the poor get monetary assistance, it does not suffice to make up the gaps in the household budget needed for a life in dignity according to the local, not to mention Western European, cultural standards (see : Futekov 2002, Hristov 2001) .

State budget limitations may reduce the potentials for intervening in the transmission of poverty and inequality and may produce among policy makers and ordinary people the feeling of helplessness.

3.1.4 Patterns of poverty and the composition of social problems (risk of llofl)

Patterns of poverty, defined on the basis of the extent and intensity of poverty differ substantially between countries in the study.

Table 4. At-risk-of-poverty headcount, median poverty gap and income inequality for total population

| At-risk-of poverty intensity | At-risk-of-poverty headcount | | |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|
| | LOW | MEDIUM | HIGH |
| Low | CZ, DK, DE , FR, LU, HU, AT, SI, FI , SE, | BE, BG , CY, MT | IE, |
| Medium | NL | | RO , UK |
| High | SK | | PL , LT , EE , EL, ES, IT , LV , PT |

Own elaboration based on Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (2007). Supporting Document, Annex 1C tab. 1a, 2 (SILC (2005), Income reference 2004

Notes: Member States are classified as having a medium at-risk-of-poverty headcount (or rate) and at-risk-of poverty intensity (or gap) if the corresponding figure is respectively within +/- 1 point from the EU average.

Member States marked in bold have higher-than-average income inequality. Member States marked in green have lower than-average GDP per capita (in PPS).

Finland and Germany are affluent countries where the percentage of the poor in the total population is low and the income difference between people at risk of poverty and those not at risk is low. In contrast, Italy and United Kingdom are affluent countries with high income inequality and widespread poverty. However these countries differ in poverty intensity, which is high in Italy and medium in UK.

Estonia, Lithuania and Poland are poor countries with a high risk of poverty and a wide poverty gap. Bulgaria, also a poor country, is more equal; poverty is moderate and the poverty gap is narrower. The income of the population at risk of poverty in Bulgaria is not much lower than of those above the poverty threshold.

Poland and Lithuania are the member states which are most affected by poverty among European Union’s 27 members. The at-risk-of poverty indicator for Poland and Lithuania makes up 21% of the population (EU25 – 16%), being more than twice as high as in Sweden (9%).

However, one has to bear in mind that the “at risk of poverty” concept is a relative one. This is why being poor means having different living standards in different member states. Because of varying levels of economic standing across countries, people considered poor in affluent countries are sometimes much better off in absolute terms than those in poorer ones. Differences are tremendous. In the United Kingdom, the poverty threshold for two adults with two dependant children is set in PPS at 22 370, in Germany – at 20 368, in Finland – at 17 851, in Italy – at 17 352 while in Poland – it is 6 041, and in Estonia 6 025, in Lithuania 4 916 and in Bulgaria 4 269 PPS. Thus, if the EU-25 average were applied to post-socialist countries to determine a share of the at-risk-of poverty population, the number of those below the poverty line would double at least. As noted by Martin Evans

...Poverty in poor countries has a higher incidence of absolute deprivation and the shape of their income distributions also makes using relative measures questionable (European Commission, Social Protection in the 13 Candidate Countries: 185).

Needless to say, the national overall resources determine the ability to provide income support via social protection systems for needy individuals and families. Therefore, poverty in post-socialist countries seems to be particularly severe.

Countries differ substantially not only in the incidence and intensity of poverty but also in which age groups are most vulnerable to the risk of poverty. If it is children, the risk of IIofl is more predicable. Many studies provide evidence that poverty in childhood is the most devastating and most predictable of poverty in later stages of life course.

Among countries in the study only in Finland is the child poverty rate lower than the overall poverty rate. The difference in the rate of at-risk-of poverty for children and the total population is the highest in Poland (8%), in Bulgaria (7%), in Lithuania (6%) and in Italy (5%). Poland (29%) and Lithuania (27%) are the countries most affected by child poverty in the European Union (19%).

Patterns of child poverty, defined by the at-risk-of poverty headcount and at-risk-of poverty gap, do not differ very much from those for the whole national population. Again, Finland and Germany are countries where the rate of children at risk of poverty is, in comparison with the EU median, low and the living standards of poor children is not very much lower than those living in more affluent households. The United Kingdom still has a high share of poor children; however the living standards of the poorest have improved as a result of state intervention, halting the upward trend of household income inequality. In Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, followed by Bulgaria, a high proportion of children live in households below the relative poverty line and their living standard is much lower than other children.

Table 5. At-risk-of-poverty headcount, median poverty gap and income inequality for children aged 0-17

| At-risk-of poverty intensity | At-risk-of-poverty headcount | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| | LOW | MEDIUM | HIGH |
| Low | DK, DE,FR, CY, AT,SI, FI, SE | CZ, LU, HU, | MT, UK |
| Medium | NL, | BE, | EL, RO |
| High | | SK | BG, EE, ES,IT, LV, LT, PL, PT, |

Own elaboration based on Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (2007). Supporting Document, Annex 1C tab. 1b (SILC (2005), Income reference 2004

Notes: Member States are classified as having a medium at-risk-of-poverty headcount (or rate) and at-risk-of poverty intensity (or gap) if the corresponding figure is respectively within +/- 1 point from the EU average

Differences between countries in the study regarding the risk of Ilofl became more evident when other social indicators relating to the present situation and to the future prospects of children and young people were taken into account (Tab. 6). It occurs that:

Table 6. Patterns of social indicators for 7 countries¹ - highlighting best performing countries (2003)

| Indicator/country | BG | DE | EE | FI | IT | LH | PL | UK | EU27 |
|---|-----------|----|-----------|----|----|-----------|----|----|----------------|
| Children in Jobless HH | -- | - | + | + | + | + | - | -- | 9.5%* |
| Early School Leavers Women (at most lower sec. edu., 18-24) | -- | = | Na | + | - | + | ++ | + | 13.2% |
| Early School Leavers Men (at most lower sec. edu., 18-24) | - | + | + | + | -- | + | ++ | + | 17.5% |
| % of low achieving 15 years old in reading literacy | Na | - | Na | ++ | - | na | + | + | 19.8%** |
| Employment Rate (15-64) | -- | + | + | + | - | - | -- | ++ | 63.4%* |
| Relative spending on family & children | Na | + | ++ | ++ | -- | + | -- | - | 7.8% |
| Impact of social transfers(excluding pensions on at-risk-of poverty rate) | -- | + | - | ++ | -- | -- | - | = | 38%* |
| At-risk-of poverty (0-17) | - | + | = | ++ | -- | -- | -- | - | 19.0% |
| Impact of social transfers on at-risk-of poverty rate for children (0-17) | -- | + | - | ++ | -- | -- | - | + | 44% |
| Youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15-24) (2004) | - | + | + | - | -- | + | -- | ++ | 18.6% |

Own elaboration on basis of Joint Report on Social Protection an Social Inclusion (2007). Supplementary document. EU-SILC

*EU25

** EU25 Joint Report on Social Protection an Social Inclusion (2006)

Country figures are being compared with the EU median for each indicator. “++” best performing quartile; “+” – between median and the best performing quartile; “-“between median and the worst performing quartile; “--” the worst performing quartile; “=”median

Finland protects children against poverty very well by means of high levels of employment for parents and generous social transfers. In this country education seems to be an effective measure to equalize not only opportunities but also performance. According to the PISA 2004 report, Finland is the best performing country in mathematics, reading and science. The high level of student performance is unrelated to their socio-economic-cultural background and there are no between-school differences in student performance. **A risk of inequality transmission seems to be very low in this country and limited to individuals and small groups.**

¹ Data for Bulgaria not available

In **Germany** generous relative spending on children in connection with high employment seems to protect the majority of children from poverty. In this country the poverty risk for children is lower than the EU median level but (??) the reduction in the poverty risk for children is better than EU average. Relatively many children are living in jobless households which may make them vulnerable to poverty. Though early school life seems not to be a reason for concern, education is not effective enough to ensure equal opportunities because, according to the PISA report:

- There are significant discrepancies between schools in student performance
- Student performance is affected very much by socio-economic background
- There are large discrepancies in performance between native and non-native students, even if they are born in Germany (OECD 2003: 163)

So, even if in Germany a risk of IlofI seems to be low, the education system may contribute to the creation of “pockets” or larger social categories (like immigrant communities) that are more vulnerable.

Despite many efforts of the New Labour government, the risk of poverty for children in **United Kingdom** remains higher than the EU median; however, reduction in this risk by social transfers is substantial. As compared with data from 2004, the percentage of early school-leavers decreased which may provide evidence that education has been a real priority for the government and that parents and pupils have recognised the value of education for improving an individual’s life changes. However, the high proportion of children living at risk of poverty and in jobless households makes the likelihood of transmission of inequality still very real.

Italy and **Bulgaria** seem to be at serious risk of inequality transmission. In these countries, risk of poverty for children is high, spending on children is low and social transfers are not generous enough to reduce the risk of poverty among youngsters. Low employment does not protect children from low income families. The situation is worse because of the substantial proportion of early school leavers.

In **Estonia**, **Lithuania** and **Poland** poverty among children is very high and, in the former, the efficiency of social transfers is also low. This may contribute to the transmission of poverty unless the proportion of social spending on families and children increases. Low employment in Poland and Lithuania should be perceived as factors impacting on the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities. Poland is not able to reduce youth unemployment substantially which, with 36.7% of all unemployed in the age cohort 16-24, remains the highest in the EU.

Conclusions:

1. Countries in this study represent different patterns of poverty and social problems composition that can contribute to the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities.
2. Data show that the risk of IloI may differ between countries, with Finland predicted to be the best and Bulgaria, Poland, Italy, Lithuania and Estonia predicted to be the worst.
3. Statistical data provide evidence that the risk of IlofI correlates with social welfare regimes, which produce different patterns of poverty.
 - a. Finland, in practising preventative measures, is effective in reducing poverty among children and the risk of IlofI seems to be limited there to particular people or small groups suffering from specific deficits.
 - b. Germany, following the rules of continental social regime protects the majority of children from poverty relatively well. However there are some “pockets of poverty and social exclusion” which are beyond effective protection of this affluent state. They are composed of immigrants who even in the second and third generations could not find a place in labour market, having worse educational achievements.
 - c. The United Kingdom, following the New Labour’s priorities, has shown some progress in mitigating child poverty and improving education. However, a large proportion of all children still live below the poverty line and in the midst of an affluent society, deprived areas populated by those who are not able to operate in the labour market continue to exist.
 - d. Italy is the relatively most endangered western country in this study in terms of the IlofI resembling to some extent the situation in post-socialist countries. However, it is known that regional differentiations are in Italy very significant.

4. Risk of Ilofl has to be of particular concern in post-socialist countries which are poor and cannot offer sufficient support to families with children.
5. Though it is optimistic that early school leaving is relatively low in post-socialist countries (except in Bulgaria), educational activities (including leisure time activities) aimed at child development, like extra-curricular courses, are chargeable.

3.1.5 Top-level political actors' understanding of Ilofl and the perception of its 'producers'

The United Kingdom is unique among European countries in its war against child poverty, which can be translated as the war against poverty reproduction. Although the mainstreaming of children has stepped up since October 2006 throughout the EU, the transmission of poverty across generations has not been declared *expressis verbis* a priority in official government documents, like the National Strategy Reports (NSR), with the exception of the United Kingdom and Germany. This means that the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities is not perceived by national governments as a challenge to society that requires consolidated actions. The perceptions of Ilofl by top level actors match this point of view.

Though there are differences in opinions expressed by top politicians from particular countries, the following similarities should be underlined:

1. The intergenerational transmission of inequalities is mostly conceptualized as almost identical with passing on poverty (social exclusion) from one generation to another, whereas poverty is considered as multidimensional deprivation.
2. The problem is mostly considered to be "private" transmission (Moore 2001) occurring between parents and their children. Transmission of different kinds of capital (cultural, social, economic) and/or of specific patterns of behaviour and value system are underlined.
3. Ilofl is perceived rather as a problem suffered by particular families than a severe social problem affecting society as a whole.

FI: It does not concern so many people, but it is more like a stable and very complex problem. The big majority of children are doing well or at least moderately well, but then there is a stable minority of those people who are either badly marginalized or socially excluded.- (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 2006: 7)

4. Transmission of disadvantages across generations is treated more as a side-effect of other processes like reduced demand for labour, globalization, and shocks like the system transformation in post-socialist countries, than as a separate social ill to be prioritized and approached in a specific way.
5. Except for Finland, the top-level actors perceive the causes of the persistence of inequality and the possibilities for intervening in the process, according to their party manifesto, as ranging from relative reluctance (right wing parties) to requirement (left-wing parties) of state intervention in the process. However,
6. Reasons for the continuation of Ilofl are considered complex and located at both individual and societal levels
7. Most top politicians attach responsibility of preventing/counteracting the Ilofl to public authorities. They underline the importance of cooperation between central and local government in the reduction of the risk of Ilofl.
8. Of the utmost importance in the Ilofl process education was underlined while labour market and welfare policies were considered secondary in the process.
9. *Via* education people from poor or low status families may be upwardly mobile but the shortcomings in the education system functioning might 'produce' inequality transmission.

Shortcomings of education policy impacting on the production of Hofl

Overall, the view held by most of the top level politicians in particular countries is that the educational system both limits and reinforces the cycle of inequality. It is only in Finland that educational policy was – almost without exception – considered successful among the political actors. Nevertheless, the interviewees recognised serious deficiencies in the education system as shown below. One of them said:

As regards educational opportunities, I would say that we have reached equality. What we have not reached is equality in results, equality in –being clear – managing through the system.
(Naumanen 2006: 97).

Representatives of other Western countries were more critical but less specific than the Finish partners. They pointed out that educational policy constitutes the most serious problem in their countries without going any deeper into the details. For German politicians, it is the selectivity of the educational system that contributes to the persistence of inequality. For the British politicians the biggest problem was perceived to be the fees to pay for tertiary education limiting access to university for poor students. Among the Italians, the reinforcement of gender inequalities was seen as the greatest problem.

Top politicians from post-socialist countries were much more specific. The reason for this seems to be almost total reconstruction of the educational systems during the transformation period in terms of structure of school systems and curricula. In some countries, a new educational system was implemented in the 1990s whereas in others, like Bulgaria, the process is not yet finished. Tremendous changes in the educational systems have provoked detailed consideration in these countries.

According to top political actors there are deficiencies in educational policy contributing to the reinforcement of the cycle of inequality. They are the following:

1. **Differences in the quality of teaching and equipment between schools** resulting from:
 - a. **Rural – urban differentiation**, claimed in post socialist countries and in Finland. Poorly equipped rural schools offer a low quality of teaching and pupils do not have access to the equipment they need. Families living in rural areas usually cannot afford to buy all the teaching materials that are necessary for their children, including providing them with the extra classes, the fees, or the support they need for further studies.
 - b. **Privatization of education**: private schools and commercial programmes in public higher schools, were mentioned in post-socialist countries. On the one hand, there are schools for children from the financial elite. These schools charge high fees and provide high quality teaching, thus enabling graduates to study at foreign universities and maintain the social and economic status of their parents (as noticed in Bulgaria). On the other hand, private higher schools operating along commercial lines were established in post-socialist countries for those not able to meet the criteria to study free of charge at university. These students come most frequently from lower status families who were not able to provide children with extra-curricular courses to improve their chance of passing entrance exams. The quality of learning is low in private higher schools and thus the return on education is low, too. Therefore, it is an illusion to think that graduation from any higher school improves the opportunity to get a better job and be upwardly mobile in social and economic terms.
 - c. **Formal differentiation among public schools**: public elite schools in Estonia accept only pupils with the highest scores. There are schools for talented and gifted children that have excellent teaching staff and financial resources. Competition for admission is strong and parents invest different kinds of capital (cultural, social, material) in children to increase their chances of admission.
 - d. **Informal public school segregation** resulting from financing schemes:
 - in post-socialist countries, schools are financed according to the number of pupils. Therefore they offer extras for payment, like additional language lessons, horse riding, etc., to attract children from upper income families living outside the school administrative district. Such pupils are gathered (in Poland) in separate classes for - as school teachers often claim – “organisational” reasons.
 - In the UK, educational funds are dispersed by the central government to Local Education Authorities (LEAs). As Local Education Authorities also secure discretionary funds by

- competitive bidding, it becomes obvious that if an LEA is not properly equipped to co-ordinate and administers bids, the ‘trickle-down’ effects of this inadequacy directly affects the funds available to local schools.
- e. **The ethnic composition of pupils** (Bulgaria, Estonia). Respondents admit that there is not sufficient provision in schools for pupils from ethnic minorities.
2. **Education is far too theoretical and does not match labour market demand.**
 - a. **Withdrawal of vocational schools from the educational system** was mentioned in almost all countries in the study.

Our educational system seems to be oriented towards preparing top-level scientists. However, most of the graduates will not become physicians, cell-technologists or historians(EE) (Trumm 2006: 55)
 - b. **Depreciation of vocational education.** Vocational education carries a label of “failure” in post-socialist countries. This image has been partially inherited from the initial phase of the transition: the rapid restructuring of the economy led to a reduction in the demand for skilled agricultural or industrial workers, which almost exclusively were educated in vocational schools. Consequently, the budget for vocational education was reduced, and schools fell into financial difficulties. The lack of resources led to an inability to react to the changing needs of the labour market and improved technologies, which cumulatively resulted in overwhelmingly negative attitudes concerning the entire vocational education system.
 - c. **Skewed educational preferences.** Very few are willing to enter vocational schools and acquire vocational training. Therefore, the labour market lacks people with such qualifications as: bricklayers, plumbers, carpenters, etc.
 - d. **Prevalence of theoretical classes in vocational education.** Even when vocational schools remain, like in Finland, they are claimed to be far too theoretical. Consequently, there are many people who could become very good workers in several practical professions, but who remain without qualifications because they cannot cope with the more theoretical subjects.
 3. **Curricula are not flexible and are overloaded**, a problem mentioned in all post-socialist countries as well as in Finland and Italy:
 - a. **The universal policy is not enough** as regards the multidimensional and cumulative nature of inherited disadvantages. If there are not additional remedial or other selective measures to accommodate the most disadvantaged children, they will continue to drop out of school because the school programme is too difficult for them, as noticed in Finland and Estonia.
 - b. In schools, **pupils do not learn what they need**:

The main problem “is not to learn how to do things, it is to learn how to learn”(IT) (Longo, Sachetto, Vianello 2006a: 132).
 - c. **School curricula are overloaded with huge amounts of information** and are ineffective in providing knowledge and training skills necessary for the future lives of students.
 4. **Education is underinvested and schools lack resources** to make any improvements (especially in post-socialist countries) or offer compensatory programmes:
 - a. *In practice, the money that are currently directed towards the educational system are used mainly for paying teachers’ salaries, and there are no funds for the modernisation of schools, for computers and for upgrading the level of education (BG)(Ignatova, 2006a:27-28).*
 - b. **Construction and maintenance of school buildings is included in the expenditures for education.** Such a practice makes educational expenditure less transparent and produces the impression that education is generously financed.
 - c. **Policy decisions made elsewhere undermine any supportive structures.** These policy solutions include not only the cuts in educational expenditure, closing down schools and making classes larger, but the tightening of timetables and demands on the school curriculum. There are not enough possibilities for individual teaching and learning.
 5. **There are intra-school mechanisms pushing children from disadvantaged families out of school**, noticed by Estonian respondents:

a. Labelling and stigmatization

- by teachers:

It seems to me, that the school rather legitimises inequality, instead of reducing it. Real stigmatisation happens here – children are stigmatised because of their families and they are treated according to that stigma. Sometimes teachers even look differently at the ‘stigmatised’ children. The teacher, who allows him/her not to notice the efforts of the child who tries to achieve the same results as his / her schoolmates from better conditions, is a psychological criminal. Unfortunately, there are many such criminals (EE) (Trumm 2006: 59).

Particularly in the smaller rural schools, the family background of children (unemployment, family conflicts, drug abuse, etc) is sometimes ascribed to the child by the teachers.

- by schoolmates:

Of course, children are not blind. They always notice if somebody wears second-hand clothes; they know who has a cellular phone and who does not; they know when somebody has no pocket money, etc. They know all of this, and they speak it out.. Nevertheless, they do not think about why it is so (EE) (Trumm 2006: 60).

It results in the exclusion of poor children from better-off peers and constrains them to belong to a group of peers who have the same living standards and attitudes.

- #### b. Withdrawal of socialization functions from the school.
- Schools try to get rid of students with problems. Schools are selecting pupils according to their behaviour and performance.

Though above-mentioned deficiencies were underlined mainly by politicians from post-socialist countries, they seem to affect all countries in the study to some extent. Prevalence of general education and withdrawal of vocational schools makes it difficult for less talented pupils and for pupils who do not have the support from their families to get the qualifications and be materially independent as an adult. Underdevelopment of education for adults, claimed by many politicians, makes the situation worse. Those who dropped out of school have little possibility to get a second chance.

Interrelations of central and local government in the overcoming of IIofI, as perceived by top-level actors

Apart from structural reasons attached to the school system, some deficiencies in school functioning are embedded in the division of responsibility between central and local government. In all countries, provision of social services including school education and welfare is attached to local government, which is overloaded with tasks and underfinanced. Nevertheless, communities attempt to do their best to support people, particularly children in need.

Division of power and responsibilities between central and local levels of government is different in different countries taking part in the Profit project. Finland and the United Kingdom (or – to be more precise – England, where Loughborough is situated, the only region within the UK that has not increased its autonomy *vis-à-vis* the central authorities in London during the recent wave of devolution, i.e. series of institutional reforms of the British governance system) are centralised countries, also when it comes to the policy responses aimed at counteracting the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities. In Finland activities counteracting inequalities, even though they are locally implemented, are mainly designed and promoted by central government authorities. The ways of organising and financing activities may vary according to the needs of local communities, but the main ideas and principles of operation are formulated at the national level.

On the other hand, Italy and Germany represent countries with the largest margin of autonomy at the local and – first and foremost – regional level. Germany is a federal country in which only selected policies (e.g. labour market policy) are formulated and implemented at the national level. Educational policy lies in regional governments’ (Länder) hands, while local communities are responsible for delivering welfare to their inhabitants. In Italy, although formally it is not a federal country, regional governments possess considerable autonomy, too. Since constitutional amendments were passed in 2001, the regions are exclusively responsible for welfare policies. Thus, it is the regional level of governance that has become crucial in designing policy measures aimed at overcoming the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities.

Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland are countries with a uniform model of administration, in which, however, local authorities increasingly play an ever more important role. The range of autonomy (and responsibility) of the local authorities has gradually expanded in these countries during the previous and the

current decade. Poland has the most complicated division of responsibilities between three levels of self-government and between central and local government.

Though the division of power and responsibilities between central and local levels of government is different in countries in the study, there is a commonly shared opinion among top-level actors that:

1. The interrelationship and cooperation between central and local government is necessary in the fight against poverty and the reproduction of inequality
2. Decentralization of responsibility for solving social problems is useful because only communities are able to :
 - a. define social needs according to local circumstances
 - b. define accurately groups and individuals requiring support
 - c. provide social services tailored to specific needs
 - d. implement a holistic approach
 - e. act efficiently in spending public funds
 - f. create networking respective to needs
 - g. attract private institutions and organizations to cooperate.
3. Cooperation between central and local levels of governance in overcoming poverty and its reproduction is a matter of criticism.
4. The imprecise and inappropriate division of responsibilities between central regional/local governments makes it often difficult to satisfy needs.
5. Overloading and under financing of communities makes them less efficient than they could be.
6. Coordination of social services in communities is perceived as weak and insufficient.

3.1.6 Local stakeholders' understanding of Ilofl and policy responses at the local level to overcome Ilofl

In the course of focus group interviews, informants formulated many important observations and comments concerning vulnerable groups and factors contributing to/preventing the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities. There were remarks and comments which they shared irrespective of the town they live and work in.

Similarities in respondents' opinions concern:

1. Conviction that [intergenerational transmission of inequalities poses a challenge to the whole community and its authorities](#). However, the inheritance of inequalities was usually conceptualized as transmission of poverty (material deprivation).
2. Understanding of the [Ilofl as a multidimensional problem](#), caused by various factors operating at three levels:
 - a. macro-structural: associated with income distribution, general situation on the labour market and national labour market policies, the functional characteristics of the educational system and the welfare system in general. In post-socialist countries, informants usually mentioned the consequences of socio-economic transformations.
 - b. meso-structural: directly connected with the specificity of the region and town (e.g. deindustrialization, privatization).
 - c. micro-structural: connected with socio-psychological characteristics of an individual and interactions in small groups (addressed as "culture of poverty", "social pathology").
3. [Social groups perceived as vulnerable](#) to the persistence of inequality:
 - a. [Unemployed](#) (especially long-term unemployed) are the most commonly indicated social category that is endangered by the transmission of inequalities (except for Loughborough/UK and Parnu/EE),
 - b. [immigrants and ethnic minorities](#) (except for Tomaszów/PL and Jonava/LT),
4. [Situations that lead to the persistence of poverty and low status](#):
 - a. [poor education, disability, growing-up in single-parent](#) (except for Tomaszow/PL and Pori/FI) or multi-children families, living in dysfunctional families, drug or alcohol addiction
 - b. [tight employment opportunities for young people](#).

I think, unemployment and income poverty are only one aspect. In addition, there are other important dimensions, which lead to social exclusion. In most cases there is a combination of problems (DE) (Eissel, Ludwig 2006b: 93).

5. Belief that **growing spatial segregation of the poor** in forms of pockets of poverty (Loughborough/UK, Giessen/DE, Tomaszow/PL) or even deprivation of a town as a whole (Jonava/LT) **may lead to the development of a “culture of poverty”**.

People who cannot function economically in a big city leave to live in small towns. Jonava is not an exception. Social risk families from Kaunas move to Jonava at first and to Rukla later on, because it is closest to Kaunas. These families usually are single parent families, unemployed, social risk families. They feel constrained to sell their apartments in Kaunas for many reasons, and move to Jonava, because it is relatively cheap there compared to Kaunas and other big cities.... Alcohol and drug abuse are responsible for such social phenomena as violence in a family, the violation of children’s rights, and families where children don’t feel safe. They usually are not motivated to study, to be graduated from school, to gain better education; finally they are not motivated to work.” (LT) (Pukelis, Juraite, Maciulskyte, Mikutaviciene 2006b: 137)

Focus group participants were unanimous in their opinion that in towns there are institutions whose activities counteract the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities:

1. The key role in counteracting intergenerational transmission of low social status they attached to educational institutions whereas NGOs were perceived as providers of services like hobbies and extra-curricular courses, day-care, etc.
2. Both passive and active labour market measures being implemented by labour offices were mentioned as supportive, particularly training for various groups of unemployed.
3. When it comes to welfare policy, they listed the following forms of intervention:
 - a. Child-centred activities - targeted at children and satisfying their specific needs. These can be subdivided into those implementing:
 - a fragmented approach - focused solely on the material well-being of children;
 - a holistic approach – focused on child's material, psychological, educational and cognitive needs.
 - b. Adult-centred activities - targeted at adults and satisfying their needs. These include:
 - financial and material support (different kinds of benefits)
 - different self-help groups (e.g., for people coping with alcohol addiction).

Local stakeholders pointed out factors contributing to Ilofl persistence/ hindering the overcoming of Ilofl:

1. **Inaccuracies in diagnosis of social problems** resulting from lack of reliable statistical data. (except for Loughborough/UK).

In Pärnu we have about seven or eight thousand children. We do not know how many of them have to live in poverty. Do you know? Have you heard about any such kind of research carried out in Pärnu? If we knew how many and which children lived in poverty then it would be much easier to work... (EE) (Kasearu, Trumm 2006b: 45).

2. **Short-term and fragmented programmes, projects and activities** that result from the lack of a long-term strategy of town development and town planning that makes local social institutions largely oriented to the short-term "fire-fighting of social problems" (mentioned in Tomaszow/PL ,Rovigo-IT, Loughborough/UK).
3. **Insufficient funding of social programmes** and the dependence of the municipality on the central budget. Financial limitations are perceived as one of the main factors that reduce the efficiency of actions undertaken. The attaching of responsibilities for social policy to local government is not followed by the provision of sufficient resources.
4. It is not only insufficient funding but **more generally considered relations between central and local government** that were perceived as a hindrance to a more effective counteracting of the Ilofl. According to specific situations in particular countries, municipal representatives indicated different aspects as decisive:
 - a. In Loughborough a highly centralised Cabinet system of governance was perceived by stakeholders participating in the focus group interviews as restricting the ability of local government to act on the particular 'needs and wants' of its community. The Cabinet system was

blamed for creating a documentation overload that is then dispersed to local communities, but does not reflect their aspirations. In the participants' own words:

since the Cabinet system came in, everybody is supposed to be an expert on everything and people no longer specialise, which has the effect of controlling the amount of information that we receive. And you get distracted, so the Council no longer has experts in particular areas, because everybody is supposed to be looking into everything, and I do feel that the Cabinet system is a major backward step (UK) (Kokoroskou, Leaman 2006b: 207).

- b. In the case of Giessen in Germany, all participants agreed that the local authorities have restricted possibilities to address effectively social problems resulting from the unemployment and poverty. The local authorities can neither decisively influence the causes of unemployment, nor can they change them (labour market policy comes under federal government's jurisdiction). Nevertheless, they have to deal with unemployment's consequences directly. German FGI participants expressed their critique that other state levels more and more reduce their responsibility for solving the apparent problems. In the end, the local authorities face more and more problems without getting increased competencies or financial means.
- c. In contrast, in Pori in Finland, some policy-makers and administrators openly admitted that they long for the past when central government transfers to local government were strictly earmarked so that every cent they received for providing certain services had to be used for that very need and purpose. As local authorities have become more independent from the state in their priorities for spending money, the health expenses of an ageing population easily overtake other costs. Therefore, some Finnish FGI participants hope that central state authorities would direct and guide more explicitly courses of action and spending in social welfare and the health care sectors.
- d. Local stakeholders in Tomaszów Mazowiecki agreed that the more autonomy in administering funds they would have, the more rational and need-relevant their expenditure would be, as they are closer to local problems and know better what kind of measures are needed to counteract poverty at the local level. Moreover, top-down decisions (prepared without the active involvement of local stakeholders) are very often ill-suited to the local needs and their implementation brings no improvement of the local social situation

Stakeholders formulated many ideas about what should be done to counteract the Ilofi more effectively in a given town. Among them were those mentioned in all towns, and namely:

1. Networking and building social capital in the local community were perceived as an effective strategy to counteract Ilofi (Pärnu/EE, Pori/FI, Giessen/DE), where the public sector successfully cooperates with NGOs. However, NGOs in post-socialist countries are very much dependant on municipal grants that are scarce and limited in number.
2. Designing of long-term town development strategies, involving local authorities, public sector bodies and NGOs.
3. Improvement of town planning
4. Implementing well-composed strategies involving early intervention targeted at groups at risk of Ilofi
5. Investing in the social infrastructure in deprived areas (e. g., kindergartens)

Young adult 'end-users' perception of relative importance of policy among factors affecting social mobility of individuals

To achieve insight into the policy impact on the life-course of individuals living in the towns studied, two methods were applied:

- Survey carried out in each town aimed at estimating the incidence of intergenerational inheritance of inequalities and revealing its correlates
- In-depth interviews with survey respondents selected among those who were born into low status families.

3.1.7 The incidence of Ilofl in towns in the study and its correlates (results from survey)

Incidence of inheritance of disadvantaged social position

Two measures of the inheritance of disadvantaged social position were applied in the analysis:

- the respondent’s subjective sense of advancement, degradation or stability in comparison with the social position of his/her parents.
- the respondent’s comparison of the parental family/household’s material situation with his/her current family material situation.

Responses to the survey question “Please compare your current social position with your parents’/legal guardians’ social position when they were at your present age” (Q. 66) provided following results:

1. A sense of advancement (36.9%) in comparison with the previous generation and the sense of stagnation (26.6%) prevail, yet a relatively large number of respondents diagnosed social degradation (19.2%).
2. The sense of social advancement, stability and degradation differs among particular towns (see Graph 1), although the tendencies are similar. The highest sense of degradation was reported by young Bulgarians and Germans, the lowest was reported by Italians and Estonians living in the towns under scrutiny.
3. The estimation of the respondent’s own position in comparison with the position of the parents is significantly correlated with the present material status of the respondent ($VC=0,237$, $p=0,000$).
4. Education and gender do not differentiate the sense of advancement in comparison with parents.

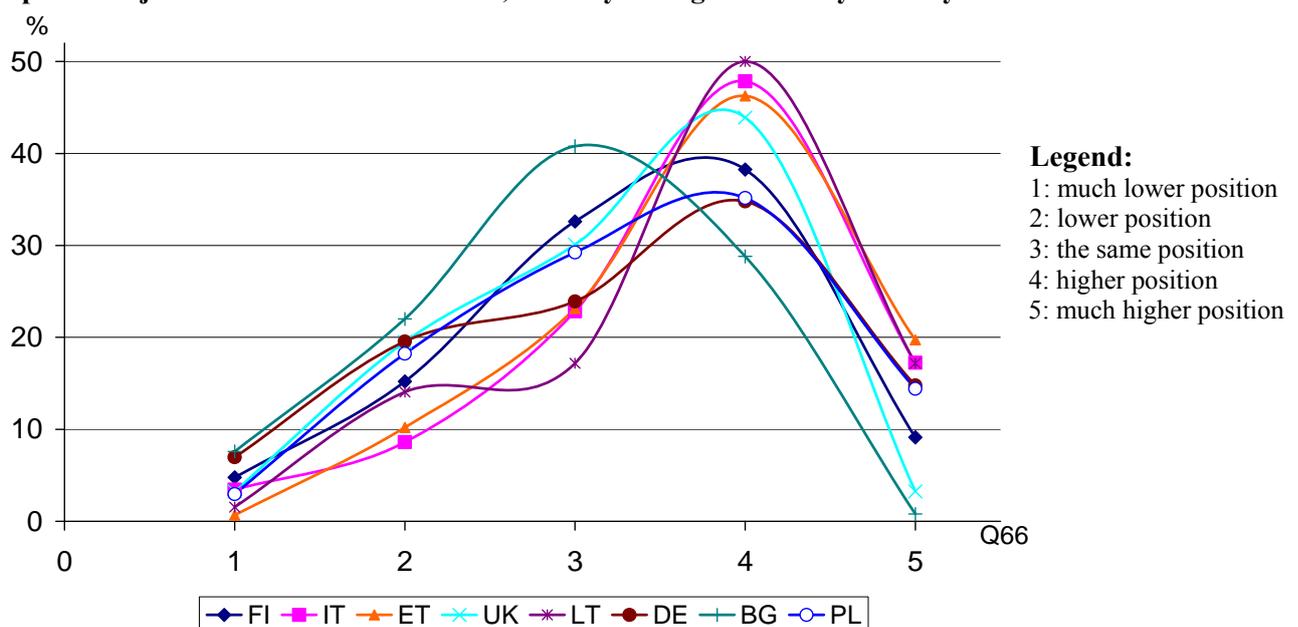
The respondents were asked to assess the financial situation of parental family and their own.

1. Over half of the respondents who originated from poor families were still poor at the point of entering adulthood.
2. There is a distinct differentiation between countries. **Indicators of inequalities reach maximum values for Loughborough (Great Britain), Tomaszów (Poland) and Pernik (Bulgaria) – in those countries the exchange mobility (chance of advancement) between extreme categories is the weakest.**

The degree of equality of chances is the highest in Pori (Finland) and Giessen (Germany).

The structures in these societies seem to be the most open for young people in comparison with other countries participating in the survey.

Graph 1. Subjective sense of advancement, stability or degradation by country/town²



² By country’s name abbreviation we mean town under study: FI (Pori), IT (Rovigo), ET (Pärnu), UK (Loughborough), LT (Jonava), DE (Giessen), BG (Pernik), PL(Tomaszów Mazowiecki).

Factors facilitating the process of getting out of disadvantage /constraining mobility and the role of social policy in this process:

1. The following correlates of poverty inheritance have been stated:
 - a. Poor housing at time of childhood (VC=0.18, p=0.000). Every fourth respondent among inheriting poverty declared poor housing in childhood as compared with every fifteenth among the whole population in the study.
 - b. Low education of father (VC=0.20, p=0.000)
 - c. Low education of mother (VC=0.18, p=0.000)
 - d. Parent's frequent unemployment (VC=0.22, p=0.000)
 - e. Support at school due to financial hardship (VC=0.15, p=0.000). Every third person inheriting poverty was granted such support as compared with every seventh in the whole population
 - f. Low education of respondent (VC=0.22, p=0.000)
Respondent sometimes unemployed (VC=0.17, p=0.000). 36% among those inheriting poverty have already been or still are unemployed as compared with 24% in the whole population
 - g. Inheriting low education (VC=0.22, p=0.000)
 - h. Inheriting unemployment (VC=0.15, p=0.000)
2. Life experiences in families (illness, alcohol, drug addiction, poor relations etc) and at school (truancy, dropping out of school, poor performance) do not differentiate respondents inheriting poverty from others. However the former declared more often:
 - lack of parental encouragement to continue education beyond the compulsory school
 - cumulative deprivation in their families of origin (e.g. both parents unemployed, both parents low educated, poor housing etc)
3. Receipt of a grant due to outstanding performance at school happened half as often as among people inheriting poverty (14%) than among those who progressed were born in poor families but are no longer poor (28%).

Factors influencing inheritance/getting out of poverty may differ among towns in the study.

The process of inheritance of social status or social mobility is multidimensional and identifying all its determinants is impossible. Additionally, small numbers of national samples did not allow us to use more advanced methods of testing the significance of differences. These analyses nevertheless allowed us to describe and compare major processes related to Ilofi occurring at the local level in different countries.

3.1.8 Young adults from low status families telling about their lives

Two core questions were to be answered on the basis of in-depth interviews with young adults from originally low status families:

1. how do respondents perceive their life conditions and opportunities in comparison to their parents, concerning the socio-economic situation of the parental home and their current life conditions
2. how do respondents perceive the impact of parents, peers, societal institutions and policies in transitory moments of their life course, like the transition from compulsory schools to higher levels of education, transition from school to work and from parental home to the family established by the respondents themselves.

The answer to first question allowed the separation of those who are subjectively convinced that they have a better life and the second one to select those who were supported by public institutions during their life course.

Assessment of overall life achievement in comparison with parents

Comparison of an individual's own social situation with that of the parents, when they were at the respondent's age, was a difficult task for young adults living in both post-socialist and western countries. This is due to:

1. tremendous changes in occupational structure connected with transition to information society (Finland), to global capitalism (as mentioned in Italy) as well as changes in welfare regime (as in Germany and United Kingdom) and in overall social order (Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland).
2. Changes in patterns of family formation, in the sense of delayed marriage and postponed child bearing.

At this particular age, they were parents already, and it means that they had to be responsible for their family and in decision-making. They had to consider this fact. They had no possibility to act as suddenly and spontaneously as I can do now (EE) (Ausna, Kasearu, Trumm 2006).

3. Invalidation of the traditional path to adulthood that assumed stable employment, marriage and leaving the parental home

What would be the general assessment? It's difficult to say, well, I really I don't know. At the moment I think I'm doing better than my parents because it was harder then for them to cope with things. Sometimes there were problems with food and work, sometimes not. Now there's a free market, we can choose from different things and it's easier. Can it be compared to their situation? I would like to compare it when I have my own home and children and I'd like to see then what I got from my own home and what I could give to my children and than I'd know if in fact I've got a better life than my parents or not. (PL, Male) (Rek, Rokicka, Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 2006)

4. Prolonged education and delayed stable secured employment
5. Prevalence of inconsistency of status factors (education, employment/occupational position, income).

These macro-structural factors make young people living in towns in the study uncertain about their positioning in the social structure. Many took the opportunity to pursue education beyond compulsory school, especially in post-socialist countries where private higher schools flourished in the 1990s. However, precarious employment and low pay make them unable to be independent of parents (except Finland). In Pernik, Rovigo, Tomaszow, Jonava respondents were talking about a 'wage ceiling' for young adults, that is, no matter what kind of job they have and no matter whether s/he works in the legal or the illegal labour market the pay is close to the minimum wage. In Tomaszow Mazowiecki it is close to 1200 PLN, equal to slightly more than 300 Euro per month and in Rovigo it is approximately 1000 Euro, as declared by informants.

[It was] a factory job; I stayed there one week, then I gave up. It wasn't work, it was pure slavery. In Ferrara I found a job as a waiter, three times a week in a pizza-pub. Then I found some work in the kitchen of a pub, working at the refrigerator, where I had to make sandwiches and "piadinas". I worked there two months, four days a week; they used to pay me € 1,300 a month, half with regular contract and half without. According to my contract I was supposed to work 20 hours a week, but I always did 40. At night I used to study in order to progress at University (IT) (Longo, Quadrelli, Sacchetto 2006).

Here we have "fixed" wage – 250 or 300 BGN, I do not even remember how much. Whatever you undertake – waitress, cleaning woman, shop-assistant – you will receive not more than 250 or 300 BGN (BG) (Draganov 2006)

In Germany and Italy better educated young people begin their work career with prolonged internships (apprenticeships) and in the United Kingdom, regular jobs with low pay. To get work that pays better, citizens of Pernik, Tomaszow, and Jonava seek employment in the capital city or abroad.

Another common experience for respondents, no matter where they live, is the restricted possibility to have a flat on his/her own. This is also relevant to those who claim to be upwardly mobile. Marketization of housing

makes it impossible for young adults to afford a flat. Depending on the custom in a given country, they stay in the parental house as a single person or as a married couple (sometimes with children) or parents pay rent for them.

In general, this is a qualitative change in living conditions perceived by young adults as compared with their parents in their twenties.

There are differences between countries in terms of how optimistic people are in regard to their life achievements and opportunities, taking an intergenerational perspective.

In Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Lithuania and Poland, in general, the interviewed young adults estimated their current life achievement and living conditions to be higher than their parents at the same age. Reasons for this they attached to:

1. **Macro-structural changes** which created opportunities not existing in times when parents were in their twenties. These opportunities concern:

- **Biography creation instead of being forced to follow a rigid life course:**

There are huge differences, because the order has changed and the policies are different from then. They had more prescriptions in their jobs, and the jobs were related to certain educational requirements. I have more choice now (EE) (Ausna, Kasearu, Trumm 2006)

At the moment I at least have more freedom of choice and it's really tough out there in the labour market. There's heavy competition, but I have my education, and I have a little more freedom of choice than some. (FI) (Naumanen, Melin, Kuokkanen 2006)

- **Free choice where to live and work:**

At their time, there was no opportunity to work abroad or to choose between different options concerning what I would like to do or where I want to work. I am not speaking about the different wages or about the possibilities of taking a bank loan (EE) (Ausna, Kasearu, Trumm 2006).

2. **Changes in their personal lives:** better relations in family of procreation, getting independent from parents, achieving higher education, occupational position, income:

First of all, in my family there was alcohol and at our home there is none (PL) (Rek, Rokicka, Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 2006)

Definitely now I live better. If we take into account that I do not live at my parents' place and I earn a living by my own (BG) (Draganov 2006)

My economic situation is now vastly better than they had at that time, because they lived in a two-bedroom flat, but I have more property. I think I do better now (EE) (Ausna, Kasearu, Trumm 2006)

My parents have primary education, they worked physically, while I graduated from a higher school and I do a white collar job..., what can I add, in one word, I went in a totally different direction (PL) (Rek, Rokicka, Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 2006).

Positive aspects of the parents' living conditions were perceived as compared with those of the respondents.

It concerned first of all the availability of work and security:

My parents always had paid work. They had never been out of paid work and no matter how many difficulties we had – somehow we managed to cope. (BG) (Draganov 2006)

Then there was work, it was not possible that someone could stay at home as a complete lazybones, without a job, and now there are a lot of things on the shelves and no dough (PL) (Rek, Rokicka, Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 2006).

I believe they had a better life because... I think so, I do not know why... if they were employed at that time, nothing could happen - being fired or whatever. Now, if you donot want to go to work, you have to quit after four days. Now you have to fight for that (PL) (Rek, Rokicka, Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 2006).

The impact of institutions and policies on life course and social mobility

1. **Family is** claimed by all respondents to be **an institution impacting mostly** on their life course and achievements.

Three main types of family environment can be identified:

- a. **Supportive families** - parents did their best to ensure the respondent's upward mobility (financial support, even if they could hardly afford it; emotional support; motivation to learn...etc.)

Parents' encouragement to study, education, and finding of a good job determined that I live better now (LT) (Pukelis, Juraite Mikutaviciene, Maciulskyte 2006)

This is entirely their [parents'] credit, although they earned very little, they did without many things in order to save for our studies, there were three of us at home and I together with my brother studied at the same time, in those times a labourer earned very little money but they resigned from absolutely everything, they ate bread with margarine to give us money for our studies and due to this they managed to provide us with education. Due to this we have... they thought we would have better lives, well in the end I don't work in a shop, behind the counter, I'm a teacher"(PL) (Rek, Rokicka, Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 2006).

Without parental support we would be nowhere! (BL) (Draganov 2006)

- b. **Families** which could not afford to support respondents financially (to pay for extra-curricular classes...etc) and **insisted on the children getting vocational training** and earning a living as quickly as possible.
- c. **Destructive families** which had a negative impact on respondents' life courses (apart from poor living standards, there was addiction, violence, and lack of emotional support).

There's a lot of things that I can blame on other people. Being thrown out of the house when I was 16, I could have had a bit more support from my mum. And when I first started seeing my dad when I was 14, instead of going out robbing houses with him and teaching me that side of life, he could have taught me another side of life, do you know what I mean, took me to the park or play a game of 'footie'[sic] with him. I never had that with him. All I had with him is smoke cannabis and drink beer". (UK) (Kokoroskou, Leaman 2006)

A troublesome situation at home was one of the most important obstacles hampering further education and having a negative impact on further life. Especially when it was intensified by the lack of support from relatives, teachers and other institutional actors.

2. The significance of **teachers** is very diversified and not frequently mentioned. Only in some individual cases, their presence was reported as very important, both positively and negatively.

- a. **Their positive impact** was reported mainly by upwardly mobile respondents when teachers engaged personally (in addition to their institutional role) in the situation of the respondent:

Maybe we will start from the teacher, my class-tutor for eight years. I was just a big child, lazybones, generally speaking, I caused a lot of problems but she didn't reject me in the sense that I was the worst of all and she did not give me much of her time and liking, on the contrary, she tried to reach to me and to change many things in my approach, she tried to explain things to me, to let, she gave me leadership opportunities sometimes, for example when we performed some silly shows at the primary school, some school celebrations, she let me do things my way, so that I could show something more cause she knew that I wanted that too. So she tried to reach to me, explained many things to me. I understood from her many things and, thanks to her, I did better at learning. It's hard for me to say it all in this moment. In the end I will tell only about her and it will be... I do not know, anyway she devoted much of her life to me, I'd say. She explained things to me and gave me a chance. She punished me when I was bad. When I was good she rewarded me and I didn't have that at home. And so something was shaped, my approach to life." (PL) (Rek, Rokicka, Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 2006).

I have been lucky. I got support from one of my teachers. She organised German courses and extra tuition for me in the afternoon. The personal engagement of my teacher and later of my classmates helped me very much. The school didn't offer these language courses for all pupils. I only got the chance because I was hard working and my teacher was very engaged. She really helped me a lot. If I hadn't had her, it would have been much worse for me. My brother has only the basic school leaving certificate, a lousy one with bad grades. He didn't get along at all. He didn't find support at school and got the degree just so. If one had supported him like me, he perhaps would have made it better (DE) (Eiβel, Ludwig, Zakikhany 2006)

- b. **Negative impact of teachers** was reported by those young persons who have low social status. Teachers were perceived as persons who stigmatized them and behaved unfairly:

I just think, that they are used to behaving like this. Teachers do not think about the child, they think about his parents. There were some in our class, who learned badly, but teachers tried to help such a learner just because his parents were affluent, have money, contacts and so on. But if you live poorly, the attitude differs. This is such an attitude.“ (LT) (Pukelis, Juraite Mikutaviciene, Maciulskyte 2006)

3. **Friends** are considered important “others”

- a. **during the transition from primary school**, especially when there was a non-supportive family environment, a lack of teachers' engagement and absence of any career adviser or councillor.

Spirit of group..., spirit of group..., we went all together - like to the army. First we went to study in Luua (Forest School) ... It was the spirit of the group, there was no pressure.... we just decided so. ... Have they influenced me? Actually, yes, but not in terms of advice or something like that... I also did not duplicate their decision – they went and I will go. We made it together... I do not know, just the spirit of the group (EE) (Ausna, Kasearu, Trumm 2006)

- b. **during transition from education to the labour market**:

The fruit job [I got] thanks to a friend who was already working there. I got the pastry job thanks to my father, who knew the owner. As far as the job doing floors, it was also through a friend of mine.(IT) (Longo, Quadrelli, Sacchetto 2006)

4. **The impact of social policies** on young adults' biographies varies significantly between countries. Policies were not perceived as supportive, and in many cases, they were not even mentioned as having any influence on informants' lives. However, in particular cases, a **stipend** offered to a low income student enabled him to study:

I get state grant (BAFöG), the highest possible amount of money. I really need it. It will become problematic when my father starts working again. Because then my BAFöG will be cut or significantly reduced. My father didn't want me to start studying. And I don't want to ask him for money. I will have to see how I get along to finish my studies. (DE) (Eiβel, Ludwig, Zakikhany 2006)

5. Opinions about the impact of **labour market policy** were diversified. In Lithuania Bulgaria and Poland they were hardly ever mentioned (job counselling at schools and labour office activities: benefits, vocational training, internships). Conviction that labour office can provide someone with the job is very low.
6. Those who are **welfare recipients** criticize bureaucratic procedures and disrespect which they suffer from in contacts with welfare agency workers:

They just treat you like some insect that has pulled off the street, do you know what I mean? Just like some idiot (UK) (Kokoroskou, Leaman 2006)

7. When it comes to transition from family of origin to family of procreation, **housing policy** seemed to play an absolutely crucial role, which is especially underlined by respondents in Loughborough (UK), Tomaszów (PL) and Jonava (LT).

8. Even if supported by some institutions in the course of a life, young adults in the study (particularly in Estonia and Finland) claim that they achieved a higher status as compared to parents thanks to their own efforts and abilities, representing an internal locus of control.

As a summary for this part of the research, an excerpt from the British report can be mentioned:

Parental inability and/or the unwillingness to help with homework or encourage a child's schooling, alongside the educational system's incapacity to cater to the specific needs of pupils, often results in educational failure and early entrance into the labour market where our young interviewees hold precarious, low-wage jobs (Kokoroskou, Leaman 2006).

It underlines that cumulative effect of discouraging **family** and non-supportive school are the most likely factors leading an individual to stay in poverty and follow the parental life course.

3.2 Project findings in national perspective (summaries by country)

While comparing project results across countries attention was paid to reveal similarities rather than dissimilarities. Below there are summaries by national research teams providing results obtained in each country in the course of the whole realization of the project. It also enables the reader to become acquainted with dissimilarities between countries/towns.

3.2.1 Poland

Perception of the phenomenon of the Hof I

The problem of the intergenerational transmission of inequalities is not present in public discourse in Poland. During conducted interviews it was revealed that the threat of transferring poverty to the next generation is not a subject of spontaneous reflection of the people formulating and accomplishing tasks connected with social policy neither at the national nor at the local level. However, in the course of the discussions it was expressed that the problem exists and can hamper the cohesive development of society.

According to the politicians in Poland there are areas, inhabitants of which are subjected to the problem of the intergenerational transmission of inequalities. They pointed to the rural areas and small cities. However, the example of Tomaszów Mazowiecki – medium size town, clearly shows that the problem exists also in such locations. Tomaszów Mazowiecki is strongly affected by this phenomenon; the main meso-structural cause of this state of affairs is the collapse of the textile industry. The representatives of the municipal authorities as well as social services workers pointed to this fact as the key one. The event became the “driving wheel” for different phenomena: marginalization of a relatively large social group - former workers in the textile industry, or the rise of poverty enclaves in former working class estates. Also young adults, the town inhabitants often referred to the bankruptcy of the “Wistom” factory – major employer in the town during socialism, as the main reason for the deterioration of the situation in the town, often also in their own families of origin.

The phenomenon of the intergenerational transmission of inequalities is chiefly associated with passing down poor education, low material status and a specific set of attitudes and life patterns (involving e.g. reluctance to undertake work, welfare dependency, and alcohol addiction) from generation to generation. Although the respondents perceived both the macro- and meso-structural conditioning of this phenomenon's incidence and permanence, they focused mainly on micro-structural and psychosocial conditionings. The role of socialization (transferring of patterns, values) and volition factors in the process of passing on poverty and low status was underlined.

The individualistic approach of the respondents was also revealed in discussions relating to local social policy. A commonly expressed opinion was that the impossibility of breaking the circle of intergenerational transmission of low social status is largely the consequence of at-risk people's reluctance to change their own fate (undertaking employment, becoming independent of institutional support), even though it is known that there are no job vacancies in a town.

The risk of the intergenerational transmission of inequalities is mainly ascribed to the individuals' growing up in the families affected by three major factors: poverty, low level of education and unemployment. The size of a family also matters in opinions of interviewees. According to some

respondents, young people from multi-children or (less frequently mentioned) single-parent households are disadvantaged and likely to remain disadvantaged as adults.

Education

Education is perceived on the one hand as a factor petrifying the social structure and on the other hand as the main tool for preventing and relieving the intergenerational transmission of inequalities. Education should be the factor that equalizes chances of the younger generation. This objective, considered by the respondents as the crucial one, has not been achieved. School segregation in the Polish educational system is a very disadvantageous phenomenon. Two kinds of segregation were mentioned. One is connected with the differentiation of schools in terms of quality of the services they provide. Very often this differentiation is also related to the territorial aspect: a great disproportion between village schools and schools in cities could be observed. As respondents stated, children from poor families have very limited opportunities to get the schools with high quality of teaching and therefore their chances to attend good educational institutions at higher level of education are decreased as well. The second kind of segregation is caused by the policy realized by schools themselves. They tend to segregate pupils according to the criterion of their parents' financial resources. School authorities usually prefer to have homogenous classes in terms of financial capital as it reduces problems of organizing additional, chargeable activities.

It was a common opinion, that education has a crucial role to play. In order to achieve this it was recommended that:

- every child should have access to good quality education
- children should have access to a broad offer of scholarships and grants funded by the state
- broader and easier access to kindergartens should be provided
- more stress should be put on extracurricular classes for the children with educational problems, who very often originate from low status families.

Labour market

Respondents from all the stages of the research often referred to the situation on the labour market reflecting the problem of IIofl. Unemployment was perceived as a very important factor contributing to the other social problems and their transmission. Interviews with young adults revealed that even though respondents assessed their social status as higher than their parents they mainly have in mind a higher education level than their parents achieved. However, their higher level of education does not necessarily mean having a stable job or even any legal employment. What is more, many interviewed young adults in Tomaszów experienced: instability, precariousness of employment, and work without contract (long working hours, delay or not getting the salary for their work, extremely low wages).

According to politicians, labour market policy is underpaid and chaotic, active measures that can contribute to combating unemployment should be widely undertaken. The common opinion among the respondents was that special programmes (training courses) aimed at improving the skills of the unemployed are not based on the reliable diagnosis of labour market demand.

The demand of the employer is usually fabricated by the labour office, like now we have the specialist in lathe-operation so we will be training lathe-operators. And in a village where there was no single turner needed, they trained 15 turners

Therefore, the efficiency of these programmes is low. What is more, there is a mismatch between educational and labour market demand resulting in a deficit of particular occupations and professions required by employers. The same concerns education provided by the higher schools active in the town that produce a surplus of graduates in professions not needed on the local labour market. Additionally, decentralization of the labour market was perceived by the politicians as the mistake. Changes that followed administrative reform were perceived as highly disadvantageous. Instead of a centralized system of the State Labour Office having subordinated to it regional branches, independent Poviats labour offices were established subordinated to Poviats Self-Government. It increased disorder and led to the lack of coordination between Poviats Labour Offices:

I got really mad when we passed the law about administrative division of the country and we created these damned poviats and at the same time liquidated State Labour Office and divided policy for counteracting unemployment among poviats. Dear people, 380 employment policies? (Rek, Rokicka, Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Woźniak 2006: 189)

Welfare policy

Welfare policy is the direct measure that should contribute to combating poverty and its transmission. However, top-politicians as well as local actors, at the same time, claim that giving people social assistance benefits contributes to the petrification of inequalities mainly by strengthening the “demand driven” attitude of the recipients.

Politicians stated that decentralization of responsibilities for the solution of social problems is appreciated because at the local level (community, municipality) more accurate social diagnosis can be made. Local authorities are able to define key problems for the local communities and choose groups which should be supported in first place. Having a reliable diagnosis, they are able to spend public money in a more efficient way. Moreover, at the local level it is possible to implement holistic and multi-dimensional social policy, aimed at families and individuals endangered by the risk of poverty or deprivation. Local government, using various institutions which are at its disposal (educational, social services, police, health care services, local NGOs) can support them efficiently. All politicians agreed that, when there is positive “networking” and cooperation between different local actors, the opportunities for absorbing money from different EU funds are large. It refers to the funds that could be spent on regional development, as well as to the social initiatives of the EU, like the European Social Fund or EQUAL.

These opinions correspond to the views expressed by the local actors, who negatively assess the regulations and budgets imposed by the national level. They believe that more independence in spending money would result in more efficient activities. The criticism concerned mainly the central authorities and the solutions (or lack of them) proposed by the government administration:

And sometimes I am thinking, what are these social assistance agencies for? Their responsibility is to help poor people but there are no funds from the state budget and everyone tries to get away from that responsibility... (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Rokicka, Rek, Drabowicz, Woźniak, Petelewicz, Rokicka, Kruszyński 2006: 155)

Communities are overloaded with tasks and under-financed. However, if there are programmes designed as central government programme, money is transferred to communities even in surplus.

The central administration of course has great ideas, we are ashamed.... No, it's not true, but our ideas are simply not carried out due to lack of finances. It is the central level which has ideas.. (...)And when there is a stream of money for meals for children we have more than enough, we've got so much dough (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Rokicka, Rek, Drabowicz, Woźniak, Petelewicz, Rokicka, Kruszyński 2006: 155).

The interviewees underlined that they have no influence on establishing the eligibility criteria for the selection of target groups and on the extent of that support:

we are not asked for any diagnoses, the decisions are made “at the top” and we've got to put them into practice. Sometimes decisions are made by theoreticians, unreasonable decisions and we are supposed to carry them out (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Rokicka, Rek, Drabowicz, Woźniak, Petelewicz, Rokicka, Kruszyński 2006: 158).

Local stakeholders underlined that the flow information between different social service providers is insufficient because of the lack of concerted data set concerning current and potential welfare recipients. Also better cooperation between various institutional actors and coordination of the actions undertaken would contribute significantly to the proper functioning of the welfare institutions.

Top level politicians, as well as local stakeholders pointed out that a fragmented approach to poverty and inequalities prevails and the actions that follow on from it are generally short-term in orientation and focused on the most burning social problems. Local experts claimed that actions undertaken by the social policy institutions are concentrated on the current issues connected with day-to-day, routine activities; priority is given to urgent matters connected with support for people in need (as was stated by one of the participants “putting out the fire”). In fact, Tomaszów Mazowiecki lacks a long-term strategy for counteracting poverty and the solution of social problems, while measures applied there are most often of a provisional character. These measures, aimed at solving problems which are usually persistent, i.e. inherited from generation to generation, fail to bring sought-after results. Similarly, top-level politicians admit that they do not apply a long-term perspective while taking part in policy making. Various conflicts, often ideological ones lead to the inability to plan, create and implement coherent, efficient and long-term social policy. It seems that politicians think about the results of the forthcoming election rather than about the creation of some holistic, systematic solutions. Issues like family policy or policy aimed at children and

young people are in many instances treated as an element in the ideological struggle, apart from the fact that before the elections the question arises as to who should be supported: pensioners or children who do not vote?

Assessment of the institutions and policy by young adults

The general conclusion following from the young adults' narrations is that they do not trust public institutional support as a factor that could contribute significantly to the scope of their overall life achievement. Those who managed to improve their status frequently declared that they did not need to apply for any kind of support (which was identified by respondents with welfare or unemployment benefits) or if they did, their contact with relevant institutions was incidental. It seems that interviewees relied on parental family members and on their own rather than on institutions. The respondents who have been covered by labour market or social welfare measures criticized the unclear and unfair (from their point of view) rules of granting support.

However, despite the fact that the majority of respondents do not realize the impact of the institutions on their life course, support from public institutions (school, welfare) can significantly contribute to getting out of the poverty circle. Research findings show that young people from families with low socio-economic status who achieved higher social status than their parents got some kind of support from public institutions connected with social policy. The above mentioned conclusions are very significant. They imply that social intervention can be effective and, even though common opinion (that nothing can be done) is different, it is possible to improve the social position of people whose parents have a low socio-economic status. Even if improvement is not so spectacular, usually these respondents can satisfy their basic needs by themselves and it is not necessary any more to be dependant on welfare benefits (at least when they are young adults).

As far as educational institutions are concerned, the interviewed young adults expressed very diverse opinions regarding teachers. Teachers were sometimes mentioned as providers of non-material support to pupils (especially in primary schools), even more frequently by those who did not experience upward social mobility. What is more, the scope of care and attention given by teachers to respondents was not linked with their institutional roles but rather with their personal characteristics.

Moreover, sport was quite frequently mentioned by respondents as one of the most significant elements of their biographies. In a few cases it could have become the gateway to a big life achievement, but interviewees' careers were usually short and the reason why they had to give up sport was mainly of a financial nature.

Feedback from the local stakeholders

During the seminar the stakeholders, as well as local politicians and municipal council members spoke about the activities of the institutions which they represented. In the opinion of some practitioners, the conclusions drawn by the researchers about the implementation of social policy instruments in Tomaszów were too critical. This opinion was supported by the examples of various initiatives and activities taken by public and NGO actors, which were considered good practice by local stakeholders (multidimensional activities coordinated by the head of Roman Catholic parish were reported to be the best). Some participants also tried to refute the argument that networking among particular institutions in the town is weak. But the examples put forward in support of this thesis provided evidence that existing networks are based mainly on informal contacts between social service workers.

The disputants also reported changes in administration and regulations, as well as new initiatives, implemented after the study had been conducted. The local elections held in the autumn of 2006 resulted in a change of ruling coalition in the town. Newly elected authorities consider that they have an idea how to improve the management of social problems.

However, it was agreed that the scale and characteristic of social deprivation in the town should be better recognized. There is a lack of precise statistical information on the town and its citizens. One of the main problems faced by social policy actors is, apart from insufficient funding, lack of coordination. In course of the discussion it emerged that the body perceived as the „natural” potential coordinating centre should be municipal authority. It was also admitted, that there are too few holistic measures aimed at whole families endangered by the inheritance of social inequalities.

Conclusions:

- A long-term strategy for the town should be devised
- The strategy has to include a holistic social policy programme

- The creation and implementation of social policy in Tomaszów should be preceded by gathering detailed statistical data about the town and its citizens
- In order to collect information, scientific research should be conducted
- The creation of a resilient coordinating centre in the town will increase local potential in applying for EU funding
- Activities undertaken and social services delivered by the Roman Catholic Parish of the „Sacred Heart of Jesus“ were assessed as the best example of good practice in a given field.

3.2.2 Bulgaria

The entire research work of the Bulgarian team in the frame of the PROFIT project shows that the problems related to social inequalities are acute in present Bulgarian society. This estimation was expressed by the interviewed social, political and economic actors at national level, and by the participants in the focus-group discussions at local level in the town of Pernik. The occurrence of the risk of intergenerational inheritance of social inequalities was empirically verified in the conducted sociological survey among young adults in the town of Pernik and in in-depth interviews with some respondents.

The Risk of Intergenerational Inheritance of Social Inequalities

It is a common opinion that the generations after 1989 faced the emergence of such significant and sharp social inequalities for the first time in the last six decades. The intergenerational inheritance of inequalities is clearly visible in the country despite the short period of change between generations. The respondents in Pernik used to connect poverty with two periods – the one before the rapid industrialization and the other after the political and economic changes in 1989. The elderly participants pointed out the widespread poverty in the town before and immediately after World War II. For several decades in the second half of the 20th century, when the town experienced rapid economic development, the local population had a higher purchasing power compared to the country's average. The inheritance of poverty was reduced significantly although there were still some groups of poor people. However, the participants in the discussions were unanimous that over the past 17 years the social and the material status of many people in the country and particularly in Pernik had worsened on the whole.

Factors determining the Intergenerational Inheritance of Social Inequalities

The participants in the study named the factors determining the intergenerational inheritance of social inequalities. These factors can be divided into the following major groups: political, economic, regional and psychological. To some extent, they result from political decisions, actions or inactions. The political platforms of all political parties and coalitions in Bulgaria include the problems of poverty and the struggle against it. However, the very issue concerning the inheritance of social inequalities is not yet precisely identified as a problem and is not explicitly part of the party platforms. The differences between their concepts are not significant in terms of the reduction of social risks. The information exchange among the main social institutions and actors is sometimes quite inefficient, some interviewed politicians said. However, what matters more is the lack of an innovative approach in interpreting the information, some added. The interviewees with academic experience saw the lack of indicators for social inequalities as particularly important. There is no developed system of indicators to measure the social effect of social programmes in Bulgaria yet and, thus, of the flow of money towards certain groups under the social programmes. The interviewed politicians pointed out the lack of consistency in social policy and the unwillingness of each new Government to take into consideration the experience of their predecessors as major problems. Local stakeholders also stated that each new local government tended to start everything from scratch. This hampers development and restricts the civil control over the authorities. Everybody agrees that there is no solid tradition of negotiations and dialogue at different levels. The interviewed social actors and local stakeholders agreed that the directions for the development of economy, labour market policy, education, healthcare, social security and the social support system should grow into long-term strategies at national and municipal level. According to some of the respondents, the municipal strategies are even more important for the local populations.

The processes and factors, determining the formation and the spreading of new inequalities, are typically regarded as a consequence of the intensive social transformation of Bulgarian society over the past fifteen years or so. The main conditions that bring about and maintain social inequalities include regional differences in economic development. There are some very poor regions in Bulgaria. In the case of the town of Pernik, the respondents mentioned as a major cause for social inequalities the economic restructuring accompanied by massive long-term unemployment. Poverty was pointed out as the most important effect of high unemployment rates and low incomes. Some participants shared the modern definition of poverty as a lack of finances for a life with dignity.

The respondents discussed poverty not only as a financial, but also as a moral problem. The interviewees pointed out to the moral and psychological factors as very important in the decision making process when fighting social inequalities. Some defined those factors as the presence or lack of willingness to adjust, and of political will to reform. Others pointed to culture, morality and the competence of the decision-makers and the executive branch at all levels as most significant factors.

Inheritance of Poverty

The major conclusion from the discussions and the interviews is that poverty in the country and particularly in Pernik is widespread. It has affected people from different ages, professional, educational, ethnic and social backgrounds, as well as health groups. The major cause for poverty in Pernik is unemployment, resulting from the closing down of industrial enterprises, which used to provide full employment for the local population and relatively good incomes. Nowadays, enterprises usually provide low-paid jobs to women. This is actually a rather important structural change in the local economy, which was known countrywide for providing well paid jobs for men.

The respondents put many of the employed in the category of the poor. The low salaries in the public and the private sectors discourage some of those receiving social benefits from starting work, since the social benefits sometimes exceed the salaries. The vast majority of people can hardly pay their utility bills and taxes. For many of the *bona fide* payers these high costs imply low-quality food, difficulties in maintaining social life or in securing better education for the children.

Low incomes and mass impoverishment over the past 15 years are considered the main social problems of Pernik. In comparison with other towns under scrutiny the empirical data from the survey carried out in Pernik show:

- the highest share of those who describe the financial situation of their parental families as very serious – 16.4% could not satisfy their basic needs and 36.8% had to spend money very carefully;
- the highest share of those who cannot satisfy their basic needs (12.0%) or have to spend money very carefully (41.6%) in their present families;
- the highest percentage of those who estimate their neighbourhood as rather poor or very poor both during their childhood and in the present day;
- the highest number of respondents who put their parental and present family in the lowest positions on the 10-point scale and perceive their current social positions as lower in comparison to their parents' positions at the same age.

During in-depth interviews it was pointed out that youngsters, who have not made social progress in comparison to their parents' situation, face serious trouble in three inter-related directions. First, they often work without official employment contracts and are not protected appropriately against dismissal. This creates a permanent feeling of insecurity and a fear of losing work. Secondly, they have to work overtime in order to keep their jobs. This is why they found it difficult to combine work, family life and bringing up children. According to the respondents, this was not the case before the transition, when employment was more secure and young families received adequate institutional support when taking care of children. The third dimension of the problems, faced by the interviewed young people, is the lack of opportunities to change their current employment for better-paid jobs and to improve their standard of living. Young respondents consider entrepreneurship as the highest professional and personal achievement. The main criterion for young respondents to feel successful is the financial independence from their parents. This is an example of how the handicap of a poor family background cannot be overcome easily and in the short term.

The Role of the Family

Family relations are included in the list of psychological factors. Some respondents said the family bears the biggest responsibility for transmitting inequality. However, they admit that the state should provide

the basis for economic stability of the family and equal opportunities for development in the first place. The opportunities for young people to achieve a high social status are closely connected to the family environment because children follow their parents' behavioural pattern and replicate it. A significant part of the population is forced to focus solely on survival, rather than on self-improvement. The parents focus mostly on providing subsistence for the family and work overtime and sometimes even commute to other towns (this applies strongly to Pernik). The children are left without parental control and are influenced by street culture. According to experts, the reason for juvenile delinquency in these cases is not only economic, but also results from the bringing-up of the children. According to the teachers, the explanation should focus on deformations in the normative value-systems. Many of the adults should change their way of thinking and their system of values, should be more tolerant, take professional responsibility in their work together with personal responsibility for the future of their children. Often the adults and their children depend on unmanageable problems. The children witness negative examples of their parents' inability to achieve the desired living standard. This situation in small social units makes the basis for self-assessment of one's social condition and for the development of a sense of inevitability. The feeling creates a poverty culture, which passes from one generation to the next. By encouraging parents to put enough financial resources into better education for the children, one may help the talented children to have better chances. In-depth interviews with young adults confirmed that young people strongly believed that their parents had a crucial role in their lives. Family was the only one, which helped them to complete their education, to develop responsibility and to overcome all employment-related difficulties. Some interviewees think that within the market economy people have more possibilities to improve their living standard. However, chances are open not only for talented, but also before those willing to take risks.

The Role of Education

Due to the prolonged social crisis in Bulgaria, it is hard to assess particular social problems and to establish their ranking in a well-substantiated way. However, the continuation of poverty and low education in particular social groups is considered a solid mechanism for intergenerational inheritance of poverty among them. Low education and even illiteracy pass from one generation to another especially in the Roma community, thus providing for the continuation of poverty and the strengthening all kinds of social inequalities in Bulgarian society. Actually all the interviewed persons agree that social inequality in Bulgaria is related to ethnic origins, especially for the Roma and the Turkish communities. The Roma are the only social group of working age that lives on social benefits. The social status and the social behaviour of the Roma, who are the only ethnic minority in the town, were pointed out as one of the major problems for Pernik.

The problem of education of the Roma children is a topic deserving special attention. Because of their own illiteracy, Roma parents neither can, nor want to educate their children. The state must intervene radically and the Roma parents must be forced to send their children to school. In fact, legal measures for achieving this exist, but are rarely applied. Low material status and poor education seem unavoidable and bound to continue among the Roma. This point is confirmed by both social studies and simple everyday observations. The conclusion is that the measures for integration of the two biggest minorities into mainstream social processes often do not go in the right direction and have not yielded the desirable results so far.

In addition to the general problem of receiving education, another serious problem concerns the quality of education and the real possibilities it offers for increasing the competitiveness of young people on the labour market. The overall assessment of Bulgarian state-financed education is that it is of low quality. The lack of access to modern technologies also limits personal and national development, the interviewees said. It is a common opinion that the long delayed and still incomplete educational reforms hinder the future development of the national economy and thus preclude the breaking of the intergenerational transmission of inequality. Bulgaria's educational system has become highly dependent on the material status of the parents. Only the rich can afford to pay the high tuition fees in the elite private schools. The inequalities resulting from different levels of education will most probably continue to deepen. Some young interviewees considered higher education as a chance to overcome the handicaps of their poor origin and to live independently.

As to the system of professional education, it was generally assessed as lagging behind the needs of the restructuring of the economy. Bulgarian education must be reformed and become part of the market economy. Young people enter the labour market with a significant lack of professional training. State funding for vocational education is insufficient. As a result, the specialised establishments have obsolete

technological equipment while modern companies tend to work with advanced technologies. The necessity to provide teachers with further training pose other problems. In addition, there is insufficient coordination between state institutions, the employers and the educational institutions. Each year students graduate from vocational secondary schools preparing them for occupations, which are not needed either in the regional, or in the national economy or with qualifications that cannot meet the current requirements. This is one of the major reasons for the difficulties that young people experience in the labour market. Teachers, representatives of the employers and of the labour office pointed out the need for a re-orientation of the secondary vocational schools in line with the new requirements of the labour market.

Programmes Promoting Upward Social Mobility

The assessment of the active measures aimed at improving the labour market situation was not unanimous. Representatives of labour offices, some politicians and municipal councillors confirmed that intensive work is taking place. Numerous programmes had been started. However, the effect of some initiatives is short-lived. The real problem lies with the effectiveness and the efficiency of these active measures. According to the representatives of the municipal administration and labour office, these programmes have positive effects because the involved people are no longer passive and dependent on social benefits, but return to work. Other participants in the discussions think that the efficiency of these programmes is low and they need to be improved since few of the involved in the temporary employment programmes actually continue to work on a permanent basis. A positive assessment was given to the initiatives for reducing unemployment among young people. For their part, the interviewed young people estimated public employment offices as very inefficient and of low quality. The same conclusion was made with regard to social welfare institutions. All of the young interviewees declared that these public institutions played no role in their achieving their personal plans and life strategies. Young people from poor families do not trust the public institutions because neither the employment office, nor the social welfare offices have ever helped them. Young respondents said they mostly rely on their own efforts to solve their problems. If the problem is too difficult to be resolved without external help, respondents expect to receive support from their family or friends. The lower the respondents' assessment of the formal institutional role, the higher is the young people's evaluation of the personal efforts, family and informal circles.

Attention was paid to various employment programmes, some of which have good ideas and are organised, funded and implemented properly. But there is no co-ordination between the particular programmes and institutions. That makes the results short-lived and does not secure long-term effects from the invested efforts and money. It is a shared opinion that the involvement of institutions and the co-operation between them is necessary to reduce the inheritance of social inequalities. Most of the interviewees think that the state should bear the highest responsibility for resolving this task. Other institutions should apply the state policies through the mechanisms they can avail themselves of. The co-operation between the central and the local authorities is considered inefficient by all interviewees. There are positive examples like the setting up of a national network of centres for social consultations and protection of the poor on a local level and of regional councils for combating poverty and social isolation in close co-operation with the central structures from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. One of the biggest national social programmes of the ministry *From Social Benefits to Employment* showed a good pattern of co-operation at the local level. According to individuals, directly involved in the programme, the local authorities have already prepared staff on a local level to manage the financial aid from the EU Structural Funds. However, most of the interviewees forecast that if the role of the local authorities is not changed, the superficial implementation of the programmes and the inefficient utilisation of the EU funds would continue. The local authorities should be allowed to be more flexible when implementing their initiatives. The social workers from the municipality mentioned this in order to improve the co-operation between the separate institutions. There is an idea for a co-ordination centre with the participation of the municipality, the NGOs and entrepreneurs.

The social support system has also received various and in some cases contradictory assessments. On the one hand, the need for supporting poor people was not questioned by any of the interviewed actors. It was repeatedly mentioned that social support programmes are needed for raising living standards. On the other hand, there is a widespread opinion that these programmes also have negative effects, since they discourage some people from making efforts to work. It was noted that the administrative capacity at the local level had increased and the system is now better suited to manage concrete situations in the social sector. However, there are still quite a number of problems and shortcomings in this field. First, the system

of social support has to be streamlined and better structured, but not expanded. Second, despite the large scope for social support schemes, there are needy people who are not covered. According to the stakeholders, there should be a restricted initial period for support of the economically active individuals when they experience difficulties. An undesirable result of the social support programmes is that significant funds and social energy are expended, but there is no certain result. These schemes function as substitutes for a certain period of time, but fail to create capacities for raising income from work and thus to help the individuals benefiting from the programme to live independently in the future. The financial support should be combined with training courses and with alternatives to encourage the activeness of people in need to get out of the social assistance programme.

The common opinion is that poverty is a severe economic, political, social and cultural problem in the country and particularly Pernik, and that it is likely to be passed from the current to the next generations. It emerged during the discussions that the optimistic prospect for the children to fight inherited poverty successfully still cannot prevail over the pessimistic one. The participants in the final conference in Pernik discussed the necessary steps that are to be undertaken against the intergenerational transmission of social inequalities. First, according to the local stakeholders the most important thing to be done in order to overcome the inheritance of the low material status of households is to foster the development of the local economy by supporting businesses in the territory of the Pernik municipality. The stakeholders were unanimous that the improvement of the local economic situation is the only sustainable way to combat the transmission of inequalities from one generation to the next. The most important point in this respect was the agreement of the participants about the leading role of the local authorities. Second, participants believed that there was a need for improving intra- and inter-institutional co-ordination. Third, stakeholders agreed that the improvement of the educational system is a crucial task. The short-term prospects for the intergenerational transmission of inequalities in Bulgaria are basically pessimistic as indicated by the interviews and the discussions. Hopes for softening social inequalities and for reducing their inheritance are more long-term in nature.

Recommendations

None of the interviewed social actors at national and local level doubt the need for or the results of efforts to adapt Bulgarian legislation to the requirements of the *acquis communautaire*. More precisely, this concerns the European social model and its application in Bulgaria. Aside from acknowledging the positive results, the stakeholders also gave recommendations for reducing the negative effects due to social risks.

Most interviewees think that the state should bear higher responsibility in the efforts to resolve the issues connected with the inheritance of social inequalities. Indeed, the issues should be explicitly identified and put into the focus of the national social strategies. The strategies and the programmes should be designed for joint implementation by the governments and the local authorities. It is a commonly shared opinion that a stronger mobilisation of institutions and a better co-operation between the central and the local authorities, between the particular programmes and institutions is necessary in order to effectively alleviate the inheritance of social inequalities. More precisely, the local authorities should be given the possibility to be more flexible when implementing their initiatives. The local authorities are close to people and should be involved in the activities in a way which would boost people's confidence in them.

The educational reforms should be continued with growing investments in the field. State and municipal institutions should support research in the local labour markets in order to meet the specific local needs. This means adaptation of the locally offered professional education to the local needs of production and services. The business circles should fulfil their social responsibility by investing in the education and training of their staff or by developing other corporate initiatives supporting active policies for coping with the intergenerational transmission of inequalities. It would be desirable to think about initiatives covering the life cycle of the households and individuals affected by poverty. The support should be therefore extended from education up until retirement. This longitudinal approach still needs to be discussed by the state, the trade unions and the employers.

The system of social support has to be streamlined and better structured, but not expanded. What should be done in social assistance is to reduce the formal criteria in order to make the officials from the social services more active in identifying persons who really need help, to get enough information about the socially vulnerable persons and to assess each case individually. One of the suggestions was to improve the social services legislation by expanding the realm of the activities potentially conducted by NGOs.

All interviewed politicians, participants in the discussions and the majority of the respondents in the survey expressed their interest in the scientific study on the inheritance of social inequalities. The political

and practical understanding of the research results is considered a necessary part of the joint actions, aimed at the reduction of social risks.

3.2.3 Germany

Social Structures of Giessen

Giessen is one of the most affected towns in Hesse when it comes to poverty. Particularly long-term unemployed, single parent families, immigrants and families with three or more children are highly affected by poverty. In Giessen also four main disadvantaged residential areas exist with a concentration of social exclusion. One third of all families living in Giessen are single parent families. The ratio of lone parents in Giessen – which mostly are women – is far above the average in comparison with the given percentage of lone parents in Germany. 13.5 % of the total population are immigrants from 148 different nations. In comparison with other middle-sized towns in Hesse and Germany this clearly is an above average rate. Most of the immigrants (27.5 %) have a Turkish migration background (data from the local poverty report Giessen, published in 2002). The number of long-term unemployed, submitted under the new labour market regulations, increased in 2006 by about 6 percent up to 19.500 in the labour district of Giessen.

Results

General remarks

Concerning the starting point of the PROFIT-Project we scarcely could find available and comprehensive data about the problem of inherited inequality in Giessen. Even if there are local reports on poverty (the last one in 2002), there are hardly any data concerning social mobility at the local or regional level. That's why more exact analysis is vital in order to be able to intervene in an effective manner. Herewith it is not only important to assess long-term and inherited inequality but also to integrate a wide-ranging report on wealth for achieving better information about the distribution of income and whether social inequality is increasing or decreasing.

Living Conditions

Growing up in a family affected by poverty

All respondents shared the view that children from families with a low social status and from disadvantaged residential areas have a very low chance of escaping the poverty trap and of achieving a higher social status. The transmission of low social status and poverty from one generation to another is present in Giessen.

My assumption is that poverty in Giessen is largely inherited. There are families, which are living in poverty for several generations. [...] There are names and city areas, where they come from, known by the Youth Welfare Department, the social welfare office, and they are known throughout the city everywhere. These families affected by long-term social exclusion have many children. I sometimes even recognize where they come from without knowing before. On the whole, this is a large group of people we are dealing with (Social worker).

The young adults who took part in the study are in more or less the same social position as their parents have been, varying from a status of unemployment of up to several years and poverty to a precarious living and working situation. In some families there were cumulated and significant problems and this situation had a crucial effect on the children. This wasn't always solely connected with the unemployment of the parents. Unemployment can't be seen as the only factor causing the problematic family situation, although it is an important one especially with regard to the economic situation of the family. Other factors were mentioned by respondents as having had a remarkable influence on their living situation as a child. These factors include indebtedness, migration background, separation and divorce of the parents, disturbed family climate, a bad parent-child-relationship, neglect and low competence of the parents, violence in the family, low or missing family and social network, health problems and addiction of the parents and growing up in trouble hotspots. The coping strategies of the respondents are very different and depend on the concrete situation in the family, age and the personal abilities of the respondent. The young respondents in the study are not resigned at all, but try to improve their situation through working very hard for themselves and taking their apprenticeship very seriously to change their situation in the long run.

Growing up and living in socially disadvantaged areas

An interesting result of the study was that living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods was portrayed very ambivalently – integration into the neighbourhood on the one hand, stigmatization on the other.

Currently it is difficult again to find a vocational training when your address is e.g. "Leimenkauter Weg". Then the chances are very low (Social Worker).

Many families moved back into trouble hotspots because that is where they have their social relations and it is difficult for them to get into contact with better-off families.

Only very few families get out of this environment. The families that move into another part of town often return after a certain time because the social environment they have created is not to be found elsewhere. They have problems getting to know the families there that might be slightly better off (Educator).

Proposals

The close relationship to the neighbourhood is also reflected in the fact that kindergartens often serve as contact points for families.

The families come to us as a contact point that is in need of expansion. We counsel them even though that doesn't really fall into our scope of responsibilities. Even in completely different matters, for example debt counselling. They always come to us and ask 'Can't you help us?' There should be something created that is accessible from where the parents live, where they feel safe, where they can also talk about their fears and apprehensions (Educator).

This clearly indicates the special need for contacts to low threshold local institutions in the neighbourhood and for experts and people known to them. Centralisation of public tasks even at the local level is a hindrance for the poor. Therefore it is strongly recommended that the infrastructure in disadvantaged areas be strengthened e.g. establishing low threshold "advice centres".

For the people living here, this area is their whole world. They need a contact point, where they get support and help. It would make sense to establish such a centre directly in the area."
(Young male adult living in a socially disadvantaged area)

The people living in disadvantaged areas often have a very close relationship to their area. It is difficult to send somebody to other institutions in town because we often experience that they do not arrive there (Social worker).

It was regarded as important to undertake more efforts working towards a better environment in the disadvantaged townships. In general, improving the housing conditions and fighting the negative image of social hotspots by providing e.g. sports fields and playgrounds and youth centres is stressed as being vital. Through this, the residents of the neighbourhood should get involved in projects, acting as "experts of their own affairs", with the aim of being able to completely hand over the project into the responsibility of the neighbourhood's residents. Examples show that the participation of residents in disadvantaged areas concerning the planning and realisation of projects lead to remarkable results. To reach these objectives, planning security and long-term projects over at least three years are necessary in addition. The different providers of social services and the social initiatives should network more closely in neighbourhood activities. Social workers from different neighbourhoods reported some positive examples of networking, but it also was evident that more resources are needed. In the end, noticeable improvements in the neighbourhoods cannot be achieved without adequate financial investments.

Education

Education plays a crucial role concerning the inheritance of poverty from one generation to another as social mobility depends heavily on educational qualities. The majority of the participants agree that success in the educational system is still dependent on the social background of the children. In Giessen about 40% of the families are unable to afford the fees for the public kindergarten. In many families the parents are not able to support and promote their children in kindergarten and schools, because they are poorly qualified themselves or do not have the time for support because they are working very hard. Often the children are also not provided with books and computers at home. All these circumstances of a poor social environment can

explain why numerous children have more difficulties in school. Children from disadvantaged families often lack even the necessary equipment:

It starts with that they don't possess the things they need. Yes, mommy is only getting the money next Monday and then again she might not and you end up buying it yourself. They come to school with a plastic bag because they don't have the money for a backpack or it has been spent otherwise. At home the children are not able to look things up because there are no books, no computer, no internet (Teacher).

The school can have a very important function to provide a richer environment that the pupils don't find at home. Therefore the school can compensate for missing opportunities at home to a certain extent depending on the school structure and the possibilities offered by the school. "Significant others" like teachers can have a very important influence on the development of children with difficulties.

I have been lucky. I got support from one of my teachers. She organised German courses and extra tuition for me in the afternoon. The personal engagement of my teacher and later also of my class-mates helped me very much. These language courses were not offered by the school for all pupils. I only got the chance because I was hard-working and my teacher was very engaged. (young female adult with migration background)

Only the intervention of one of my teachers and my older sisters changed the attitude of my parents towards the high school. [...] (young male adult who improved his social status)

Proposals concerning Education Policy

1. **Comprehensive schools.** All respondents emphasize the decisive role of education in fighting poverty. PISA shows for example that success in the educational system still depends on the social background of the children. Consequently the educational system is not able to establish equal opportunities. A huge number of respondents identify the early selective German tripartite school system as the main source of promoting educational discrimination and excluding migrants. To learn a longer time together was seen as necessary step to overcome the early selection. Therefore many front-liners and some young adults advocate comprehensive schools aimed at overcoming its highly selective character. These reforms are urgently needed and should be orientated towards the Scandinavian school system as positive examples.

Integration is important. Children with different social backgrounds should stay together in school and learn together. The children can learn from each other and they can learn to cope with differentiations (Front-liner).

Everyone studies together. In my opinion establishing comprehensive schools should be the central project to improve the educational system in Germany significantly. More participation in education should be the aim of political reforms (young male adult who improved his social status).

2. Almost all participants agree that investments in education are imperative. That also means the **establishment of full-time schools**. This is targeted especially at children from socially disadvantaged families. Special supportive courses for disadvantaged children like extra-tuition lessons or language courses should not depend on the personal engagement of single persons, but should be institutionalised at school.

Children should have an independent area of life outside the family as early as possible. I developed all abilities and interests when I wasn't at home. [...] One assumes much too strongly and too often today, that all parents naturally promote the abilities of their children. But often parents offer the children the same things which were offered to them. In case of socially disadvantaged families, this isn't often very much. That's why all-day schools could offer more opportunities and support especially for disadvantaged children. (young male adult who improved his social status)

3. **Free access to crèches and kindergartens (especially in social hotspots).** Early support of the children in crèches and kindergartens is regarded as very important. There is also the need for smaller classes in schools and kindergartens. The teachers reported that they do not have the possibility and time any

more to support the children individually and to include the parents into the activities. The reason is, on the one hand, that the number of children per class and teacher is increasing. On the other hand, the children often have more difficulties and problems and therefore need more attention.

Now I'm getting to the strategies of making sure that the groups are smaller and at least two qualified persons are present. Then you can also involve the parents. (Educator)

4. Because the educational career of the children from disadvantaged families is often realised against the will of the parents, [free access to educational institutions](#) and public financial support is an important issue to be able to make an independent decision.

Labour market and Social Policy

The majority of the front-liners argue that an increase in the inheritance of poverty in Germany to a large extent is due to the hazardous development in the labour market. They confirm that the latest reforms by cutting back unemployment benefits, is worsening the situation of the people affected by poverty significantly and are intensifying social exclusion. Before the labour market reforms were passed, recipients could additionally file an application for example for a washing machine or winter clothes. This changed, now the welfare recipients are expected to save money and to cover all expenses with their low unemployment benefit. Because the amount of money they get hardly permits any saving it is most likely that the problems are increasing. All front-liners agree that the financial support for poor families is not sufficient and should be increased.

It can not be expected that the welfare recipients save money for unusual and un-expected expenses. In former times they had to file applications, and now they suddenly get money and have to save it. That can not work. [...] This will lead to an increase of indebtedness (Social worker).

At present the unemployed with no or low qualifications have the lowest chances of entering vocational training and the labour market. The demands for skilled and well trained employees is increasing, jobs for low-skilled workers are declining.

If you have failed in school, in the past you have got a second chance, because there was a need for workers. Nowadays the enterprises have very high expectations and they want already highly qualified apprentices. The enterprises can make their choice, because we have an oversupply of those asking for work. In addition, there are not many professions and jobs for low qualified people any more (Trade unionist).

The majorities of the young adults in the study is undergoing vocational training at the moment and therefore still depend on their parents to a significant extent. Because the respondents don't receive much money during their apprenticeship, some try to earn some extra money through illegal work at the weekends. The experiences described by the respondents prove impressively how difficult and precarious the transition periods from school to vocational training to work for disadvantaged young adults are. After leaving school many of the respondents faced unemployment for a longer period of time. They tried very hard to find a vocational training place and often wrote a lot of applications but had to face only rejections. Many of the respondents found a vocational training place at last through ZAUG (Centre for work and environmental protection). The task of this public institution is to resolve the discrimination produced by the education system and the labour market with the focus on disadvantaged teenagers and young adults in the transition period from school to work. Although most of the respondents found a vocational training place at last, the transition is not yet really complete, because vocational training is a step in between school and labour market, and they will probably face the risk of unemployment again afterwards. To be unemployed for a longer time without the prospect of overcoming the situation is very difficult for the young adults. Because they don't find a job they feel left out of society and sometimes think that they are responsible for that.

I had difficulties to find a vocational training place. I was unemployed about one year. I wrote about 50 applications. From time to time I was even invited for a job interview. Nevertheless I received refusals one by one without giving reasons. Unemployment really sucks. One feels so miserable. You feel as if nobody needs you, as if you are loser. I asked myself why I made such an effort at school to achieve a good school-leaving qualification if it doesn't help you at all

afterwards. I really blamed myself for this situation (Young female adult with migration background)

The experiences with the labour office are very different, often depending on the advisor responsible for the respondent. The young adults often feel helpless dealing with the office and not treated fairly:

I don't feel treated well. The last time I went to the labour office they said: "You filled in the wrong form." Then they didn't pay the benefits. Just like that. And it was their fault, because they send me this form. I told them, that it is unjust. They made a mistake and we have to suffer because of that. The advisor told me, I would receive a new form but till then I wouldn't receive any money (Young female adult).

Proposals concerning Labour market and social policy

- 1. Vocational training places.** The fight especially against youth unemployment was regarded as a key objective for providing the younger generation with a perspective after leaving school. More vocational training places in general and a public occupation sector are necessary. The public occupation sector should offer employment with social insurance contributions. Especially the unemployed with no or very low qualifications, which have the lowest chances to enter the labour market, need intensified support.

What we really need is more vocational training places. There are so many young adults searching for work after school. Vocational training is the Alpha and Omega. [...] ZAUG is really important for us, because it reveals a perspective to young people to make something out of their lives (young male adult)

Many participants regarded the 'Federal Government's Job Training Initiative' in conjunction with trade and industry, relying on the voluntary self-commitment of companies, as failed. It was not possible to effectively tackle youth unemployment with this instrument. As an alternative, participants favoured a training levy. This legal obligation would incur a fee for companies that do not offer job-training opportunities. The generated revenues would benefit companies offering apprenticeship positions.

- 2. Social und cultural participation.** It was also regarded as necessary that access to public cultural and social facilities is available to everybody and that public utilities are not privatised. The so called "Giessen-Pass" is a good example for increasing participation:

The City-Pass offers cultural and social participation. The social-cultural minimum of 345 Euros per month is extended at least a little through this. It is important that people have access to cultural facilities (young male adult).

Strategies of the political actors

Although all political actors take for granted that there is a problem of inherited poverty in Germany, there is a lack of strategies at all political levels. With the exception of the former Federal Family Ministry (SPD), all interviewees accepted public responsibility for poverty reduction policies. Combating poverty is seen as a political obligation and not perceived as a personal matter. In contrast, the Family Ministry stresses the individual responsibility of the persons affected. The Family Ministry publicly maintains the scarcely demonstrated point of view that the example of the parents and the social environment in which the poor children are brought up are the main causes of inherited inequality instead of any external or structural factors.

Suggestions for improving social policy are scarcely to be found with conservative party members and government representatives. But some of the politicians from the national and regional level demand more transfers to guarantee a sustainable income for the poor. They also point to the requirements of flexible child care and a satisfactory provision with acceptable accommodation and the right to sufficient language courses, especially for children with a migration background. All these measures should primarily benefit single parents, children and immigrants.

A majority of politicians from the federal, regional and local level favours improvements in the educational system. They consider education to be the key for overcoming the inheritance of poverty. But ideas about the reform of the educational system vary considerably: Whilst the conservative party (CDU) advocates a secondary school form model that divides an age group into different schools based on assessed ability (for example in Hesse), Social democrat representatives and the Greens criticize the German educational system as being too socially selective. Their reform ideas are orientated towards the

Scandinavian system demanding that children stay together in the same class and school for as long as possible. At the local level all political parties with exception of the CDU want to abolish fees for kindergartens. The party representatives of the opposition (the Social Democratic Party, the Green Party and the Party of Democratic Socialism) suggest establishing family centres, investing more money in education, establishing more all-day schools and an improvement in the carer-to-client ratio.

Concerning labour market policy the answers of the politicians at national and regional level indicate that nobody is willing to take responsibility: Representatives at the Federal level are referring to the responsibility of the different Länder. At both levels – federal and regional – politicians demand a higher responsibility on the part of private companies concerning the supply of employment and especially of vocational training places.

The front-liners criticize the fact that politicians at all levels intervene very hesitantly in fighting unemployment and poverty and mostly by imposing disciplinary measures.

Also the young adults have the impression that politicians even at the local level aren't really interested in them:

But I am not a politician. I have no idea how it works. All I hear from the politicians are empty promises. The only thing they care for is their career. [...] The future lies on you students from university, not on us, the common people.” (young male adult with migration background)

I often listen to poor people saying that this is the first time that somebody is listening to me. The disadvantaged people need a voice (social worker).

3.2.4 Estonia

Perception of intergenerational inheritance of inequalities

Nature and patterns of intergenerational inheritance

The interviews with national elites and local stakeholders in Pärnu revealed that Estonian society is exposed to a high risk of intergenerational inheritance of inequalities and could be considered as an obstacle for ensuring the sustainable development of society. The phenomenon of intergenerational inheritance was interpreted as an inevitable part of social life, an unexpected outcome of societal transition, or a result of personal choices and individual values. In more detail, the social and cultural values and attitudes of the family of origin will determine the aspirations of the younger generation to achieve a social position in the society. In real life, the realisation of these aspirations will depend on the economic resources of the family. It means that the simple factor of economic hardships or poverty would not necessarily result in inherited poor social status.

The inheritance of inequalities has a multidimensional nature, where the values, material and non-material resources combine with each other in the particular social environment. The main perceived risk factors for inherited poverty were poor education, living in a peripheral area, unemployment, poor knowledge of the Estonian language, insufficient social capital and poor social networks.

The elite interviews and focus groups revealed that the ascribed social status and limited social mobility is unequally distributed within the society. Some particular social groups have a higher risk of inheritance than others do. The young people from families with a low level of material resources and lower education are more vulnerable to the transmission of inequalities compared with the more wealthy and educated families. The low level of economic and social capital could be caused by several factors and the pattern of inherited inequalities is not very clear. Nevertheless, the single parent families, families with unemployed members, families with many children were the most typical examples presented by the respondents. In addition, the non-Estonians as a highly vulnerable group were revealed by the study.

However, the interviewed young people did not perceive the causal impact of the parental family and social institutions on their current life. The main determining factor of the current socio-economic status in the narratives of the respondents was individual active orientation, willpower and entrepreneurial spirit. Most of the interviewees declared that all relevant decisions have made personally by themselves and all other possible impacts (from parents, peers or institutions) had only had an indirect and minor effect. This understanding in the context of the whole project can be interpreted as a lack (or insignificant effect) of

intergenerational transmission of inequalities. Such an interpretation seems to be valid for the whole generation concerned, not depending on gender, place of origin and other socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Education as a main risk factor of inherited inequalities

Education was considered as a main tool for improving human capital and it therefore plays a key role in the reduction of inherited inequalities. In respect of education several issues were tackled. The interviews revealed that access to education is a main determinant of the future social status for the young generation. The physical access to an educational institution could be limited in the small rural areas, where the long distance and high transportation costs may hinder access to educational opportunities and certainly reduce the opportunities for hobby education. However, access to good quality education is restricted for a significant part of students. Here the main cause for that is the high level of differentiation in the Estonian education system. Division of schools into elite and ordinary schools creates competition between the students where the children from less educated and economically deprived families may more probably find themselves among the losers in the game.

At national level, the unequal educational opportunities for Estonians and non-Estonians were highlighted. Non-Estonians compared to Estonians have less choice in selecting schools, insufficient mastery of the Estonian language bars attendance at Estonian schools.

School drop-out is one of the main problems in the Estonian education system. Drop-out involves mainly boys, who have other interests and whose behaviour is not acceptable for the teachers. Estonia does not have enough information about the family background of the students dropping out, and the interviews did not reveal a correlation between the low family status and the interruption of studies.

Vocational education in Estonia has a poor image among the population. The vocational institutions are least popular in Estonia and the great majority of the students are planning to continue their studies in grammar schools and prepare themselves for university.

Higher education in Estonia is in the process of rapid development. The number of students has increased several times. Most of the students, who have failed in the entrance competition, have to pay for their studies. A system of partially paid higher education tends to increase inequalities in Estonia, the students from poorer families are not able to afford the study fees and the everyday expenditure on food, accommodation and study materials may exceed the level of available resources, which makes the continuation of studies impossible.

Unemployment as a main cause of the transmission of inequalities

The representatives of the national elites indicated that young people are exposed to the relatively high risk of unemployment in Estonia. The risk of unemployment is the highest in the case of students who drop out, but also among those with just primary education. The conducted studies revealed that the link between education and labour market is not sufficient. As a result, unemployment among young people with higher education may increase if the economic growth of the country starts to slow down.

Pärnu and the surrounding region has one of the lowest rates of unemployment and for this particular reason, unemployment was not considered as a relevant risk of disadvantage by the local stakeholders as well as by the interviewed young people. Most of the young respondents have successfully entered the labour market and are working in a field close to the profession obtained from the educational system. Entrance into the labour market was mainly supported by informal social networks (parents, relatives, peers and their relatives) and to a lesser extent by the measures of employment and educational policies (apprenticeship, career counselling, etc).

Policy responses to the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities

Education policy

Both, the representatives of the national elite and local stakeholders considered education policy as a main tool for preventing and relieving the intergenerational transmission of inequalities. The main suggestions made were concentrated in the following policy measures:

- **Improving access to (good-quality) education.** The policies should improve access to competitive education at all levels, which is currently more problematic in rural areas. It could be done by providing necessary funding for all educational institutions, strengthening quality assurance, improving support mechanisms for students studying far from their place of residence (scholarships, dormitories, etc).
- **Improving training of pedagogical staff at the school.** The training and refreshment courses for teachers should first of all concentrate on social pedagogy. The teachers should learn about the socialisation process and the stages of child development. They should notice and deal with the social problems of the children. They have to increase their competencies concerning the provision of social skills. A specific topic in the area of training is the restoration and expansion of the training system for teachers in the non-Estonian schools.
- **Increasing prestige of vocational education.** The role of vocational education should be increased and the prevalence of general grammar school education should be reduced.
- **Reformation of the higher education system.** The state should show more initiative in designing the profile of higher education and try to achieve a higher correlation between demand and supply in the labour market. The system of study benefits needs to be revised. All young people who would like to study should have a access to higher education, even if they lack the appropriate material resources.
- **Implementation of the system of career planning and educational counselling.** The students should have an opportunity to receive advice from specialists to get to know about his/ her personal abilities. They should have neutral and adequate information about the study opportunities and labour force requirements. The implementation of such a system could prevent youth unemployment and contribute to a significant reduction in inherited inequalities.

Labour market policy

The studies conducted in the framework of the project revealed that unemployment is the main single cause of a low social status in society. Thereby, the participation in the labour market could be seen as a relevant resource for breaking the cycle of the inheritance of inequalities. The main problems of reducing the access of young people to the labour market are related to: (1) mismatch between education system and the labour market, which results in the overproduction of certain professions, (2) significant regional disparities in employment opportunities, (3) absence of the strategy for integrating young people into the labour market, (4) low position and 'value' of young people in the labour market (low pay, illegal working), and (5) insufficient social capital of young people.

In the opinion of interviewees, the following policy responses should be applied:

- **Strengthening the link between educational output and labour market needs** by improved co-operation between the employers and educational institutions.
- **Improvement of the system of youth career counselling;**
- **Expansion of active employment services** (apprenticeship, work training, etc) for young people;
- **Increasing the role of the trade unions.**

Social welfare policy

Social policy could be seen as main tool for relieving poverty and social exclusion. However, in the Estonian case, the levels of benefits and social services are not sufficient for ensuring an adequate level of subsistence. An additional set of problems concerns the disproportion between labour and social income – the minimum wage is too low compared with benefit levels which lowers the motivation to work and look for work.

The possible solutions proposed by the respondents concerned an increasing balance between minimum salary and the threshold for social benefits, expanding the good practice of an individual case-management approach in social work and networking between different agencies as well as developing active services targeted towards 'problematic young people'.

The discussion of the vignette in the focus group gave evidence of numerous policy measures that really could be implemented in current socio-economic conditions of the town. The supporting mechanisms for people in need as well as the organisational structures of actors providing assistance is well developed in Pärnu, and the experience of the town could be presented as good practice, which potentially could be implemented in other local communities. As a generalisation of the analysis the following lessons can be drawn:

- **Prevention of transmission of inequalities is easier than the alleviation of the consequences of it.** Thereby the minimisation of environmental risks of (ii of i) and the earliest possible intervention into the problem should be prioritised among other policy responses.
- **Careful analysis of problems related to the transmission of inequalities is a necessary precondition for efficient policy implementation.** The discussion of the vignette revealed that the phenomenon of (ii of i) has a complex character where the different risk factors are causally interrelated. Thereby, the personal strategies focusing on every individual member of the family should be elaborated.
- **Active involvement of the client in the policy process has a crucial importance.** The application of policy measures should be based on the principles of subsidiarity: the first resource is the good will and active participation of the individual; afterwards the potential support from the family and the closest social network should be realised before the formal policy interventions.
- **The formal policy intervention should be balanced.** The analysis revealed that too generous assistance carries a high risk of the formation of a dependency culture. For this reason assistance should not provide the possibility to live only on assistance, but should require a personal contribution as an obligatory entitlement criterion of social assistance.
- **Efficiency of the implemented policy measures could be significantly increased by mobilising different social actors and the formation of networks.** The complex character of (ii of i) could be necessarily considered only by the co-operative involvement of different specialists and social actors.

Evaluation of policies by interviewed young adults

The interviews with young adults in Pärnu revealed no specific policy impacts. Such a result can maybe be explained by the following objective and subjective arguments: (1) rapid development of the policy environment during the time concerned by the study has made it complicated to construct an 'adequate landscape' of policy measures, (2) Estonia's policy environment can be characterised by the low level of social expenditure and the low redistributive effect of policies, (3) the respondents have declared their lack of interest towards policies and politics as well as distrust of public authorities and powerful institutions, (4) prevailing individualistic value orientation and 'self-help ideology' among young people refuted any impact apart from that of personality.

Brief conclusions from each stage of the fieldwork

The main conclusion drawn from the elite interviews: the intergenerational transmission of inequalities in Estonia was perceived mainly as a potential risk rather than a real phenomenon. It was revealed that the most problematic fields of policy-making are concentrated around educational policy. The political elite of Estonia was concerned about the highly differentiated and selective education system which may restrict the opportunities of children from economically less successful families. Low education and insufficient cultural capital of parents are the main negative factors, which can be transferred to the generation of the offspring. Unemployment was perceived as the most important cause directly impacting on inherited inequalities. The employment status is highly correlated with the education level achieved, thereby the main political solutions for the reduction of the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities could be found in integrated measures of employment and education policies.

The focus group interviews confirmed the findings from elite interviews concerning the mechanism of intergenerational inheritance of inequalities. The specific focus was directed at mapping and evaluating existing (as well as potential) policy measures in the local policy environment. The main finding from this stage of the project was that the problems of the intergenerational transmission of inequalities can be solved with the help of existing policy measures – the town has sufficient administrative, financial and professional capacities for dealing with the population in the most vulnerable situation.

The survey data. Pärnu has the highest level of upward social mobility of young people compared to that in all other towns in seven countries involved in the project. The study revealed also that there is no significant

correlation between the social status of the respondent and his/ her parents, which means that the phenomenon of intergenerational transmission of inequality in Estonia was not empirically confirmed by the survey data.

The in-depth interviews provided some explanation to the missing correlation between the social status of parents and children. On one hand, the interviewed young people had problems conducting comparisons between their current economic and social situation and the situation of their parents when the respondents were 14 years old, because of the crucial differences in the social, political and economic background of Estonian society in the early nineties compared to 2006. In addition to the incomparability of societal situations, the former patterns of transmission of material, social and cultural assets from parents to children were transformed and reconstructed according to the new values and requirements of the society, individual adaptation and coping strategies.

Evaluation of the main results by stakeholders

The main results from the project were introduced to the local stakeholders at the final dissemination seminar held in Pärnu on 21 February 2007. The participants in the seminar considered the results as reliable and as relevant material for understanding the socio-economic situation in the country in general and in the particular town. It was agreed that education is a key factor in creating and abolishing the risks of the transmission of inequalities. Education policy should be targeted towards reducing selectivity of the education system and ensuring smooth transition to the labour market. The participants raised the issue of school drop-out, which is apart from other areas in Estonia also a problem in Pärnu. The drop-out can be prevented by increasing flexibility in curricula and teaching methods as well as by early recognition of economic, social and psychological problems of a child and his/her family. Thereby the school social workers and school psychologists fulfil an important role in the prevention of the intergenerational transmission of inequalities.

The results from the survey and in-depth interviews with young adults were widely discussed. In general, the discussion was concentrated mainly around two questions: (1) how to explain the overall positive attitudes of young people concerning their current socio-economic status and further perspectives in comparison with their parents; (2) what could be the reasons that the studies did not reveal the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities. The discussants agreed that the particular period of societal development is an important determinant of the results revealed. In this respect, the question of determination of the age group for the study was highlighted. Some participants suggested that conducting the study among older (30-35 years old) respondents could give a better opportunity to capture the mechanism of transition to early adulthood in more homogenous societal conditions and to reveal the direct transmission of assets from the parents to the children. Some of the participants by referring to socio-psychological regularities of human development, tried to explain the phenomenon by reference to the high self-confidence of young adults, connected to the rejection of external impacts while speaking about their own success in life. Last but not least, young people as active social actors form their own life careers supported by their own networks of peers and friends.

The participants also expressed concrete comments and criticism concerning the results. It was pointed out that the regional disparities between the districts of the city are not as significant as could be understood from the analysis. In fact, the minor differences in economic resources and social status of the residents of different town districts exists but they do not allow conclusions concerning the spatial and social segregation of the town. The participants also did not agree with the statement about the economic differentiation of students in different schools of the town.

3.2.5 Finland

Introduction

According to several statistical indicators and comparative studies, Finland is currently one of the most equal societies in Europe. The Finnish educational system, health care and social security are universalistic in nature. Income inequalities are small compared with most of the European countries. The share of women in the labour markets is high. The number of female members in parliament and in the cabinet of ministers is probably the highest in the world. So are there any reasons to worry about inequalities in Finland?

According to a recent analysis, more than 60,000 Finns are at relative risk of poverty. The economic crisis at the beginning of the 1990's meant a real redistribution of income and wealth. As a result, part of the population are winners whereas others are losers. This division has also had an impact on children and young people. Generally speaking, the economic crisis meant that the position of children and young people deteriorated. After the crisis, childhood poverty has doubled. The share of children living in the lowest income groups has also doubled. In 1990, only 5.4 % of the families with small children belonged to the lowest income decile. In 2003, the share had increased to 9.4 %. Income development in families with small children has been uneven. Incomes in families with only one child have grown substantially. On the other hand, incomes in families with more than three children have only slightly increased, and the income of single mothers has hardly increased at all. The economic crisis has meant a clear polarisation among Finnish families.

The work of the Finnish Profit team shows that issues relating to social inequalities are a really existing problem in contemporary Finnish society, too. This was clearly shown by the interviews of the national reports and local stake holders in the city of Pori.

The intergenerational aspects of equality have not been a popular field of study in Finland in the past ten years. The inequalities that are highlighted in the studies are related less to the inter-generational than to the intra-generational dimension of social mobility. In social sciences there is quite a large body of studies discussing whether there is equality as regards to different matters such as the economy, employment, education, health, power or prestige etc. The studies also cover different groups of people, comparing conditions between occupational or socio-economic groups, between men and women and between population groups living in different regions of the country, and whether levels of equality have been changing over time. In this respect the notion that there is a lack of research in the field of intergenerational inequality seems quite accurate, especially when considering the fact, that equality of opportunity has long been the normative goal of Finnish society. Nevertheless, such studies regarding the intergenerational aspect focus usually on the relationship between various family background characteristics and either economic status (incomes, poverty), employment status, occupational (or social) status or educational attainment.

Despite the empirical evidence for the existence of these patterns of intergenerational inequality transmission in Finland, research findings have not been used very much to challenge policy making. Actual suggestions for appropriate policy responses are even scarcer. However deep or severe the problems of the poor, the long-term unemployed or socially deprived might be, it is quite probable that the intergenerational transmission of these inequalities is considered to affect only minor groups of Finnish people, and therefore it is not seen as a big social or political problem. From this perspective, the idea of inheriting a risk to become poor, unemployed or poorly educated gains more favour than the idea of actually inheriting poverty, unemployment or any other inequality.

The patterns of inequality transmissions, which are considered as the crucial defects of welfare policies and thus the most challenging ones, concern first and foremost the inheritance of poverty, unemployment and impending social deprivation related to these. Secondly, the empirical findings of social inheritance of low educational attainment raise anxiety especially among those who believe in and work for the goal that everybody has an opportunity for education and schooling regardless of his/her socio-economic background. Finnish welfare policies have long been committed to the aim of increasing social mobility and thereby strengthening social equality by providing public education to all on an equal basis, free of charge.

In social science literature there is very little discussion about what kind of special policy programmes or actions should be brought into play to combat the inheritance of inequalities. In general, there seems to be some kind of consensus that something should be done – with unemployment of young individuals in particular – but it is not clear what and how. The lack of this kind of thorough investigation of different policy options may suggest that the intergenerational inheritance of poverty, unemployment and low educational attainment is not seen as a very big social problem in Finland, even though the existence of these hereditary inequalities is recognised and considered as a weak point of the welfare state. It is perhaps not very far-fetched to think that the transmission of these inequalities is after all considered to affect only minor groups of the Finnish population, and thus taking care of these problems should take place mainly within the limits of the current social and welfare policies, just as has been done so far. More practically this means that

besides the viable system of social and welfare policies and the selective actions taken already to overcome poverty, social exclusion and educational inequalities, there seems to be no need for any additional policy programmes or schemes specially destined to overcome the problems of intergenerational inheritance of inequalities.

The case of Pori

The study we conducted in Pori is by its nature a community study. Before the economic crisis in the early 1990s Pori was a flourishing industrial centre. It had a wide range of manufacturing industries, mainly connected with metal production and machine building. During the past 15 years Pori has experienced rapid de-industrialisation. As a consequence unemployment has increased and is today at about 15%, which is twice as high as the average in Finland. So it is quite understandable that we also analyse the effects of de-industrialisation on poverty and inequalities.

We completed our field work Pori in during the autumn of 2005 and the summer of 2006. Focus group interviews were conducted in 2005, the survey was fielded in the spring 2006, and the qualitative interviews were done during the summer. The field work was done in close co-operation with the authorities of the city of Pori. The city administration had a very positive attitude towards the project from our first contacts up to the seminar with local stakeholders in January 2007. The social policy department of the city administration helped us to contact participants for our focus group interviews and all the discussions took place in the city hall. One part of our survey was collected by social workers. The over-all orientation of the city authorities was very positive towards the project.

On the basis of the focus group interviews, survey data and the qualitative interviews, we can say that in general young adults are coping quite well in Pori. In fact youth unemployment is a little lower than on average. Today there are also substantial educational opportunities in the Pori region. Housing conditions follow the general Finnish pattern. Pori has experienced deep structural changes during the past 20 years, which have caused also major economic deprivation in the region, but during the past few years we have seen a clear recovery. So in the spring 2006 there was a feeling of growing optimism on the whole.

In general our respondents think that they are doing somewhat better than their parents have done when they were at the same age as they are now. The interviewees express a sense of moderate success rather than a feeling of deprivation or degradation in comparison to their parents. However, when we interpret the results, we have to take into account the fact that Finnish culture has a strong normative ethos to get by on one's own. This means that in public people try to keep up the façade of success and well-being even though they have serious problems to cope with. The Finns generally, and in particular men, do not easily express publicly that they have personal problems. This is, probably, one reason why our team did not succeed in reaching those young adults, particularly males, who were the most socially excluded.

We would have used other methods too to get in touch with people in marginalized positions. In social sciences there is ample experience to show that those who participate in normal postal surveys are in good or in average positions. Finding the really poor young adults in Pori would have needed a lot of effort to contact many different actors.

Generally, the interviewees consider that they have more and better opportunities for achievements in life, i.e. better educational and occupational opportunities and career prospects than their parents had when they were young adults. The educational opportunities have indeed increased. Especially the number of tertiary institutions has increased. Also the financial support by the state for students is much better than it was for instance 30 years ago. Thus, as regards the macrostructures of society, the replies given by young adults in Pori support the view of a positive development.

When asked about their overall life achievements, our respondents come to think of their educational level, employment or occupational status and the material well-being in general. Even though some have not achieved any employment or permanent status yet, they, nevertheless, consider they are having more opportunities ahead of them than their parents had in their youth. In spite of their current economic or other personal problems, young adults see their future in a positive light. They have a strong sense that they will overcome all these problems.

A desire to achieve something in life and a determination to realise their intentions are the major factors behind the positive life achievements of our respondents who regarded themselves as survivors or as winners in comparison to their parents. The interviewees had very positive attitudes towards the education system and their career opportunities. They also valued the Finnish welfare system. It is, however, the individual contribution that is crucial here, because it is often assumed that opportunities already exist and that supportive measures are available for everybody who needs them.

In Finland, important transitions within the education system occur at two points. The first is the decision whether young people will continue their studies in the general upper secondary school or in the vocational upper secondary school. The second occurs when the young students graduating from secondary education choose whether they should apply for a study place at the tertiary level of education, to continue their studies in further vocational education at the secondary or post-secondary level or alternatively enter the labour market. In principle there are enough study places for the entire cohort, but there are much fewer of the most valued places at the tertiary level than there are applicants. As higher education is popular, there is strong competition and access to universities is restricted.

About half of our interviewees had chosen to study in the general upper secondary school and half in the vocational upper secondary school. In most cases, the first transition from the lower to the upper secondary level of education has occurred without any major difficulties. Particularly those who had chosen the general pathway express their satisfaction about their choice and the transition. Those who succeeded to move on to study at the tertiary level of education, are basically rather satisfied with their educational career and the qualifications they have already received or are gaining at present. However, there are also those who say that they are lost or have been lost at some point of their career before finding their own pathways.

Transition from school to work very much depends on the general economic and labour market situation. At this moment youth unemployment in the Pori region is not any serious problems. Most of our interviewees are employed. They are also quite satisfied with their employment situation. Those who are unemployed are planning to continue their studies. The biggest problem at the moment is the fact that there are only fixed-term employment opportunities for those who are entering the labour market. This means that young adults are faced with insecurity, which has a strong effect on their entire life.

Moving from the parental home to one's own home happens at an early stage in Finland. Young adults move at about the age of 20. In most cases this is the point when young adults either continue their studies at the tertiary level or they start to work after vocational training.

One important finding of the field study in Pori is that parents' social position is a weak determinant of a child's social position. At the societal level we have still a lot of social mobility in Finland. Investment in higher education has opened opportunities for children from working class families, too. The Finnish education system and the social security system play an important role in providing equal opportunities to children from different social backgrounds. Many of the respondents tend to think that they have all the opportunities in their reach which their parents were lacking. Of course, social problems are not all connected to poor living conditions. Alcoholism or lack of care may also occur in middle-class families with good living conditions.

Conclusions:

Reforms needed in social and welfare policy: more holistic approach. The political actors who we interviewed find concern in both pillars of the social security system in Finland: in income transfers and in welfare services. To summarise briefly, in the discussions with politicians, three themes were raised above all others. The first one is about developing a more holistic (comprehensive) approach within the policies at every level of both income transfers and services systems. The second theme is closely related to the former and deals with the activation of people (rebuilding identity) instead of just reallocating or redistributing money. The third theme concerns emphasising early intervention, which again is strongly connected to the first one, thus stressing the importance of multi-professional work in helping people.

The second theme of activation can be read in several comments and replies given by political actors. At first, this comes up when discussing the adequate level of the income support. Many of the political actors do consider that the level of minimum security – both the labour market support and social assistance – is too low for a decent standard of life. However – and what is more important – they speak more about “cutters” and mismatches between the different elements of minimum security, which makes it difficult for people to behave rationally and earn a little money without losing social welfare benefits. Thus, the biggest problem here is not the adequacy of support, but the risk is of combining various parts of minimum security in the wrong way, i.e. in such a way that the young people are not supported enough to be able to help themselves. In some comments, there is the strong belief that the dependence on income support increases because there are these incentive traps in the system.

Parallel to the themes of activation, self-help and incentives, fostering and improving proactive services are also stressed, such as increasing home help, vocational rehabilitation and creating social networks, social enterprises and other supportive surroundings, which might prevent the social exclusion and more serious marginalization. As one of our respondents highlights, it is not enough that one is given money, but one has to be a member of some meaningful network or community in order to get a sense of belonging to society. Furthermore, all the work with basic care is seen of utmost importance, because only in this way it is possible to find out what is wrong with the person and what motivates him or her. The starting point is to (re)build the person’s identity: “thinking that one is not a drug abuser or an unemployed person, but one’s identity is totally something else”. Thus disadvantaged people should be helped to find goals in their life that are realistic and give hope.

Some of the political actors bring up the need for a more holistic approach in social and welfare policy, which they think is much lagging behind the labour market and educational policies that are given far more resources. The more holistic approach would mean firstly, that people are treated as “whole persons” and not just labour market actors or economic actors. Secondly, it implies that educational and labour market measures are not enough with regard to combating Ilofi. If a person has been unemployed for a longer time and is experiencing a crisis, he needs other kinds of support and services than that of signing on the dole or attending courses. Unemployment may not even be the most serious problem. If the person is going through difficult mental or drinking problems, these have to be worked out before he/she can start to go to work or on training courses. Accordingly, there should be more resources for welfare- and social policies, since these sectors and their workers bear the most serious and heaviest burden.

In several comments made by the political actors, there is a reference to a programme called “Early Intervention”. This is a project coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in which the central administrative sectors as well as social organisations operating in the fields of child welfare, substance abuse and mental healthcare taking part. The aim of the programme is to improve the ability of service systems to intervene at an early stage in the problems of children, young people and families, helping them cope.

The problem of Ilofi is more severe and more difficult to solve than before.

When asked how problematic they consider the question of intergenerational inequalities in Finland today, most of our interviewees, both at national and local level; respond that the problem is a serious one. As many of them conceive the situation, the problem of intergenerational inequalities does not concern so many people in Finland, but those who are concerned with it are in a very weak position in society. Thus, while quantitatively speaking the problem is not so big, qualitatively speaking it is a difficult and “deep” problem to tackle, and therefore the question of Ilofi should be regarded as an important social and political problem that needs to be discussed more.

To some extent our interviewees share the view that people facing the intergenerational inequalities such as poverty and unemployment today are much worse off than people facing similar problems twenty years ago. There are several reasons for political actors to think like that. Firstly, the problems today are much more complicated and more difficult to solve than those previously. Problems are often multidimensional and cumulative in their nature so that they do not have only one cause or symptom that can be treated, but multiple ones. That is why there are simultaneously many difficulties to be overcome or many illnesses to be cured, and the traditional tools and methods of the welfare system cannot easily cope with all of them.

Secondly, some of the political actors consider that in Finland today, there are fewer opportunities for social and occupational mobility than there used to be in the recent past. Thus, with regard to social advancement,

the prospects for Finns are worse today than twenty or thirty years ago. For example, after suffering social or economic loss of position, it is much more difficult to get back up again. There are notably fewer jobs on offer in the manufacturing sector of the economy than before. On the other hand, the majority of jobs that are available in the service sector today do not bring the same 'lifetime' security and advantages for a person with working-class background as the traditional 'smokestack industry' brought in the seventies (and still in the eighties). One of our interviewees notes that as soon as the big "baby boom" generations born after the war will retire, there will be more jobs on offer for those with higher educational qualifications. Instead, people with lower educational qualifications or without any qualifications will have even worse prospects than they ever had.

Thirdly, the problem is regarded as a serious because the prospects of Ilofi are seen in general quite pessimistically. In this view, which many of our respondents share, the intergenerational inequalities will rather remain unchanged or increase than decrease in the near future. As it was put by two of our interviewees, the problem of Ilofi has been "worked out once in Finland" or "kept somehow in control until today", but now it is "getting out of hand again". Thus, even though the problem of Ilofi is not very big yet at the moment, it will get bigger or worse in future. These statements refer to two kinds of perceptions of the future of Ilofi. In the first one, the problem is getting bigger and "out of control", because of growing inequalities in the Finnish society. In the second view, the inequalities are not so much increasing, but the problem is worsening or deepening, because it is taking on entirely new dimensions that are not treated solely via the traditional methods of welfare state policies.

Children of socially excluded and unemployed people with multidimensional problems are at the biggest risk of inheriting disadvantages. When asked about the groups of children and young people, who have the most limited access to social and economic advancement in Finland, the answers given by political actors are quite clear and unanimous. According to our respondents the children of socially excluded people and the children of long-term unemployed people with many problems (social, mental and physical) simultaneously are at the biggest risk of becoming disadvantaged themselves, and therefore have the most limited opportunities for any kind of success in their lives.

Quite often inherited inequalities are connected with long-term unemployment or other kinds of social exclusion, which, when lasting for long enough, usually produce new problems; these may be at first financial problems and after a while possibly problems of substance abuse, mental problems or physical illnesses. Apart from these background characteristics, which are often thought to offer a "fertile" breeding ground for the appearance of inherited inequalities, there were few observations made by political actors about the effects of homelessness, poor local surroundings or area deprivation.

To conclude, Ilofi in Finland is foremost a political issue. To help young adults who are in the risk of marginalisation and social exclusion needs a holistic approach and targeted resources. All depends on the political will at national level. Only then can local actors implement the necessary programmes.

3.2.6 Italy

The National Elite view

At national level the Padua research group has carried out 15 semi-structured interviews with political, economic and NGOs elites. To the interviewees the topic of the intergenerational transmission of inequalities was not very clear; in other words this theme is not taken much into consideration by the national elite. The interviews were mainly about the analysis of the present state of inequalities in Italy, about their causes and the policies to reduce them. With regard to this last topic, the interviewed people did not know much about policies and about the results they could lead to. It is also important to note that none of the interviewed people used "social class" as a category of analysis.

In general, they tend to focus on their own specific field of work/intervention, showing gaps of knowledge. Politically right-wing people believe that inequalities should be reduced, but not eliminated, because they encourage competitiveness; on the other hand, politically left-wing people argue that the return of old inequalities is a topic they can use to attack their political adversaries.

More recently, some inequalities seem to have been overcome as the education opportunities have increased; however, educational levels are still low and for many interviewed people this is a core problem for labour mobility. People with a low income or living in the countryside are considered to have fewer opportunities to gain high educational levels. Cultural and educational levels are generally considered to affect the transmission of inequalities

The interviewed people do not believe that information technologies affect the transmission of inequalities

In relation to what people think of opportunities and ways to overcome the Ilofl, the interviewed elites seem to be clearly divided. There is no model society and no necessity to cancel social inequalities.

As regards what people think of policies and programmes relating to the transmission of inequalities, we got very different answers. It can be assumed that the opinions of the interviewed reflect opinions in our society in general. Present political leaders (centre-right-wing) try not to interfere in social life; on the other hand, the left-wing elites are demanding new laws in order to reduce social differences.

The opinion of the people we interviewed is that labour market policies as well as welfare policies need to be changed because they are inefficient. However, it is not clear in which direction the change should go.

Social Structure of Rovigo

The Italian research group chose Rovigo as the town for their study. Rovigo is a medium size town with 50.000 inhabitants, located in the north east of Italy. It is a “particularly relevant typical case” because even if the city is part of a rich and developed region (Veneto), it is economically and socially deprived. During the recent years the town experienced some improvements, but the economic crisis that involved Italy since 2001 - and in particular the north east part of the country - had very strong consequences in Rovigo. Between 1999 and 2002 the town of Rovigo was involved in an experimental and innovative project called “Reddito minimo di inserimento” (Minimum Income for Placement) in order to fight against poverty and social exclusion. The project involved 39 municipalities in Italy and Rovigo was one among 5 towns chosen in Northern Italy.

The unemployment rate in Rovigo is 6.42% (Istat 2001), the female unemployment rate is 8.93%, while the region of Veneto has 4.11% of unemployment (5.83% female). Rovigo has the highest unemployment rate in the Region; we have to compare these data with the lowest activity rate in the region: 51.48% (female 41.93), while in Veneto it is 52.51% (female 41.14%). Also the youth unemployment rate is the highest in the region: Rovigo has 22.01% (25.33% female) while Veneto has 11.02% (female 13.06%). Finally the occupation rate is 48.17% (female 38.18%), while within the region it reaches 50.36% (female 38.74%) (Istat Censimento 2001).

The point of view of Local Stakeholders

The research team has generally observed some curiosity and interest in the topic of the reproduction of the social inequalities by the local stakeholders. Unlike the experts contacted at national level, the ones at local level have demonstrated more availability to take part in the debate and greater competences as to the analysis of the local situation. The research team has invited 40 persons who were particularly competent on the subject of the research: local policy makers (chairmen and town and provincial councillors of the different political coalitions), members of non-profit organizations (both Catholic and secular with different aims), and finally social workers (with competences both purely social and in relation to health)

The intergenerational transmission of inequalities in Rovigo is considered in quite varied ways by the local stakeholders. Almost all initially denote some difficulty in considering the phenomenon as a problem; rather what is considered is the poverty which affects various social classes. The participants refer to the economic and social context from a historical point of view, complaining about the chronic unemployment which has characterized this area. In fact it is a town involved marginally in the economic development which has characterized Veneto in the last thirty years. As some participants especially point out, this is an area where the presence of the sectors considered mature, such as the textile and the clothing, is imposing. The crisis of these sectors, generally labour intensive and with relations of sub-supplying, tends to increase unemployment rates, in particular female unemployment.

The size of the town, with little over 50 thousand people, constitutes the chance both to apply to the community in case of need and to monitor more closely its members. In particular, in some people's opinion the small number of entrepreneurs and managers prevents the formation of a real social elite.

A common factor pointed out by many local stakeholders is that the increase in social mobility typical for the period between the 1960s and 1980s is declining. Compared to more secure times, nowadays the reforms of mobility seem to be much more casual. If 10 or 20 years ago social mobility was a diffuse phenomenon and many people could aspire to it lawfully, nowadays this mobility seems to have stopped. This change is due to two phenomena: mass schooling and the precariousness of work relations. In fact on the one hand the diffusion of high levels of education has caused a relative devaluation of the qualifications which do not succeed in assuring access to the labour market at high levels any more. On the other hand the precariousness of work relations affects the new labour market in a noticeable way. However, those who have a certain social capital in terms of rich and varied networks of acquaintances in the job market are the ones who can enjoy more opportunities to find work. So the processes of inclusion and social mobility are slowed down by the advance of the precariousness which widens social inequalities.

The interviewees think that the intergenerational transmission of inequalities is a social problem which has to be fought by public institutions. Local elites clearly point out that a process of inversion of the social mobility is being made; unlike the parents' generation who has experienced a strong upward mobility, nowadays the children remain in stagnation or risk slipping lower socially. One of the main causes which have facilitated the mobility of the parents' generation has been the strong effect of better schooling, which has increased the level of education, so reducing the reproduction of inequalities; while the reversal of this trend is due to the precariousness of work.

The interviewees perceive the town of Rovigo as a community where social groups are integrated and social control is very strong. Inequalities are interpreted as individual discomforts due to a whole range of negative events happening in the course of the persons' lives independent of their social group. As to the intergenerational transmission of inequalities, the local elite believe that young people today live under social conditions which are profoundly different from those of their parents; in fact they are seen to have much higher levels of education, but they have to face new factors which restrict them in their personal and social realization, above all the fact that they cannot practice the professions corresponding to their educational qualifications or their hopes.

Many members of the local elite point out the importance of social networks in the mechanism of production and reproduction of the inequalities; in fact the lack of a network of community support can become a source of social discomfort. Also they link the intergenerational transmission of social discomfort with the cultural level of families, believing that the whole family has a high risk if getting into poverty when its cultural level is low. So the reproduction of conditions of social discomfort is due to the interaction of several factors rooted in the social context of Rovigo, and these have an effect on the situations of families and individuals which are already problematic.

Some of the local elites connect the social inequalities to the social group to which individuals belong, and they point out new forms of vulnerability caused by the introduction of work flexibility, which has deepened precariousness and social insecurity in Italy. Besides they point out the problems of unemployment and precarious employment which have hit many graduates of both social and natural science subjects.

The number of social groups affected by the intergenerational transmission of inequalities is increasing. Divorce and separation, the loss of the breadwinner's job, an extended illness of people with temporary contracts lead to a condition of extreme discomfort for the family which can be reflected in the children. These are the people described as "the new poor" or at risk, such as people experiencing long term unemployment, often having old parents and not much education. A particular category can be found among migrants. For migrants, the residence permit which is now connected to the work contract is the main cause of inequality. The long-term life plans of immigrants and their children depend in the last instance on the existence of a work contract, and when they are without one, they are deprived of any rights and become irregular. In addition, they experience further inequality at work, since immigrants are segregated into the most tiring, unhealthy and low-paid jobs. The lack of the right to vote is another serious injustice and cause of social exclusion, since the interests of the immigrants who live and work in Italy become invisible for politicians.

However, according to local elites the social groups more at risk of impoverishment in Rovigo are:

- families where parents are separated, single parent and single income families;
- women with little education who have lost their job because of the textile crisis;
- well educated young people (very diffused in the town of Rovigo), who cannot realise their hopes for adequate employment and thus are obliged to look for jobs in richer urban centres, such as Padua and Bologna;

- disabled people;
- men over-fifty years who are out of work and have a family to support;
- migrants.

Proposals:

The policies suggested by interviewees to combat the reproduction of social vulnerabilities and to give support in situations of discomfort are first of all [integration of the private and of the public in a network of local welfare](#) able to sustain people who are faced by the changing labour market. The network is produced among all the subjects who cooperate in the conception, planning and implementation of these policies. It has to be pointed out that the network is now a concept shared by the subjects concerned with welfare policies, while the practices in setting up the network are still far from being realised. In certain cases the network is considered as a substitute for the community which, as it seems, cannot adapt to the social changes.

With regard to the educational field, the local stakeholders think that a reform of the system has to be carried out, intended for [the reduction of the gap between education and the employment world](#), in order to facilitate the access to work for young people. [Housing policies](#) are also necessary, since housing is one of the main problems for migrant people as well as for the natives. The inadequacy of the social policies is due to the fact that interventions are short-lived, sporadic and they not consolidated over time.

At institutional level, apart from measures for import support, many local stakeholders point out [the importance of professional training and re-qualification](#). Such measures are currently in existence but only partly known to possible recipients; moreover they are implemented by different agencies, such as university administration, the Region, the Province or the Town.

Institutional policies should be activated to revive industrial activity, not only through plans aimed at reducing labour costs for enterprises, but also at increasing securities for workers. A measure which enterprises should adopt to link economic development to the social one means that social responsibility must be developed.

Some participants point out that [public intervention becomes effective if it is activated in the presence of subjects who have a substantial social capital](#). In situations characterized by precarious social relations, public intervention becomes a form of relief with little success to alleviate the discomfort effectively. On the other hand people complain fact that public policies are often effective on the basis of defined plans. Such plans, as in the case of the latter, are short-term and their limited duration has a negative effect on the ability to modify situations of discomfort or poverty.

All the local stakeholders point out the heterogeneity and the high number of subjects who take part in the planning and in the implementation of policies intended to overcome inequalities. With regard to this a basic role is played by [information, which has to be very clear and detailed](#). As the town chairman for social policies explains, the population is often not able to understand the various bodies which supply services or benefits and sometimes they don't apply to any of them, since they consider the current measures humiliating.

Apart from information, measures active not only at local but also regional level have to be developed and implemented. The lack of [coordination](#) caused by the multiplicity of agents taking part, sometimes makes the measures ineffective. The changes undergone by the Italian welfare system, with the system of delegation from the central State to the territorial bodies more and more emphasized, do not seem to be effective in the direction of policy implementation, since there is a lack of substantial funding, and this leads to the fragmentation of interventions.

The point of view of young people

In the third year of the research we carried out some interviews with young people in Rovigo. These showed that Rovigo family members often seem to be attached to a perception of social mobility, whose cognitive frame is to be found in what may be defined – both metaphorically and literally – as the world of “concrete and steel”. This world is mainly located within a model of “the professions”, where the idea of “flexibility” itself is not only a logical contradiction, but the tangible sign of limited achievement in employment and of rare social and professional success.

The scenario where individual careers, beginning with an accreditation guaranteed by a diploma, started at the lowest level of an “office” and gradually went up and up through the hierarchies, has abruptly changed in most situations in today's world of work. All this implies a radical change in the strategies aimed at improving one's socio-economic conditions. Paradoxically, in fact, the typical features of social mobility

today are exactly the opposite of the usual perceptions of parents. Parents considered the improvement of their own socio-economic conditions as a synonym for “tranquillity and security”, whereas for young social actors the opportunity for social advancement is given only provided that it forces the individual to a permanent challenge which inevitably includes a certain degree of uncertainty; in this frame, the individual micro-business has to confront any other individual micro-business fighting without mercy. From this point of view, the social actor openly considers the search for economic stability – and the resulting job security – as the main elements which prevent him or her from achieving upward social mobility.

In most cases, indeed, the choice of a vocational school rather than a more academic school providing education in the sciences or classical learning is the specific behaviour of families with little cultural capital, with few books at home, no experience of the theatre, visits to museums and places of culture in general. The drastic separation between the world of culture and the professional world is implicitly consistent with such a vision of the world. Anything that cannot be translated in the immediate or in the near future into revenue or profit is perceived as superfluous.

Other aspects, external to the family, appear to have an irrelevant influence on the choice for the children’s future schooling, unless they coincide exactly with the family’s point of view. The young social actors also seem not to express any autonomy in the decision of their own future. The choice made by the family seems to fully satisfy the young people, who declare to identify themselves with the “pragmatic” decision suggested by the family and imposed upon them at the same time.

To summarize, apart from some rare exceptions, young people living in Rovigo, are on the same wavelength as their families and tend to consider the future jobs prospects offered by certain schools as the main focus of their major educational choices. The focus of their expectations, therefore, is a job that is guaranteed and able to improve their social and economic status. Finally, for most of them, the major cognitive horizon seems to be represented by the ambition of upward social mobility. Choosing a professional school is seen as the quickest way to get to this goal. But the transition to the world of work will present most of them with surprising implications.

The transition from the school world to the world of work appears to be basically characterised by an overall homogeneity, regardless of the social conditions of each social actor. Nevertheless, this in no way means equal opportunities for everybody; on the contrary, the above illustrates a deep-rooted socio-economic pattern that tends to magnify social differences more and more. The transition to the world of work, moreover, mostly takes place through private channels, which are generally related to personal knowledge or friendship. In the light of this consideration, it becomes more evident that the social actor’s status is, even more clearly, a main determinant in his or her personal destiny.

Autonomous life experiences of the young people living in Rovigo are in most cases temporary and related either to the study period outside of the city, or to post-university courses and practices. In almost every case, even the transfers made necessary by new work experiences fail to become a chance for the social actors to fully emancipate themselves from their original family and turn out rather to be just a parenthesis whose duration will be limited to the length of training. The few cases in which the social actors reach autonomy are far from being representative of the most common and frequent condition of young people in the province of Rovigo. Lastly, we cannot consider young people who start to live autonomously but still rely on their original family for support as being truly autonomous. Instead of speaking of full autonomy in these cases, it seems more appropriate to consider further social differentiation between the numerous social actors examined. Those who can rely on a higher family income usually enjoy apparent autonomy, and they will be able to go and live alone, whereas all the others tend to remain with their parents.

The family seems to play an increasingly relevant role, a concrete element that conditions the future of the social actors. It is no accident that our interviews do not dedicate much space to this issue. The institutions which could help here seem not to exist; there is apparently no trace of social policies in this direction. On the contrary, the trend appears to be exactly the opposite: the institutions tend to fully offload any responsibility about the children’s life onto their families. And the children, having to cope with an increasingly precarious and uncertain world of work, do not even seem to realize this. They are instead inclined to consider their bonds with their original families as something steady and unchangeable.

The educational training courses and welfare policies overall have a negligible effect on the lives of social actors; they seem in no way to affect or improve their real chances of upward social mobility. If we do not take into account those social actors who benefit from the protection of their families, who thus are of course able to be in career training programmes for longer, the only real chance of upward social mobility is represented for all the other young people purely by their individual ability to assert themselves and find their place in the world.

3.2.7 Lithuania

General remarks

Social transformations occurring in the political, economic and social life since the 1990s have inspired many scientists and researchers to start analyzing social issues, such as: social inequality and exclusion, marginalization and polarization, social differentiation and deprivation etc. However, there is still little analysis produced on long-term inequality, including the patterns of inequality transmission in Lithuania. Research discussing the issues of social stratification usually only briefly touches the risk caused by already existing or probable long-term inequality. More thorough research has been done in the general analysis of poverty, social exclusion, marginalization and social policy applied to overcome them. So, the research done within the PROFIT project created possibilities to look deeper into the Ilofi phenomenon and discover new opportunities to overcome problems at the national, local, organizational and individual level.

Perception of inheritance of social inequality and poverty

The respondents agree that the poverty and social exclusion have an inheritance aspect. They acknowledge that the family as one of the main social institutions is a very important subject/actor influencing the emergence of and solution to many social issues. The family and its characteristics make a crucial impact on inequality inheritance, especially if we have in mind 'problem/risk families' – families where such social practice as alcoholism, drug abuse, violence, lack of common values, etc. are dominant. Parental status and dominant ethical attitudes determine child's chances of reaching a higher social status in society than their parents. Restrictions in the problem families basically are related to dominant value attitudes in the family who do not develop the child's improvement and intension to reach higher education and status; insufficient financial resources and genetics were also mentioned. National politicians forecast that social inequality from generation to generation would be reduced in Lithuania. They related these improvements to the economic development in Lithuania after joining the European Union, the development of new technologies and reforms in state policy and special programmes. A lot of focus-group respondents noticed that the evidence of the phenomenon was not so obvious in Jonava, when comparing the present situation with the time three or four years ago, but they stressed that new forms of very deep exclusion are emerging, with the appearance of 'rubbish heap' people, begging children etc.

Factors and processes generating the Intergenerational Inheritance of Social Inequalities

The participants in the study named the factors for the transmission of social inequalities through generations. These factors can be divided into the following groups: political, economic, regional, pedagogic and psychological.

Politicians noted inadequate *state policy* as the dominant reason for the development of inequality. The gap between authority and the people, and the pursuit of people's own interests influence the formation of policy directed towards the property differentiation. The *dominant political parties* in parliament is a very important factor, determining which political parties have strong influence on government formation, what kind of priorities and attitudes will be dominant in policy, since *essential positions in committees are given not on the basis of competence, but of political affiliation*. The lack of political will enacting appropriate solutions was mentioned as one of the factors preventing the reduction of social inequality.

Standardized state policy is not flexible and sensitive to local problems, either. Respondents agree that *central and local authorities* have to cooperate and pay attention to each other's limits of competence, and some of them single out that they miss effective and constructive cooperation. The respondents mentioned various reasons, which, according to them, create obstacles to effective cooperation between these two levels of state authorities: there is no mutual dialogue between the national government and local authorities. Among the problems are inadequate perceptions of the limits of competence of both of these authorities towards each other; the defectiveness of a centralized tax system; the absence of legislation and authorities responsible for cooperation; the lack of human and financial resources to maintain cooperation and so on.

Most respondents pointed out that the main reasons and processes motivating the transfer of social inequality from generation to generation lie *in peculiarities of post-communist state development*, which after 15 years have almost no new traditions. According to the respondents, the present situation can be seen as the sequence of 50 years of Soviet occupation, which formed public attitudes, as people used not to feel

personal responsibility in the family and work; thus the Soviet way of thinking impedes different processes of progress in the state, economic development, and on the person level – adaptability to change, and this results in the development of social disjuncture.

As one of the peculiarities of post-Soviet state development we can see as the *switch from planned to market economy*. It has been mentioned that privatization was implemented not in democratic ways and this effected social differentiation as well as the formation of social inequality.

One more reason for the reproduction of low social status mentioned by the respondents is the **specific geographic location**. Families living in *villages/small towns* have few chances to integrate into society successfully. This is determined by the high poverty levels in these regions, the village environment (lack of accessibility of new technologies, the general economic level of the region), low quality of education in rural schools and specific dominant variables like alcohol dependency. Focus-group respondents noticed that Jonava and its district, being close to the big and relatively expensive city of Kaunas, are attractive to people in risk groups, i.e. those with lower qualification, long-term unemployed etc. The respondents identified the formation of the phenomenon as so-called *poverty concentration* in the research literature. There is a settlement close to Jonava called Rukla³ where the poverty concentration has been particularly marked. Favourable conditions to transmit poverty, problematic social practices and low social status have dominated here for quite some time.

Low qualification, unemployment and poverty were mentioned as very important factors. It would be too artificial to characterize these reasons as separate ones, because they are interrelated. Low qualification determines long-term unemployment and finally leads to complex poverty: in terms of economic, social, value, psychological conditions. All this has an influence on the application of twisted values in family life and the education of children.

The family as one of the main social institutions is a very important subject/actor influencing the emergence of and solution to many social issues. The family and its characteristics make a crucial impact on inequality inheritance, especially if we have in mind ‘problem/risk families’ – families where such social practices as alcoholism, drug abuse, violence, perverted values, etc. are dominant. Families with small incomes or unemployed families with limited financial resources and inadequate traditions and attitudes act as restrictions to the child’s aspirations.

Family role inheriting poverty and social inequality

The financial and psychological atmosphere of the respondent’s parental family has a direct impact on achievements in education, the labour market and social status.

In most cases, if the family is not asocial, the parents who have no higher education supported and motivated their children to learn. They indoctrinated their children with the value of education as a way to a better life. In most cases, parents opposed the children’s wish to choose a vocational school, which was based on the desire, “*to finish the vocational school more quickly and go to work*”, but also on the influence of friends. Respondents emphasized, that if parents had allowed – they would not have quit secondary school. Parents helped not only during school-time, but also during time at university. Lots of respondents had to move to other cities for their studies. At this time material support from parents was very important, however, not always sufficient.

In-depth interview respondents, who grew up in asocial (alcohol-addicted) families or in boarding-schools, have not felt family support. Even though at the beginning they learned quite well, later they lost their motivation, were playing truant or left the school. Problems in the family directed them towards “experimentation”, not towards learning, self-expression and the search for better results. Bad financial situation at the parental home meant that the respondents left secondary school early and continued their education at vocational school. They referred to their apprenticeship during their vocational training as their first earnings.

When analyzing the life of respondents who had family support and motivation to learn, it showed that their life became a little more successful, compared to respondents who grew up in asocial families or boarding-schools. The aspiration to education and life goals of the first group of respondents are higher, their

³ Rukla was a military campus of the Soviet army where about 15.000 Soviet soldiers were located. After the Soviet army left Lithuania, a lot of empty houses were left by the officers. Rukla is still used as a military campus where the Lithuanian military corps are located. However, most army personnel come to Rukla for work. They usually live in Jonava with a better developed social, cultural, economic infrastructure or in other big cities. Rukla is mostly inhabited by social benefit receivers.

social relations are more successful, and they see the future more optimistic. Respondents who originated in low status families and experienced difficulties in their childhood often mentioned problems in their parental family such as: alcoholism, divorce, unemployment, housing and food problems, and poor relationships among family members as well. They were up against problems such as lack of personal aspirations, low education, insufficient income, ineffective state support and the generally problematic economic situation in the country. However, the role of the family seems to be one of the most important factors.

Education role overcoming II of I

The vast majority of respondents agreed that educational policy plays a crucial role in overcoming II of I. However, most of respondents indicated that the Lithuanian government pays too little attention to educational problems and does not regard education as a priority in overcoming social differentiation, II of I and other social problems.

Almost all respondents' critically evaluated the *educational reform* and educational policy aimed at decreasing II of I. The fact that educational system was reformed by replicating a *Western model* which does not suit local traditions and conditions was also criticized by respondents. *Restructuring* of schools provided Lithuania with a better choice of different schools, including a range of secondary schools, colleges, etc. On the other hand, this caused many problems mentioned by most of the respondents. The closure of rural schools had dramatic consequences on the community development, since this meant the loss of meeting places, cultural centres, the absence of teachers, libraries and so on. In addition, in some remote areas, there is a problem of transport to school, which leaves rural children without the possibility to get to school. Even such relatively positive examples of the reform as newly *established 'gymnasiums'*, which provide quality education, also have shortages, as they are barely accessible for those children who are from disadvantaged groups, including poor families and/or rural areas, etc. *Profiled education* enabling students to focus on one subject area also restricts children's possibilities to change their minds in the course of their studies and focus on a different subject area. Respondents were concerned that such a situation causes problems of non-attendance, dropout and increasing social exclusion and II of I.

Very often *school* was mentioned *as supporting social inequality*. The experience of in-depth interview respondents at school is closely linked to family situation. Some of them did not feel discrimination from teachers or from schoolmates. Sometimes parents were able to let children go on excursions or attend various extra-curricular activities. Some respondents themselves, sometimes encouraged by their family members, never spoke with teachers and schoolmates about the real situation in the family, aiming to give the impression of average family life. This shows that respondents did not have trust in schools and teachers. However, sometimes, even when the hard family situation of a learner was known, the school did not try to deal with the situation positively. In some schools classes were formed according to parental status creating the feeling of exclusion for the children from poorer families. Another segment of respondents, who lived in asocial families or boarding-schools, were faced with negative attitudes by classmates and especially teachers. It showed that children were ranked according their parents' status. Respondents pointed out that teachers disliked children whose parents were alcoholics and never disguised this. Often such children felt unfairly treated or given lower grades compared to their classmates; they also had fewer chances to experience success in the learning process. Respondents who grew up in asocial families or had cold relationship with their parents, reacted extremely sensitively to negative behaviour and, at the same time, were very receptive to the kindness and warmth of teachers. Negative behaviour of teachers caused demotivation and increased non-attendance. The teachers' strong personality, regularity and humanity had major educational influences, acting as resource to motivate the learner and stimulate major interest in the subject. Unfortunately, only very few teachers were mentioned and only in isolated instances.

Almost every respondent strongly emphasized *regional differences* in the Lithuanian educational system. It is assumed that urban schools have better teachers, are better equipped and provide better quality education than rural ones. Lack of IT skills is strongly related with the poorer rural family situation. Families living in rural areas usually cannot afford buying all teaching materials necessary for their children, providing them with extra classes or support them during their further studies. All these factors construct different starting positions for young people later in the labour market.

An inconsistency between study programmes and reality was also mentioned when discussing *higher education policy* in Lithuania. The majority of respondents indicated that there is a lack of measures to equalize the opportunities for young people on this level. The politicians and experts also pointed to the lack of adult education. It is problematic when people who need knowledge in business development, political science, accountancy etc. cannot get it because of financial reasons.

Proposals:

It is crucial to improve the efficacy of educational policy, first of all by setting *long-term goals* and implementing the measures seeking concrete results. In order to equalize the opportunities for all, persons regardless of their social status, income, etc. should be of value to the state, its servants and society as a whole.

It is important to extend the functions of schools and pay more attention to *extracurricular activities*. Schools should provide children with the possibility to spend their free time in an interesting way, do sports, prepare their homework, and have dinner and even overnight accommodation, if necessary. The improvement of teachers' qualifications is also one of the suggestions, as they should not be mere teachers; they should also be educators.

Vocational education and training policy needs more attention, in order to encourage more young people to study at vocational schools and provide them with better chances in the labour market. As vocational schools have had a bad image since Soviet times, it was suggested to reorganize these schools into technological gymnasiums. Also, it is crucial to analyse the demand for certain vocations in the labour market, so that graduates can be integrated into labour market.

It is important to equalize the opportunities to acquire *higher education* for young people from underrepresented groups, i.e. children from poor families, rural areas and also the disabled. Universities may have different missions. Some of them may be elite schools, others specializing in reducing social inequality can provide education for socially disadvantaged people.

Labour market role overcoming II of I

Labour market institutions were named as having low influence on successful entrance to labour market. Most of the respondents argued that people with lower education and less training have fewer chances to enter the labour market. However, the problem is that there are no adaptation programmes for socially disadvantaged groups, which would allow certain groups of people to be better integrated in society.

Most respondents criticized the current labour market policy as inappropriate and incorrect because of growing hidden unemployment, lack of working people, increasing protectionism and low wages. Despite the national employment policy and implementation system, the system does not correspond to the needs of different social groups, including people living in rural areas and working in the agricultural sector, lone mothers, national minorities, etc.

Another problem with labour market policy measures is that they are available only for those who are registered at the Labour Exchange. However, those who are not officially registered as unemployed usually belong to the groups at social risk; they do not have the same rights and guarantees. One part of Labour Exchange applicants from the in-depth interview respondents group applied for help in finding a job and were disappointed about the lack of expedience and attention to clients, and generally the passivity of these kinds of institutions. Most of the applicants were not satisfied with the service, provided by the Labour Exchange and were looking for a job themselves. The respondents were disappointed and usually rejected employment proposals because of "*low salary*", "*health status inadequate to work requirements*", "*inconvenient or inconsistent timetable*", etc.

Proposals:

Most respondents emphasized the importance of **coordination** between educational system and labour market. A very serious problem is that colleges and universities do not provide their students with professional skills, focusing mainly on theoretical knowledge, which is a big problem when graduates are willing to enter the labour market.

More control and coordination is needed between the labour market and educational policies in order to reach a balance between supply and demand in the labour market.

There should be possibilities created for young people to assess their personality, opportunities, needs and skills and what kind of work they could and would like to do.

New models of cooperation between social partners should be developed, aiming at **sustainable development of the labour market**. Local government should also be encouraged to solve unemployment issues. Universities and other institutions of higher education should be more involved in retraining programmes, especially for people with higher education who lack certain skills and knowledge.

Role of Social welfare overcoming II of I

There are 17,000 problematic families raising 39,000 children in Lithuania. Current welfare policy has not been effective by providing social benefits to these families, because they do not motivate individuals to look for solutions by themselves. Most respondents argued that the social welfare system does not solve major problems. Existing measures are only partially effective, as they are focusing on the consequences, but not the causes. The existing social support system is oriented towards financial allowances, compensations and free social services rather than active measures of social support. Such social policy encourages the passivity of allowance users; people who receive social benefits often do not make any attempt to change their situation, by looking for jobs themselves.

One of the major problems, which make the whole system inefficient is categorical social benefit, which depends on certain characteristics and multiplies social differentiation. Stigmatization is a serious problem, particularly among school children who try to avoid social benefits, including school meals free of charge, because of the stigma attached to it. This causes problems of non-attendance and dropout.

National planning and distribution of funding for social affairs is inappropriate. Since it is the national government which decides not only the amount of funding, but also the categories or the purposes of spending, this way of funding does not meet the local needs. Such a situation also reduces the independence of municipalities and restricts the possibilities to manage regional problems. Therefore, a closer and more open dialogue between the state and local authorities is needed.

Social policy measures were criticized because of the lack of coordination between them, their one-sidedness and short-term effect that increase social exclusion and promote passive behaviour among the recipients of such measures. Without assessment mechanisms and supervision measures between policy decisions and implementation, their effectiveness and expediency are at risk.

When talking about the main factors of social inequality, most of the conference participants emphasized the role of the family. Accordingly, the strengthening of family support systems should be the priorities of national and local social policy. However, the present situation shows that there is *no clear family policy in Lithuania*. It is important to create a complex social support system for a family as a whole, rather than for individual members.

Insufficient human resources in the field of social work were emphasized by the locals. This is a serious obstacle taking into consideration that new forms of social services and reforms of the existing social support system are necessary to improve the situation. Low salaries for teachers at all the levels of educational institutions and also for social service providers leads to increasing lack of human resources in these areas. Therefore, funding strategies have to be revised at the national level.

The whole social welfare system has been inadequate. The minimum standard of living estimated by the government does not reflect reality. Although the level of social welfare depends on the financial opportunities of the state, it is also important what kind of priorities the government sets.

Proposals:

In order to improve the efficiency of welfare policy, the number of categorical benefits should be reduced, including free school meals, which cause stigmatization and social differentiation. Since almost 70 percent of rural pupils are receivers of this particular benefit, there should not be any differentiation at all, so that all schoolchildren in rural areas would receive free school meals.

The quality of social services should be improved and a more personal approach applied in social work. *The direct social work with risk families should be implemented.* Families are the social actors who play the determining role in the personality formation of every human being's life; problem families are most at risk when it comes to living in conditions conducive the transmission of values and habits which cause social inequalities. This means there should be *a complex social support system for the family as a whole*, not only its separate members.

The consolidation of the *community role* is necessary when talking about preventive measures to combat social problems like IIofI, to empower individuals to better adapt to changing situation, to encourage them to take care of themselves and their children. NGOs and the church should also play more active roles in providing social services.

The implementation of *the holistic approach*, i.e. collaboration between all institutions, is necessary in order to reduce IIofI. Social workers, education and health professionals have to work together after a thorough analysis of the situation.

The *assessment mechanisms* and supervision measures between policy decisions and implementation should be applied with the purpose of efficiency and expedience.

The promotion of foster families could be the most efficient way to cut the roots of Intergenerational Transmission of Inequality among children who are left by their parents. This must be included as part of the state policies for the family. Improving the quality of education would be the next important step to eradicate this social phenomenon.

3.2.8 United Kingdom

Loughborough profile.

Population profile

The Borough of Charnwood in Leicestershire, has a population of some 155,000; its largest conurbation is Loughborough with a population of around 57,000⁴. This however increases by around 15,000 during term time due to the student population attending Loughborough University, bringing the population to over 70,000 inhabitants. According to the 2001 Census, the Black and Minority Ethnic Population in the town was 13.4%. However, the current influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe in the East Midlands region has, undoubtedly, contributed to this figure increasing, although specific Loughborough statistics are not yet available.

The local economy

The nature of the local economy has altered significantly over the years. Until the 1980s, economic activity and employment was concentrated in textile manufacturing (hosiery and knitwear) and light engineering; by the end of the 1990s both industries had virtually disappeared, leaving one large pharmaceutical company (Astra Zeneca) and one much reduced engineering works, together with a much expanded service sector, dominated by the now biggest employer, Loughborough University. The University has shifted the weight of the local economy from low-skill, manufacturing jobs, to high-skill, service sector jobs, reflecting the overall sectoral development of advanced industrialized economies. The reliance on the University to provide employment, has, on the one hand contributed to the relatively low levels of unemployment in the town (2.3% by July 2006) but on the other has limited the opportunities of the low-skilled workforce, which tends to be concentrated in run-down estates.

Deprivation

In total, there are five Super Output Areas (population circa 1,500 inhabitants) within Leicestershire which are ranked within the 20% most deprived in England in the *Indices for Multiple Deprivation 2004*; two in the Greenhill Ward (Leicester) and one each in the Loughborough wards of Hastings, Shelthorpe and Storer. There are no Super Output Areas in Leicestershire in the 10% most deprived in England. The 'geographical' and 'ethnic' distribution of disadvantage in the town is evident when one looks at statistical indicators of poverty in various wards; it then becomes clear that one of the most deprived wards in Loughborough, the *Hastings* ward, has an unemployment rate of 6.1% (as opposed to 0.8% for the richest ward in the town, Loughborough *Nanpantan*). Almost a third of the population in the *Hastings* ward is Bangladeshi and a third of 16-74 year olds have no qualifications. Homelessness also represents a significant aspect of deprivation in the Borough. Recent National Statistics data revealed that the percentage of accepted homeless applications in Charnwood stood at 11.1% (for the period April 2004 – March 2005), a percentage significantly higher than the East Midlands level of 6.6%.⁵ Housing occupies a dominant position in the Council's overall policy field and our focus group discussions with local social workers mostly centred around the subject of (social) housing, highlighting the limitations of funding in coping with social housing demand at local (as well as national) level.

Community Strategy

Local Authorities are under a statutory duty to secure the production of a Community Strategy:

"...for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area, and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK".⁶

⁴ Charnwood Community Profile 2005

⁵ Office for National Statistics 2006. *Neighbourhood Statistics* section, Charnwood Homelessness.

⁶ Charnwood online, Charnwood Community Strategy. Available at www.charnwoodonline.net

The formation of a Charnwood Strategic Partnership in 2002 attempted to co-ordinate actions between various actors locally (like the Council, public bodies and voluntary organisations) to address community needs and “improve the quality of life for everyone living and working in Charnwood”.⁷ It was the forerunner of the first comprehensive Charnwood Community Strategy, published in 2003 and reviewed in 2005 under the flagship name *Charnwood Together*. The Charnwood Together Community Strategy addresses future policy challenges (up to the year 2012), as articulated in the research and consultation processes carried out in the Borough over the years. Figure 1 below, has been taken out of the latest consultation document (published in 2006) and is an illustrative summary of the “key themes or projects that Charnwood Together can promote, co-ordinate and provide leadership on”⁸, if vision of an improved quality of life for all living in the Borough is to materialise.

Figure 2. Aims of the Charnwood Community Strategy, p.14



Interviews with national and local level politicians (elite interviews)

For the UK partners, the project brief was such that the majority of the ‘elite’ interviews had to be conducted at the time of the British general elections of May 2005. The timing proved to be a ‘two-edged sword’, both acting as a deterrent for participation due to time-consuming canvassing responsibilities for several interviewees, whilst simultaneously being an opening platform on which the parliamentary candidates could voice their manifestos. Bearing the above in mind, three interviews with local-level politicians were conducted over the phone and two written responses were received; questions were semi-structured, allowing the respondents to expand on points which they felt were important. The interviewees were representatives from the three main political parties, namely, the Labour, Conservatives and Liberal parties, with their insights and perspectives being as varied as their political manifestos. However, convergence of opinions was registered on the admission that pockets of deprivation exist locally with an urgent need to address them.

The problem of attendance was also resolved by inviting local Councillors to attend a focus group later on in the year, in September 2005. As the current Labour member of Parliament, Mr Andy Reed, could not be approached for interview, his personal website was used to extract information about social issues affecting the town of Loughborough relating to our project. The most important points arising from the interviews with local-level politicians in relation to the familial, labour market and educational disadvantage of young people in Loughborough are summarized below:

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Charnwood Community Strategy, p.8

1) All local-level politicians were in agreement that parenting is the single most enabling/limiting factor in a child's future life outcomes. The role of educational institutions is significant in recognizing and realizing individual ability and talent, but only comes second to 'good' parenting, as this prominent MP highlights:

Parental circumstance is (probably inevitably) an important contributory determinant towards the life chances of their children. It should be part of the objective of the education system to enable individual children to overcome any disadvantages associated with their family background, but in an imperfect world, this is unlikely to be ever wholly effective. (written response)

2) There is a clear need for more vocationally based education at local level, alongside a need for British society to truly *value* education, not merely the acquisition of qualifications.

3) The lack of adequate housing stock in Loughborough exacerbates problems of homelessness in the town and limited funding is likely to compound this problem in the near future.

The council hasn't built any new housing stock for 10 years, hasn't built any properties anywhere. I think there are partnerships working with some of the housing associations but nothing in comparison with what's really required.

(Councillor, focus group interview)

4) The competencies and resources of British local government are constrained by the discretionary powers of central government. Funding decisions for social housing, education and even council tax are taken at national level and this has repercussions for the powers of local government to cater independently for the specific needs of its citizens.

5) Although interviewees accepted the *structural* causes of poverty and the uneven life-chances starting at birth (see last sentence of first quote below), there was an underlying premise that *personal actions* (linked to the notion of individual responsibility), largely accounted for why disadvantage is either exacerbated or overcome during adulthood:

A young girl about 18-20 had a child and I had gone to see her, trying to help her with her accommodation and she was mouthing-off about the Council, the fact that she was using cocaine and the fact that the baby was born and she didn't even know who the father was. None of that was her fault; it was merely the system's fault. Then the baby started crying and she turned round, kicked the pram and said: "shut up you git", to a baby 3 or 4 months old. What chance does that child stand?" (Councillor, focus group interview)

Some successful people come from very disadvantaged backgrounds but have the strength of character not to let that affect them, or just to ignore that and get on with making the best for themselves". (Councillor, telephone interview)

6) There are obvious efforts to alleviate poverty in Loughborough, but these are hampered by limited funding which often depends on competitive bidding, and by the complexity of a faceless, bureaucratic system:

I don't think that many of us sitting in those committees understand a word of the documents we are filling in to get grants. This business of 'aims and objectives', 'put in for that and get money for that', there is no strategy. It is as if there is an abstraction beyond care that we are not part of and that is really worrying. I think that we are quite lost. The world that Mike inhabited and I thought I did, is actually that human world where the local Councillor was a face and the policeman was a face. (Councillor, focus group interview)

In-depth interviews with young adults

Fifteen in-depth interviews were conducted during the last year of the project with young people in Loughborough (aged 24-30), who shared a common background in-as-much as they had all experienced childhood poverty. A small percentage of our interviewees were in employment at the time of interview; for those young unemployed welfare dependency equated to low self-esteem and a continual struggle to make ends meet. Through biographical narrations prompted by pertinent questions from the interviewer, those 15 young people were given a 'voice' that informed the PROFIT agenda in a direct and detailed way.

The main conclusions drawn from the interviews are summarised in different sections in one of the published PROFIT reports and in many respects reiterate national findings on the general ‘vulnerability’ of young people’s lives, regardless of their economic and social status (after all the term ‘working poor’ has entered the government’s political lexicon for good). Education combined with a supportive family was described as the main vehicles for escaping adolescent poverty. Nevertheless, this finding gets caught in the discursive struggle to establish which of the two factors is more catalytic; some sociologists argue that family influences are more important than schools in shaping future life-outcomes⁹ others claim that schooling overrides family effects.¹⁰ Referring to our own small-scale study and in response to the question “What was the one most important factor¹¹ shaping your life-course”, the majority of our interviewees responded that family members tended to have overwhelmingly positive or negative influences in their up-bringing, with schooling being important, but not as important as family in preventing poverty. While there is a danger of over-simplifying complex arguments, the interviews revealed that schools were either unable to pick-up the pieces of a broken home and the specific needs of pupils (for those with negative educational experiences), or merely supported the parental interest in a child’s schooling (for those with positive educational experiences). There are signs that a renewed interest in adult education (partly triggered by the government’s life-long learning initiatives, partly due to a growing realisation of the benefits of education as our interviewees reach their mid 20s, combined with a physical and emotional distancing from parents) may help neutralise the significance of family in transmitting disadvantage, but this argument requires further investigation.

Concerning attitudes towards work the results highlight no real differences in the working ethos between the working and the non-working population. Our young sample clearly valued the benefits of work and education (in some instances belated education). Nevertheless, signs of societal exclusion were also evident, as the unemployed often felt stereotyped and excluded by members of the public and local institutions. However, it should be born in mind that our respondents were also prone to stereotyping others; they claimed notably that race and gender were significant determinants of benefit-entitlement; for example, white British respondents claimed that the system disproportionately benefited members of the local Indian and Bangladeshi communities who claimed benefits for their predominantly large families, or single mothers who had priority in getting council accommodation.

In terms of the contribution of local organizations to tackle adult disadvantage, there were mentions of good practice within two government initiatives; the Connexions and the New Deal for the Unemployed, alongside the positive contribution of local NGO’s (like The Bridge, see section 2.4) where some of our respondents sought support and advice on housing issues. Adult educational bursaries were also seen as a positive educational incentive, with some financial assistance attached to College attendance. Nevertheless, the restriction that unemployed claimants can only take up a part-time course of training or study whilst claiming Job Seeker’s Allowance (JSA), does limit the claimant’s availability for work as well as the choice of courses available. Finally, the complex rules and regulations of claiming bursaries were also seen as a disincentive to pursue adult-learning courses, for fear of loss of one’s benefit. The government’s effort to turn the Further Education (FE) system into

*the powerhouse for delivering the skills at all levels that are needed to sustain an advanced, competitive economy and make us a fairer society, offering equal opportunities for all based on talent and effort, not background*¹²,

are clearly well intentioned. But legislative detail reveals that there are gaps in educational service provision for people in the mid-20s, who want to be given a second chance in full-time FE. During this demanding time at College, young adults should be getting enough financial support to realise their academic potential, if the above pledge is to materialise.

The overall conclusion drawn from the interviews is that for people in their 20s depending on the welfare system in Loughborough are let down by an overly bureaucratic system that leaves them confused and frustrated, often waiting for money that is urgently needed. The Local Authorities’ dependence on central

⁹ Sparkes J (1999), “Schools, Education and Social Exclusion”, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion.

¹⁰ Mortimer P, Sammons P, Stoll L, Lewis D and Russell E (1988), *School Matters: The Junior Years*, Taylor and Francis Publishing.

¹¹ This could be a person, an institution or an event.

¹² Department for Education and Skills White Paper, “Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances”, March 2006, p.3, The Stationary Office, *DfES online*.

<<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/6514-FE%20White%20Paper.pdf> [accessed January 2007]

government bodies to instruct policy and deliver funding, does relate to the peculiarity of the British system of central governance, although the piloting of Local Area Agreements (which will mean decision-making about policy and service-delivery will be made at a local level) may eliminate this dependence and assist Local Authorities to respond to the local needs of citizens. However, the immensity of this task and the timescales required for this to happen, should not be underestimated.

Main considerations arising from the dissemination seminar with local stakeholders

Fifteen representatives from various organisations, such as Councillors from Charnwood Borough Council, financial advisors to the Council, local NGO representatives, a school Governor and sociologists were present at the seminar to share their professional experience and knowledge with the UK PROFIT team. Dr Jeremy Leaman and Christina Kokoroskou introduced the seminar by presenting the main research findings from the various stages of the project. The floor was then open to questions and what followed was an hour-long discussion of the main issues informing the local policy agenda.

The majority of the representatives found common ground between our research and their personal and professional experiences relating to the transmission of poverty from parents to children. Representatives from local homeless shelters and charities were particularly vocal about the cycle of homelessness that repeats itself once the children of what have previously been homeless families, also seek temporary accommodation. However, it is important to note that this pattern of transmission is not explicitly followed; the discussion transcript suggests that there are clear instances locally, where children have broken free from their parental predispositions. In the words of a social worker:

I have thought of a family we have supported for over 4 years. The mother is over 60 years old; she is a chronic alcohol user. She had 7 children (one has passed away from a heroin overdose), 3 are on incapacity benefit and have drug or alcohol dependence, one I know does have a criminal record as well. These 3 children all live in social housing, and I would agree that poverty and disadvantage for them have been inter-generationally transmitted. But in contrast she also has 3 children who are in employment, they do not have alcohol or drug dependence, and either own their own accommodation or live in private let homes. I have not met these children, so rely on the mother's perspective of how successful they are.

There was an acknowledgement that positive moves have been made to break this cycle of disadvantage, through the development of a youth 'competence model' by a local independent youth organisation, with the identification of 8 areas of focus (mainly educational) which local practitioners need to concentrate on, to increase the skills-base of their young clients. It was also acknowledged that projects like Sure Start (which operates locally) have helped young families on a low income by improving parenting skills, accessing support and affordable child care so that they can return to work. Furthermore, the introduction of an Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) under the current government has made a difference, with some 16 year-olds reporting that their parents have encouraged them to continue in education because their college course has an income attached to it, offering youngsters some financial independence and security.

However, despite positive measures to combat poverty, there are also serious disincentives for change and various examples were given to highlight this, like the market gap between the inflated prices of private rented houses in Loughborough and the amount the council pays a social landlord for renting his/her property to benefit claimants:

A private landlord, if he takes a tenant who's on benefits, he is going to be paid 4-weekly in arrears. If he lets the house out to University students he gets paid a term in advance and he's going to get at least £11 - £12 per room per week more.

In addition, according to the participants, the 'discriminatory' nature of benefit eligibility has a clear 'gender' and 'age' dimension; for example, a single male is not in 'priority' need for council accommodation and the eligibility for full benefits does not start until the age 25. The lack of continuity and need for 'quick-fix' solutions in the political decisions of ever-changing governments, was blamed for the existing discrepancies within the system; in the words of one Councillor:

Governments need to keep introducing something new to keep their name in the public eye.

Apart from the 'structural' factors of poverty relating to the wider societal factors and the political preferences of the day, the 'personal' dimensions of poverty were also reported. Mental illness or addiction

was recognised as key factors of homelessness and unemployment amongst young people locally. One social worker attributed the perpetuation of disadvantage to a ‘culture of poverty’ that is transmittable from parent to child, the latter trying to maintain the value-structure of his/her most familiar networks (in this instance by ‘using’ the system to get council accommodation):

There is a small community of disadvantaged youths, what we are talking about, and what we found is they all know each other. You get one person at the hostel, they know most of the people in the hostel, they’ve gone through the same system they’ve been to the hostel, they’ve been to the Bridge, they grew up on the same estate, their mum and dads go to the same pubs, so they know the system through their community. We often get referrals from friends of people in that community, so they’ve come in contact with someone with similar disadvantage but not necessarily from the same network.

The major conclusions deriving from the final Dissemination Seminar can be summarised as follows:

1. There is a clear recognition that poverty and social inequality exist in British society at large, with an urgent need for these ills to be combated.
2. There are instances of youth homelessness and ‘hidden’ poverty in Loughborough that are masked by the relative success of an affluent University town.
3. There are clear gaps in welfare policy provision that adversely affect benefit eligibility for needy local young people. The limited competences of local authorities which constrain their ability to counteract largely correctly diagnosed multiple deprivation with integrated, holistic, ‘joined-up’ strategies, illustrates these deficiencies.
4. Local NGOs work hard to ameliorate the effects of poverty and disadvantage locally, but the limitations of central government funding and changing policy priorities undoubtedly hamper these efforts.
5. ‘Prevention’ was emphasized as the best possible ‘cure’ for poverty.
6. There was a distinct confusion amongst some practitioners about the underlying causes of poverty and whether they are primarily attributed to ‘structural’ or ‘personal’ factors.

Point 6 above clearly reveals that conceptual barriers to a consensus about the causes of poverty remain, even amongst politicians and policy practitioners. Some stress individual responsibility for poverty and subsequent life-outcomes, others stress structural factors more insistently. Faced with the practical problems of dealing with existing poverty at local level, practitioners rarely have time (and often lack resources and influence) to construct policy responses that accurately reflect considered analysis of culturally transmitted poverty. With this in mind, the dissemination seminar conducted at Loughborough University under the PROFIT ‘flag’, exposed, firstly, the very basic problems of conceptualisation and, secondly, the challenges that social workers, politicians, academics and everyday citizens face in the battle against poverty and inherited disadvantage.

3.3 General conclusions from the field work

1. The PROFIT project provided evidence that:
2. Social welfare regimes result in a different extent and intensity of poverty as well as in different age cohorts vulnerable to poverty.
3. Among both affluent and poor countries in the study there are differences in patterns of poverty and the composition of social problems, which impacts on the risk of inequality inheritance.
4. In post-socialist countries, particularly in Poland and Lithuania, the risk-of poverty is widespread despite very low poverty thresholds. It may result in an escalation of social problems in the future.
5. The understanding of the importance of the transmission of inequality and its conceptualization is attached to the level of governance where people are active:
 - Top-level policy makers tend to perceive inequality transmission as ‘private’ matter, affecting rather particular families than society as a whole.
 - Local stakeholders are aware that persistent poverty, of which the most severe form is the reproduction of poverty, may affect the whole community and poses challenge for local authorities and citizens.

- Social service workers and NGOs are able to point to a geography of poverty and name people who are vulnerable to poverty transmission. They are those inhabitants municipality inhabitants who try to tailor social programmes, projects and activities to local needs.
6. In each town in the study there are many examples of good practices. However, due to financial restrictions, projects are terminated when the funding runs out.
 7. To act effectively, better statistics are needed to formulate well targeted support and long-term strategies to use more effective projects and programmes.
 8. The European Social Fund is perceived as very supportive not only for financial reasons but also because it improves the management of projects.

4. Policy Learning

An important objective of the PROFIT project was to inform policy by bringing the policy-relevant findings of the research to the attention of policy practitioners in municipalities, participating countries and at European level, through meetings aimed at mutual learning and through publications such as the series of *European Studies on Inequalities and Social Cohesion* providing national reports from each stage of the study (accessible in the PROFIT website www.profit.uni.lodz.pl) as well as through articles in the national press.

In preparation for the dialogue with policy practitioners, members of the national project teams selectively and critically analysed policy relevant aspects of the observed problem (see Project results in national perspective - above). The aim was to assess the extent to which specific policy measures/projects/practices could be deemed to have succeeded in meeting their objectives and might serve as examples from which other countries could derive lessons. Good practice examples were sought in municipalities, and municipal practitioners were first of all those persons to whom Profit project results were addressed. Good practice examples were selected in particular towns in a course of seminars gathering researchers and local practitioners, including representatives of local authorities. These seminars offered an opportunity for local stakeholders to acquainted themselves with the results of research carried out in the town they live and work. The selected good practice examples are generally small in size and scale. They are not expected to solve the problem of the intergenerational inheritance of inequalities, which is a very challenging task for national and supranational bodies, but to inspire local stakeholders to extend their activities aimed at counteracting the IIofI using successful examples from other towns. The selected practices were as follows:

4.1 Tomaszów Mazowiecki (Poland) - Activities of the Parish “The Sacred Heart of Jesus”

1. Description of good practice

a. Background/ history

Before 1989, Tomaszów Mazowiecki was an important industrial town. A large textile factory “Wistom” employed the majority of Tomaszów’s working population. During the 1990s, the town was hit by recession. The factory was closed and unemployment became the most important local social problem. The unemployment caused not only massive poverty in the town, but contributed to other social problems (e.g. alcoholism) as well. To counteract these negative tendencies, the local Roman Catholic parish started its various social initiatives.

b. Aims and objectives

Actions run by the parish aim to counteract diverse forms of social exclusion. Firstly, there are actions aimed at helping the children coming from worse-off families. The parish hosts a social club for children called “Mom”, and in co-operation with local schools, it organised a sports club. It co-operates with a local Scouts Team as well.

Each year, the parish organises an annual family festival, which offers a range of play activities for children and parents alike.

The parish runs two self-help groups. The one is “AA” (Alcoholics Anonymous) that is designed for people dealing with problems related to alcohol addiction. The other is “Al.-Anon” that is designed to help the relatives of people experiencing alcohol-related problems.

The parish also runs a night shelter for homeless men.

On Christmas Eve the parish organises suppers for poor and lonely parishioners.

c. Target group and customisation

Social activities undertaken in the parish relate to different forms of social exclusion. The main target groups are children coming from the economically vulnerable families, adults dealing with alcohol-related problems, homeless and senior citizens endangered by poverty and the lack of social ties.

d. Staff, equipment and other resources needed

Most of the activities take place in the parish building. Both the social club for children, the children’s sports club, “AA” and “Al.-Anon” self-help groups and shelter for the homeless are run by volunteers (teachers, therapists etc.) who devote their spare time to work free of charge for the parish’s social activities.

e. Costs and financial input needed

No information

f. Management of good practice

The activity of the social club for children “Mom” started in the winter holidays in 2003. Currently, about thirty children from the local primary and lower-secondary school attend the club. From Monday to Friday from 15.30 to 17.30 children have different educational and entertainment activities organised by their teachers (who work as volunteers), they could also do their homework and get teachers’ professional help with it.

Apart from offering professional care and help with homework, the social club also offers meals for every child as well as consultations with teachers, social workers, psychologists and other specialists. When necessary, club volunteers work with families in solving their various problems.

The club represents children’s interests while co-operating with different organisations for family, children and teenagers. It provides a space for using computers and the Internet and allows for playing with toys or sport games. It organises visits of children to the theatre, museums and other cultural events. It provides art and book therapy for children, allowing them to solve their psychological and emotional problems and making it easier for them to develop their full potential. It professionally organises winter and summer holidays (for about 100 people), in which children and teenagers from poor families can take part free of charge.

Since 2004 the parish runs a sports club for boys from primary school. It offers them football training once a week. The football team takes part in different sporting competitions at the local and regional level.

The scouts group has its own meeting place at the parish facilities. Scouts can organise their meeting and can play there. Volunteer teachers engaged in the social club for children often use the scouts’ working methods in their work with children. Some scouts help to run the social club by taking care of children and organising different activities and excursions for children from the social club.

The night shelter for men is a place where lonely, poor and homeless men (often experiencing various health problems) could sleep in a safe place, eat a meal, take a shower, receive professional medical help, get new clothes and sometimes find work.

g. Networking and co-operation with other local, regional, national bodies

The social activities of the parish require close co-operation with the local schools, the local authorities, as well as with other parishes in Tomaszów and with a national Roman Catholic charity organisation, Caritas.

h. Integration into the regional innovation system

No information

2. Why is it good practice?

The system of social help developed by the parish in Tomaszów is a good example of an integrated approach to dealing with various (economic, social, psychological, emotional, etc.) consequences of poverty. Social actions undertaken by the parish apply to different groups endangered by social exclusion (children,

alcoholics and their families, the homeless, senior citizens). The social actions of the parish are a good example of how local NGOs can play an important role in effectively dealing with the Ilofl at the local level.

4.2 Pernik (Bulgaria) - Together we can – Business Center

1. Description of good practice

a. Background/history

The Business Centre in Pernik is an independent non-governmental organisation created in 2000. It was founded by local authorities and local business organisations. It is a member of BARDA (Bulgarian Association of Regional Development Agency) and part of the JOBS Project (Job opportunities through Business Creation).

b. Aims and objectives

The Business Centre's goals are fostering local development, encouraging sustainable employment creation, facilitating small and family business creation and development and facilitating the co-ordination between local authorities, local business and local NGOs.

c. Target groups and customisation

The Business Centre's target groups consist of unemployed job seekers; the unemployed (especially young people and women) wishing to create their own business ventures; minorities and people with disabilities who are vulnerable in the labour market; start-up entrepreneurs; micro and small enterprises; handicraft specialists and growers.

d. Staff, equipment and other resources needed

The Business Centre employs 11 persons and 1 licensed trainer. It has 2 fully equipped training rooms and 3 window offices (one in Pernik, two in the nearby towns).

e. Cost and financial input needed

No information

f. Management of the practice

The Business Centre provides micro financing (financial leasing). It delivers training courses. It provides consultation, information, administrative and advisory services. It facilitates business-to-business contacts and it rents its premises at below market prices.

The Business Centre helps the young unemployed to find paid work, to start their own business, to increase their employability (transfer of knowledge and skills – through training schemes). It helps young entrepreneurs to solve their difficulties and encourages the integration of disadvantaged groups through labour market participation.

g. Networking and co-operation with other local, regional, national bodies

The Business Centre in Pernik co-operates with central and local authorities, local labour market offices, businesses, NGOs and international institutions. It is part of the National Network for Business Development's JOBS Project (Job Opportunities through Business Creation).

h. Integration into the regional innovation system

No information

2. Why is it good practice?

The Business Centre is successful, because it solves the problems with labour market participation, the unemployment trap, low incomes, the skills gap and the life chances of talented but deprived young people. Because it is based on co-operation between all local stakeholders, it is innovative. Because at the same time it fosters local economic development, supports the deprived young and promotes co-operation, it has multiplier effect. And because it cultivates only successful initiatives and mitigates results of painful local economy restructuring, it is sustainable.

3. Short description of the success story

Since 2003 more than 185 unemployed have been trained in entrepreneurial skills and ICT (45 women formerly working in the mining and steel industry, more than 45% of all beneficiaries - young unemployed). The Business Centre has provided premises for 6 enterprises (1 of them a sewing workshop of people with disabilities, 1 young family, as both spouses were unemployed). In 2006 it also provided micro financing for 3 young unemployed who started their own successful business.

4.2 Giessen (Germany) – ZAUG (Zentrum Arbeit-Umwelt)

1. Description of the good practice

a. Background and history

The Centre for Work and Environment Gießen (ZAUG gGmbH) is a non-profit vocational training company founded in 1988.

Due to the massive increase of unemployment, the local council has to face new and difficult tasks. The foundation of the non-profit organisation ZAUG GmbH in 1988 was the first important step to build a modern community strategy: Instead of financially supporting the unemployed, it pays for work – at the same time guaranteeing public services which are inevitably necessary. Useful work is an elementary human need, whereas income support is a mere means of survival.

ZAUG GmbH assists in the reintegration of former unemployed persons into the so called “first” labour market by giving them practice-oriented employment and qualification and is thus defeating the vicious circle of unemployment and social downgrading.

ZAUG-shareholders are the Gießen county council and the community councils of all town councils belonging to the Gießen community.

b. Aims and objectives

ZAUG’s aim is to combine social and economic issues. The concept aims at providing alternative models of economic development of new local workplaces for socially excluded people, who are the losers of globalisation.

Even though ZAUG is dependent on public financial support from the local authorities, the Länder, the central state and the EU, the intention is for these projects eventually to stand on their own feet. In cases when companies run by ZAUG make profits, they are ploughed back or invested in other operations of a similar kind.

c. Target group and customisation

ZAUG targets two groups: firstly, young people and young adults (aged below 25), and secondly adults living on income support and the long-term unemployed.

d. Staff, equipment and other resources needed

No information

e. Costs and financial input needed

Three factors contributed to ZAUG’s success:

- 1) The public awareness of a huge societal challenge posed by an above- average level of unemployment (and its subsequent local costs in the form of rising social expenditures).
- 2) A stable network or collaboration between social scientists, local policy-makers and supportive NGOs who were powerful enough to push through alternative solutions to current neo-liberal thinking.
- 3) Supportive financial means for adequate programmes to fight especially long-term unemployment from the EU, the federal level or the regional authorities.

f. Management of the practice

ZAUG offers vocational training, jobs and qualifications for local unemployed people; it runs non-profit oriented enterprises and other projects. ZAUG’s two main pillars consist of projects (vocational training,

qualification, advice and counselling projects, networks) and non-profit enterprises (which are nevertheless market-oriented and operate on a professional basis).

Vocational-training offered in ZAUG's own enterprises and workshops is provided for approximately 130 trainees yearly in 7 different professions and three different projects: electrician, housekeeper, painter and varnisher, cook, gardener, building cleaner and waitress. ZAUG provides pre-vocational training courses for approximately 145 young adults per year. ZAUG's enterprises create working opportunities for socially disadvantaged people as well. Approximately 260 adult persons are currently working at ZAUG. ZAUG's projects for adults offer their participants the possibility of getting qualifications through "learning by doing" in ZAUG-run enterprises, they create non-profit working opportunities for communities and schools and they offer training courses for women returning to the labour market as well.

Non-profit, market-oriented enterprises of ZAUG include: two training-restaurants and cafés (restaurants are used as a part of a retraining scheme for waitresses and cooks and also for vocational training. A party service completes the range.); leech cultivation (by cultivating leeches ZAUG contributes to preserving this special species. Both cultivated and imported animals are used in naturopathic treatment as well as in orthodox medical treatment and are sold throughout Europe. This enterprise offers qualifications and creates working opportunities.); bio-organic farm (established in 1990, annually certified as a bio-organic farm. Organically grown and controlled vegetables are sold to ZAUG's canteens, restaurants and at weekly markets. This enterprise offers vocational training, creates work opportunities and possibilities for acquiring new qualifications.); two large canteens (that are producing about 1.800 lunches a day for children in kindergarten and schools and are delivering them throughout the communities and cities around Giessen district. Canteens also produce approximately 500 meals a day for adults, offered by a catering service. This enterprise offers vocational training, creates work opportunities and possibilities of acquiring new qualifications); house cleaning (ZAUG offers house cleaning services for non-profit organisations and for the public management. This enterprise offers vocational training, creates work opportunities and possibilities of acquiring new qualifications).

g. Networking and co-operation with other local, regional, national bodies

ZAUG is involved in many projects that require the close co-operation of different local, regional, national and EU bodies. It offers advanced training in the Network "Education and Advice in Gastronomy". It provides the Town of Giessen with city assistants who are working for the local public services in Giessen (e.g. they help mothers in buses with their push-chairs, they give advice to tourists etc.). In co-operation with other non-profit training companies in the framework of the Equal network it creates new schemes for disadvantaged young people. And finally, in co-operation with the Hesse Ministry of Justice it runs a project of work therapy in prisons. The focus of this project is therapy for prisoners by providing them with a possibility of working with wood.

h. Integration into the regional innovation system

Nearly all fields of work and enterprises run by ZAUG are market-oriented and therefore operate on a professional basis. Some of the branches can nearly exist on their own income by selling products and services (like restaurants), others are and will be dependent on public finances (like training courses). Some branches collaborate with the private sector (like vocational training). There is a close collaboration with the local Labour Agency in charge of administering the new labour market law.

2. Why is it a good practice?

ZAUG is in part highly accepted because of its special support for those living under the threat of social exclusion, due to its emphasis on environmentally friendly activities, and due to developing new projects and implementing them at a regional level.

4.3 Pärnu (Estonia) - Coordination of social services for children and families

1. Description of the good practice

a. Background/history

The Family Assistance Centre, which currently functions as an institution providing multiple services for children and their families in Pärnu, was founded in 1991 as a shelter for children. The Family Assistance

Centre in its current form evolved out of the shelter. New services have been gradually added into the Centre's activities. In 1993 a day-care centre for children was established. In 1994 the Centre became engaged in dealing with custody issues, i.e. it started placing children in foster families. In 1997 psychological guidance was established. In 2005 the Centre became an institution in charge of providing national welfare services in the city of Pärnu. In the same year, it started to run rehabilitation services for young delinquents. In 2007 the Centre began to offer personal support services for families with children.

b. Aims and objectives

Shelter for children, which is still the backbone of the Family Assistance Centre, provides accommodation and assistance for neglected children. Clients can stay in the shelter as long as necessary and for as short a time as possible. Three quarters of clients stay for less than one month. The aims of the shelter include:

Ensuring security of clients – they should know that they can stay in the shelter as long as necessary and that they are always welcome.

Ensuring permanent support – support person/educator establishes mutually trusting relationships and provides all kinds of support needed by the client.

Working together as a team makes it necessary to change the attitudes of the staff and to develop co-operative skills.

c. Target group and customisation

The Family Assistance Centre's main target groups are neglected or abused children aged 3-18 and their parents in need. Clients of the shelter for children lack an informal network of close relationships, home and personal property, passport and other identity documents, necessary education, formal employment contracts and adequate income. They are characterised by: a high level of distress and depression, frequent emotional disorders, physical and mental exhaustion, insomnia, and low self-esteem.

d. Staff, equipment and other resources needed

The Family Assistance Centre employs 19 persons. To ensure security of clients, the Centre is in need of stable funding for its additional services. To ensure high-quality permanent support for its clients, the Centre needs to motivate and train its staff properly. In order to work together as a team, the Centre's employees are in need of counselling and supervision services.

e. Costs and financial input needed

The Family Assistance Centre is a social welfare institution administrated by the Pärnu Town Government. It is approximately 90% financed from the town budget and 10% from the state budget.

f. Management of good practice

The Shelter for children has 10 beds and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The shelter faces two main problems. Firstly, how to deal with young people with behaviour problems in conditions where there is a lack of experienced and limited professional staff. Secondly, how to guarantee minimal living standard (food, clothes, necessary school items, etc.) to teenagers for a longer period of time.

g. Networking and co-operation with other local, regional, national bodies

While solving its clients' individual needs, the Centre co-operates with local family doctors, hospitals and counselling centre, the Migration Board, external child protection specialists and the Study Counselling Centre.

h. Integration into the regional innovation system

No information

2. Why is it good practice?

The Family Assistance Centre is an excellent example of the adequate response of dealing with the new, emerging needs. It is focused on providing support to children, in other words, it intervenes as early as possible, thus solving social and psychological problems of children when they are easiest to solve. By providing co-ordinated social services tailored to the child's individual needs the Centre approaches problems of children endangered by social exclusion in a multi-dimensional way.

3. Short description of the success story

Description of one of the Centre's clients shows best how different measures aimed at helping children in need are implemented at the Family Assistance Centre. This presentation shows the individual approach to solving clients' problems employed by the Centre's employees.

A fifteen year-old Russian-speaking girl showed up at the Centre. Her parents were divorced, they both had alcohol-related problems and they both had their parental rights denied. The client escaped from an orphanage, she was homeless and dropped out from school. She had health problems, was psychologically unstable and aggressive, she distrusted everybody. She smoked and had an unstable network of friends.

To solve the client's needs, the following actions have been taken. An individual support person was appointed to take care of client's needs and to supervise her progress. Thus, the client was provided with an opportunity to speak out (about her fears, problems, and relations etc.). Her basic material needs (bed, clothes, food, etc.) were provided. In co-operation with a family doctor, a hospital and the counselling centre, the Family Assistance Centre provided the client with medical examination, and in co-operation with the Migration Board, it arranged for her necessary documents (passport and residence permit). The client was offered psychological counselling, in order to give her emotional support and the sense of security and belonging. In co-operation with external child protection specialists, social assistance for the client was provided.

The outcome of measures taken by the Centre in this case was positive. The client showed an increased interest in education. In co-operation with the Study Counselling Centre an individual study programme was drafted and applied. As a result, the client graduated from the primary school in 2005 and continues her education in the vocational school. The client lives permanently in the shelter. She has a good and trusting relationship with her support person, she has a stable partner, too, with whom she has been cohabiting for 1,5 years. She has established a good relationship with her grandfather and she takes care of him.

Summing up: such a successful case management can be achieved when the interests and the needs of the client are individually followed, when targets derived from the real situation are set, when the Centre's employees are able and allowed to work together as a team (horizontal networking), and when the Centre has stable and sufficient funding and external support (vertical networking).

4.4 Pori (Finland) - Project Power and Help

1. Description of the good practice

a. Background/history

Between 1991 and 1994 Finland found itself in a deep economic crisis. Unemployment grew rapidly (in 1994 its rate was 24%). Youth unemployment rose rapidly as well. This significantly increased the risk of marginalisation and social exclusion, especially among young people.

b. Aims and objectives

In order to counteract these negative tendencies, Pori's local authorities, in co-operation with the European Social Fund (ESF), introduced three projects, whose aim was to activate, empower and help the unemployed young adults. Project Power I (Poveri I) lasted from 1995 to 1997, project Power II (Poveri II) lasted from 1998 to 1999 and project Help (Jelppi) lasted from 2001 to 2002. The aims of Power I and Power II were to empower and activate the unemployed young adults (below 25) in Pori. The aim of the Help project was to help young adults aged less than 25 years old.

c. Target group and customisation

The target group in Power I (314 participants) was the unemployed young adults (aged below 25) living in Pori. They had poor education, social problems, alcohol problems etc in common. In the case of Power II the target group consisted of 50 young adults who participated in the first project but who nevertheless did not manage to find employment or education. The Help project's target group (500 participants) consisted of people who were at the same time clients of the employment office and social security office. The idea of all projects was to create new working patterns between the young adults endangered by social exclusion. In other words, the main idea of all the projects was to help the young unemployed adults to help themselves.

d. Staff, equipment and other resources needed

Each of the projects involved only a small team of 2-3 workers. Projects required an active networking between different units at the level of the city administration. Only a few contacts with NGOs and local firms were established.

e. Costs and financial input needed

No information

f. Management of the practice

In the framework of Power I project, more than 300 consultations at the client's home were conducted with 83 young adults in order to assess their individual needs. As a result of these interviews, educational projects and support and active employment services tailored to individual needs were developed. Activities undertaken within the project included also job creation measures and active search for housing for those clients who lacked their own flat. In the case of people who did not manage to stand on their own two feet, activities (such as individual consultations, flat search, job search, and support with education), started during Power I, were continued under Power II. Power II established several networks to work with the target group. They focused on and dealt with 'alternative educational prospects', 'new forms of employment', 'many skills', 'prevention of marginalisation', and 'partnership'.

The Help project involved conducting interviews with clients and providing them with consulting, tailored activation and services concerning (among other things): how to cope with work opportunities, events, how to improve daily life (housekeeping), how to deal with the bureaucracy or how to co-operate with social workers. As a result, 48% of the 500 project participants started work (1/3 of them got open labour market jobs, 1/2 of them state-supported jobs), 20% started "work rehearsal" and 25% started education.

g. Networking and co-operation with other local, regional, national bodies

Power I and Power II were organised by the local authorities of the City of Pori in co-operation and with the funding from the European Social Fund. The Help project was organised by the City of Pori and state-run employment offices. The role of the local authorities and the ESF was essential in carrying out all projects; however, the role of NGOs was marginal in all three cases.

h. Integration into the regional innovation system

No information

2. Why is it good practice?

All three projects could be considered as examples of good practice because each of them really managed to help young adults to solve their problems. The fact that Power I and Power II were co-financed by the ESF shows that such projects could quite easily be transferred to other EU Member States.

4.6 Rovigo (Italy) - Voluntary Service Centre

1. Description of the good practice**a. Background/history**

Rovigo, as other towns in Italy, has a long tradition of local civil society associations. The civil society has been developing especially for the last twenty years, when it took a formal and wide shape. The public sector uses services offered by the non-profit organisations to cut costs and develop new services (innovative and experimental projects). In 1991, the Italian Parliament passed the Framework Law on Volunteering. Subsequently, Voluntary Service Centres (VSC) were established throughout the country. The Law specifies that economic resources for VSCs are provided with donations from the Bank Foundation, which is financed by obligatory donations from banks operating in Italy.

b. Aims and objectives

In 1997, the VSC was founded in Rovigo. Its aim was to support financially and organisationally local civil society organisations and facilitate public-private partnerships dealing with social issues. It facilitates start-up and growth of the voluntary activities aimed at overcoming local social problems. Services provided by

the Rovigo VSC include: information, dissemination, communication; materials and data collection; counselling; training; support in preparing projects and in fundraising; awareness raising campaigns among people as far as promotion of volunteering is concerned; and logistics. In 2006 Rovigo VSC financed 105 projects of 848 voluntary organisations.

c. Target group and customisation

VSC focuses on delivering help and expertise to migrants, the homeless, people living in extreme poverty and also to NGOs working with these vulnerable groups.

d. Staff, equipment and other resources needed

Public servants, social workers and volunteers are engaged in projects supported by VSC.

e. Costs and financial needs

Projects supported by VSC are financed with the Centre's own resources (coming from the obligatory donation provided by banks via the Bank Foundation) and with money coming from municipalities and regional governments. In the future, a bigger role of citizens and private companies' financial contributions should be taken into consideration

f. Management of the practice

VSC's aim is to investigate and identify local social problems, define objectives for measures aimed at overcoming them. Additionally, VSC chooses partners that best fit within a network dealing with a certain social problem. It signs an agreement for a joint programme with project partners, implements agreed actions and eventually evaluates the outcomes of the action/programme.

g. Networking and co-operation with other local, regional, national bodies

The very nature of VSC requires close co-operation and networking both with public and private bodies dealing with social problems on different levels of governance.

h. Integration into the regional innovation system

No information

2. Why is it good practice?

VSCs are centred on the individual/family biographies rather than on the formal citizen. They deliver information where and when it is needed. They integrate different services, thus overcoming the separation in different fields of intervention.

3. Short description of the success story

A night shelter for migrants and homeless could be presented as VSC's project example. The shelter is run by one social worker and 10 volunteers. It is open 365 days a year. In 2006 it had 97 clients (73 men and 24 women), 25% of whom were Italians, while the rest came mainly from the North Africa (38%) and Eastern Europe (39%). 21% of the shelter's clients had an upper secondary education, while 13% hold a university degree. Major problems clients of the shelter faced were lack of a residence permit and waiting for political asylum. Some of them were victims of human trafficking. They had to deal with the unemployment problem, too. Total cost of the shelter in 2006 was 51,337.20 Euros, the average daily cost per person was 14.40 Euro (in a public institution it is five times higher). Funding for this scheme was provided by the VSC, the municipality of Rovigo and private donors.

The shelter seems to be a success because:

1. After 12 months 42% of its clients found a job and a place to live. 23% of them are in another structure or have moved to another town or have been repatriated. Only 10% are on the street again.
2. The shelter is slowly being integrated into the neighbourhood.
3. A network has been established among 10 organisations. These are both religious and non-religious and they deal with migrants' issues and homeless people. Its main goal is to support the basic needs of people who live in extreme poverty and to build individualised projects for social inclusion.
4. Since 2007 the Shelter is officially recognised in the "social health area plan".
5. The shelter gave a stimulus towards the creation of a new project called "Fair Municipalities".

4.7 Jonava (Lithuania) - Foster parenting

1. Description of the good practice

a. Background/history

The Lithuanian Research Team selected foster-families functioning in Jonava as an example of good practice in preventing and overcoming the IlofI. The system of foster-families is more efficient and better adjusted to fulfilling the needs of neglected children than the system of foster homes (orphanages). The former allows for building positive social experience among children and for developing their social skills. Apart from pedagogical and educational reasons, foster families are also cheaper and more flexible than big foster homes. This new form of custody of neglected children has gradually been introduced in Lithuania since the 1990s.

b. Aims and objectives

The main aim of foster-families is to provide shelter and conditions for proper physical, psychological and educational development to neglected children.

c. Target group and customisation

Foster-families target neglected children (mainly social orphans – whose biological parents had their parental rights removed, or biological orphans – whose parents are dead).

d. Staff, equipment and other resources needed

As already mentioned, the system of foster-families is very efficient in terms of staff and resources needed for its implementation.

e. Costs and financial input needed

The costs of foster-families include allowances for foster-parents that are supposed to cover children's material needs. However, the amount of money allocated to children is insufficient for financing the full development of their abilities and talents. Additionally, because being a foster-parent is not considered as employment, it does not give foster-parents access to pensions or the right to use social security. Hence, foster-parents are forced to stay in the labour market and are unable to become professional foster-parents.

f. Management of the practice

Each family can apply for the status of foster-family. Provided it meets appropriate criteria specified by the law, it signs the agreement with the local authorities and is obliged to take care of neglected children, who are under the local authority's supervision. Theoretically, each family cannot have more than five foster-children under its tutelage. However, as experience from Jonava shows, under special circumstances (when there is a threat that siblings would be separated) it is possible that a single foster family can take care of more than five children.

g. Networking and co-operation with other local, regional, national bodies

Successful functioning of the system of foster-families heavily depends on the close co-operation between foster-parents, representatives of local authorities, teachers, social workers etc. In order to be fully effective, such a system requires a close co-operation between foster-families themselves, so that they are able to influence collectively the policy-making agenda at different levels of governance. However, the lack of proper communication between foster-families at the local and national level, the lack of collective representation of their interests, was mentioned as one of the problems that need to be solved.

h. Integration into the regional innovation system

No information

2. Why is it good practice?

The system of foster-families in Jonava focuses on providing support to children, in other words, it intervenes as early as possible, thus solving social and psychological problems of children when they are

easiest to solve. It is an effective system of satisfying the needs of neglected children, it provides them with a friendly environment in which they can properly develop. As the example of a foster-family that was allowed to be larger than regulations allow in order not to separate siblings shows – it is a very flexible system, tailored to the individual needs and capable of delivering results.

3. Short description of the success story

Individual success stories best summarise the effectiveness of the foster-families system. Deividas who is now 10 years old and who has lived in a foster-family since he was 3 years-old, at the beginning was almost unable to communicate orally. He made gestures and inarticulate sounds. Psychologists and doctors after testing him at the age of 6, before attending school, suggested that he should follow a limited learning programme. Deividas now attends a fourth grade class of a regular public primary school in Kaunas. Sandra (15 years-old, lives in a foster-family since she was 6), another girl living in the same foster-family, was also found by experts to be incapable of pursuing a regular curriculum at the age of 6. She currently attends the eight grade of the primary school in Kaunas, and her grade point average is 8.0 on a 10-point scale.

4.8 Loughborough (the United Kingdom) – “The Bridge”

1. Description of the good practice

a. Background/history

Loughborough is the largest conurbation in the Borough of Charnwood. The Borough of Charnwood is divided into 28 wards. Loughborough enjoys relatively low levels of unemployment. However, social and homelessness figures in Charnwood are above the regional and country average and social housing is problematic. Charnwood Borough Council and The Bridge (a Housing Advice Service) are employing successful methods to reduce instances of homelessness in Loughborough. The Bridge is a charity that provides services which work with homeless and vulnerably housed people.

b. Aims and objectives

Charnwood Borough Council’s housing department has two key priorities: preventing homelessness and producing effective services to meet the needs of homeless people. Housing legislation dictates that certain groups of people are deemed to be in ‘priority need’, meaning that if they present to the Council as homeless the Council has a duty to investigate the situation, provide temporary and perhaps also permanent accommodation.

The Mediation Service was set up over three years ago as a response to the difficulties faced by and with 16-17 year olds. The aim of mediation in the context of homelessness is to work with families to improve communication and relationships between family members.

Central government strongly encourages local Councils to use mediation as a tool to prevent homelessness.

The Bridge was adamant that its Mediation Service would work alongside the Council, to provide the support required by families in a time of heightened stress and conflict.

c. Target group and customisation

16-17 year olds are among ‘priority need’ groups. As the majority of 16-17 year olds become homeless after being asked to leave home it can be very difficult for the Council’s ‘homeless investigation’ to conclusively prove that they are ‘unintentionally homeless’.

d. Staff, equipment and other resources needed

There are currently two persons employed in the Mediation Service run by The Bridge.

e. Costs and financial input needed

No information

f. Management of the practice

To overcome the problem of ‘gate-keeping’, the Bridge researched approaches used by other Councils. Best ideas from each area have been picked out and formed a draft proposal for a Charnwood Mediation Protocol. The Council co-operated so that a joint document was created which addressed the concerns of both the

Council and the Bridge. The heart of the Protocol was built on the agreement that both organisations were delivering a service to support young people and families. To support the Housing Officers in their new roles, the Bridge paid for joint training for the Council and Bridge staff regarding working with and encouraging clients to use Mediation Services.

The Protocol has now been working for two and a half years. The Bridge Mediators and Council Housing Officers hold a bi-monthly meeting where they discuss cases referred by the Council, successes, problems and the protocol itself. Additionally the Mediation Service emails a weekly update to the Housing Officers which contains key details regarding the progress of cases they have referred. Periodically it has had to be ensured that the protocol is being adhered to by all staff but, on the whole, staff from both organisations agrees that it is a model that works, both for the clients and for the organisations.

g. Networking and co-operation with other local, regional, national bodies

The Mediation Service was the outcome of the close co-operation between the Bridge and the Charnwood Borough Council.

h. Integration into the regional innovation system

The Protocol and positive joint working between the two organisations have been recognised as a model of good practice by national organisations. The Bridge has contributed to the writing of 'Alone' in London's Good Practice Guide for Young People and Family Mediation, has received an award from Support Action Net (2006) as well as several invited presentations. In June 2007 a Leicestershire-wide conference will be held to raise awareness of Charnwood's joint working model and the Protocol that underpins this

2. Why is it good practice?

In 2005-2006 out of 66 families referred, 31 young people were able to return to or remain at home as a result of mediation. 13 were assisted to avoid using unsuitable Bed and Breakfast accommodation. 25% of the young people were involved in criminal or anti-social behaviour, of these 70% are still at home and 38% are now in long-term education, employment or training. 42% were not in education, employment or training and many had not been for over a year. Over the period that we mediated with the families, 30% of these gained long-term placements in education, employment and training. Client feedback shows that 92% reported an improvement in the relationship, 100% were satisfied with the outcome and 92% would recommend mediation to other people.

General conclusions:

Summing up, as already mentioned, the selected good practice examples are not expected to solve the problem of intergenerational inheritance of inequalities, their aim rather is to inspire the activities of local stakeholders aimed at counteracting IlofI using successful examples from other towns. It has to be underlined; however, that in no country in the study was the persistent evaluation of effectiveness of projects common. Therefore, no solid criteria for benchmarking delivery of results in the social sphere were agreed. The need for developing a grid for evaluating actions and programmes aimed at overcoming of IlofI is therefore of crucial importance.

Secondly, initiatives, organizations and institutions described above exist in all countries taking part in the PROFIT project and are in no way nation-specific. Thus, all the above-mentioned practices are perfectly transferable from one country to another. What is really important is to see that these practices, originally devised to serve other purposes, could be used to prevent the inheritance of inequality (e.g. the shelter for children, if it approaches its clients' needs holistically – as in the case of Estonian shelter – not only satisfies children's basic immediate needs, but effectively breaks the cycle of reproduction of low social status).

5. Conclusion - some lessons learned in short

The reflexivity of what it has been done in the Profit project could be summarized in three topics:

A. Lessons learned in the theoretical sphere

The central problem for theory and method in relation to policy-oriented studies has to do with creating frameworks that can handle two types of approach: “hard” and “soft” systems theory (Cheekland 1998, Cheekland, Scholes 1990). In “hard systems” there are assumed to be clear objective boundaries, built in goals, goal-seeking mechanisms and conditions. A “soft systems” approach is understood as one addressing human activity systems composed of people, where the goals are a source of conflict. A soft system is socially constructed by actors involved.

The hard system was a starting point in our project to formulate a list of questions for the research on intergenerational transmission of inequality and policy responses to that process (the framework was shown in figure 1. However, this perspective does not emphasize “that human action must be understood through actor(s) and interpreted on the basis of reasons: knowledge, intention, power, and institutions”. On the basis of a “soft” framework we could formulate some detailed questions relevant to our concerns of what “local actions” are effective platforms for combating the intergenerational transmission of inequalities and how “good practice” could be transported from one community to another:

- What are the ways in which different partners (having different interests) might handle the kinds of inter-related and inter-disciplinary problems related to the intergenerational transmission of inequalities?
- How do stakeholders come together as “partnerships”?
- How are they constructing agendas for action?

Such an attempt shows that the issue of combating intergenerational transmission of inequalities could be defined as problem-based learning. It is a process that needs time and takes place in concrete situations in regard to who is concerned and the willingness to interact, what issues are at stake and in which general framework.

The process of change is not easy and for stakeholders it is essential to develop an understanding of the new learning and practices before these practices can be successfully applied (a wide gap between best and common practice).

B. Lessons learned in the methodological sphere

- When we talk about raising local capacities to act, we are thinking of ensuring that there are human resources to help communities and groups identify opportunities, constraints and resources and develop strategies for action (including horizontal and vertical networking). People with certain competences are needed to help here. Who should they be? Should these resource people be “owned” by local communities: should they have professional status and benefit from professional networking: should they have access to specialized sources of knowledge and help – eg. through universities?
- The next research area, not fully recognized, should concentrate on the role of facilitators and the role of facilitation tools and mediation tools in the learning processes.

C. European - level learning

What do we learn from being involved in a larger European group? Despite the many similarities, there are a number of very important differences between European countries which are relevant to the issue of IIoFl.

- National level for counteracting the intergenerational transmission of inequalities seems to be commonly conceived of as providing facilitation and support rather than structures supplying sufficient resources.
- The need for national, regional and local collaboration is identified as a central problem for securing social and economic cohesion.

- The impact of the EU on social policies, especially in the new Member States, is not to be overestimated. The EU imposes an obligation on the states to formulate strategies for combating poverty and social exclusion. It makes national and local authorities consider social problems in strategic and everyday management. Commonly agreed objectives and indicators as well as the Open Method of Coordination are of particular relevance. Since 2006 *child mainstreaming* became an important element of the EU social agenda, which seems to be crucial for counteracting the intergenerational transmission of inequalities. In this respect it is essential for political leaders to commit themselves to ensuring the well-being of the next generation.

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APPENDIX 1. Final plan for using and disseminating the knowledge

Publications

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32. Trumm A. (2006) Report on top level political and social actors interviews: Estonia, *European Studies on Inequalities and Social Cohesion*, vol. 1-2, Lodz University Press.
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CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:

1. Blom R., Melin H., *Approaches to Inequality: inequality, classes and social divisions*, XVI International Sociological Association Congress, 2006: The Quality of Social Existence in a Globalising World, session: Intergenerational Transmission of Inequalities, Research Committee 19, Durban, South Africa, 23 – 29 of July.
2. Dall'Ara L., Sacchetto D., *Good practice from Rovigo (Italy)*, Final Dissemination Conference of the PROFIT Project, Spała (Poland) 12th- 14th April, 2007.
3. Dębiec P., *Together we can: good practice from Tomaszów Mazowiecki (Poland)*, Final Dissemination Conference of the PROFIT Project, Spała (Poland) 12th- 14th April, 2007.
4. Drabowicz T., *Access and exclusion. Some reflections on inequalities in the network society*, 7th European Sociological Association Conference: “Rethinking Inequalities”, ad hoc session: “Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities”, Toruń, 9th – 12th of September 2005.
5. Drabowicz T., *Digital inequalities – a case of Poland*, Equalsoc Summer School “Inequality and social cohesion”, 4-9 of September 2006, University of Trento (Italy)
6. Drabowicz T., *Digital Inequalities – New Dimension of Social Differentiation*, 2nd Interdisciplinary Conference: “Man and the mass social phenomena. Social inequalities”, University of Wrocław, Institute of Psychology, 4–6 of June, 2006.
7. Drabowicz T., *Digital Inequalities. Some empirical results and future research suggestions*, 2nd Graduate Conference in the Sociology of Culture: Culture Matters. Or not?, University of Trento, 3rd – 4th of March 2006.
8. Drabowicz T., *E-inclusion in the Information Society*, 3rd National Conference: Information Society - Functional and Dysfunctional Aspects, Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, AGH University of Science and Technology, Krakow, 23rd – 24th of June 2005.
9. Drabowicz T., *New inequalities – an access to ICT*, V Festival of Science, Technology and Art – University of Lodz, Session on Social inequalities and policy to counteract them, 21st of April, 2005.

10. Drabowicz T., *New social inequalities – access to the new communication technologies*, XV Assembly of the Polish Association of Social Work Schools: Research in the Social Work – Review of Achievements and Perspectives, Łódź, 11th -12th of October, 2005
11. Draganov D., *Experience from PROFIT Field Studies in Bulgaria*, 4th session of the UNESCO-MOST/ ISSC International Summer School “Comparative Research in the Social Sciences: Field Studies”, Sofia, 07-17 September 2006.
12. Draganov, D., *Together we can: good practice from Pernik (Bulgaria)*, Final Dissemination Conference of the PROFIT Project, Spała (Poland) 12th- 14th April, 2007.
13. Eissel D., *Lokale Ungleichheitsstrukturen (Local Structures of Inequality)* – university course winter term 2005/06.
14. Eissel D., *Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequality in Germany. Impacts of neo- liberal ideology and redistribution policy*, 7th European Sociological Association Conference: “Rethinking Inequalities”, ad hoc session: “Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities”, Toruń, 9th – 12th of September 2005.
15. Eissel D., Lorentz A., *Good Practice in fighting poverty and unemployment - the case of Giessen (Germany)*, Final Dissemination Conference of the PROFIT Project, Spała (Poland) 12th- 14th April, 2007.
16. Genov N., *Challenges of Field Research in the Social Sciences*, 4th session of the UNESCO-MOST/ ISSC International Summer School “Comparative Research in the Social Sciences: Field Studies”, Sofia, 07-17 September 2006.
17. Genov N., *Ethnic stratification of life chances: reproduction and ‘eradication’ of poverty*, XVI International Sociological Association Congress, , 2006: The Quality of Social Existence in a Globalising World, session: Intergenerational Transmission of Inequalities, Research Committee 19, Durban, South Africa, 23 – 29 of July.
18. Genov N., *Reproduction of ethnic inequalities: how policies might reduce it?* 7th European Sociological Association Conference: “Rethinking Inequalities”, ad hoc session: “Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities”, Toruń, 9th – 12th of September 2005.
19. Genov N., *What did we intellectually profit from PROFIT?*, Final Dissemination Conference of the PROFIT Project, Spała (Poland) 12th- 14th April, 2007.
20. Grotowska – Leder J., *Situation of the children in contemporary Poland – threats and opportunities*, Seminar At the Marshal’s Office of the Lodz Voivodship, 20th of June, 2005.
21. Grotowska – Leder, J. *Labour market for young people – opportunities and threats*, V Festival of Science, Technology and Art – University of Lodz, Session on Social inequalities and policy to counteract them, 21st of April, 2005.
22. Grotowska-Leder J., *Access to labour market - reality or myth? Polish labour market policy in perspective of intergenerational inheritance of inequalities*, 7th European Sociological Association Conference: “Rethinking Inequalities”, ad hoc session: “Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities”, Toruń, 9th – 12th of September 2005.

23. Grotowska-Leder J., *Contemporary Poverty in Poland (research and results)*, lecture in frames of the ERASMUS exchange, University of Padova, Institute of Sociology, on 4th of April, 2006.
24. Grotowska-Leder J., Warzywoda-Kruszynska W., *Informal Support for the Poor and Its Impact on Poverty Alleviation in Countryside Poland*, XVI International Sociological Association Congress, , 2006: The Quality of Social Existence in a Globalising World, session: Marginalisation and Poverty, Working Group 05, Durban, South Africa, 23 – 29 of July.
25. Grotowska-Leder J., *Youth Joblessness in the EU in the Globalization Time: Causes and Consequences*, XVI Conference of International Trade and Finance Association on “Globalization and its Controversies”, Lodz, 11-13 of May 2006.
26. Grotowska-Leder J., *Youth Unemployment Social Inequalities on the Polish Labour Market in perspective of intergenerational inheritance of inequalities*, lecture in frames of the ERASMUS exchange, University of Padova, Institute of Political Science on the 5th of April, 2006.
27. Ignatova E., *Local labour market’s situations, work status and standard of living*, conference: Development of Local Labour Markets, Białystok, Poland, September 2005.
28. Ignatova E., *PROFIT results*, seminar: Ethnic Aspects of Social Inequalities, were presented results from the recent research work of REGLO on social risks and quality of life in Bulgaria, Sofia, October 2005.
29. Janowska Z., *Concluding Remarks on the PROFIT Project*, Final Dissemination Conference of the PROFIT Project, Spała (Poland) 12th- 14th April, 2007.
30. Juraite K., Mikutavičienė I., *PROFIT research on national experts and elites*, seminar for local authorities and community members in Jonava, October 12-13, 2005.
31. Juraite K., *Overcoming social exclusion among young people: problems and outlooks*, conference in Jonava city: Who is Responsible for Overcoming Social Inequality: Person or the State?, Jonava 03 04 2007.
32. Juraite K., Pukelis K., *Efficacy of Social Welfare Policy in Overcoming Long-term Poverty: Challenges and Opportunities in Lithuania*, 7th European Sociological Association Conference: “Rethinking Inequalities”, ad hoc session: “Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities”, Toruń, 9th – 12th of September 2005.
33. Kokoroskou C., Coupe S., *Good policy practice examples from Loughborough (United Kingdom)*, Final Dissemination Conference of the PROFIT Project, Spała (Poland) 12th- 14th April, 2007.
34. Kokoroskou C., Coupe S., *Good policy practice examples from Loughborough (United Kingdom)*, Final Dissemination Conference of the PROFIT Project, Spała (Poland) 12th- 14th April, 2007.

35. Kokoroskou C., *Poverty and Inequality in the UK – preliminary results from a local area study*, 4th session of the UNESCO-MOST/ ISSC International Summer School “Comparative Research in the Social Sciences: Field Studies”, Sofia, 07-17 September 2006.
36. Krzyszkowski J., *Social services in Poland – the instrument of fighting social inequalities or their creator?*, 7th European Sociological Association Conference: “Rethinking Inequalities”, ad hoc session: “Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities”, Toruń, 9th – 12th of September 2005.
37. Krzyszkowski J., *Social welfare – between the welfare state and welfare society*, V Festival of Science, Technology and Art – University of Lodz, Session on Social inequalities and policy to counteract them, 21st of April, 2005.
38. Kutsar D., *A good child - the good parenting? Contradictions and dilemmas*, 12th NFRN network seminar in Uppsala, 11-12 September, 2004.
39. Kutsar D., *From Diversity towards Coherence*, international seminar organised by the University of Tartu and University of Turku, Tartu, 1-2 June 2005.
40. Kutsar D., in frames of the ERASMUS exchange, two lectures focussing on the issues of the PROFIT-project, Justus-Liebig University of Giessen (Germany).
41. Kutsar D., lecture Changing families and childhoods in Europe in the frames of the lecture courses for international master students at the University of Tartu, May 6-16 2005.
42. Kutsar D., *Listening to the poor and excluded*, International conference “Welfare States under Quadruple Pressure; Estonia, Latvia and Norway in a comparative perspective” organised by FAFO Institute (Norway), Riga, 08-10 May 2006.
43. Kutsar D., *Looking for indicators for 'risky' families and children - methodological analysis*, international conference “Comparing Childhoods, Families and Risks”, Tampere 10-11 Nov 2005.
44. Kutsar D., *On social inclusion process in the EU: understanding the underlying problems of poverty and social exclusion* (keynote paper), international conference: „Taking Forward the EU Social Inclusion Process” organised by the European Commission in Luxembourg, 13-14 June 2005.
45. Kutsar D., *Poor childhood - poor parenthood: relative estimations, decisive solutions*, COST A19 workshop in Norrköping (Sweden), 18-20 June 2004.
46. Kutsar D., *Results from the survey of young adults of Pärnu in comparative perspective*, 4th session of the UNESCO-MOST/ ISSC International Summer School “Comparative Research in the Social Sciences: Field Studies”, Sofia, 07-17 September 2006.
47. Kutsar D., *The Families - Never the Same Again*, ICCFR Conference: Families and their Relationships: Ten Years after the Year of the Family, Tallinn, 13-16 June, 2004.
48. Kutsar D., Trumm A., On PROFIT project, international joint seminar of the EQUALSOC and CHANGEQUAL, Stockholm, 23-25 November, 2004.

49. Kutsar D., Trumm A., *Poor childhood – Breaking the circle?: Perceptions of the elite of Estonia and Reflections of poverty on parenting and childhoods*, Sixteenth Annual Summit of Child Welfare Leaders World Forum held in Tallinn 18-21 Sept 2005.
50. Kutsar D., *What kind of support from the state is expected by the families*, thematic workshop on family problems, organised by the city government of Tartu. 01 November 2006.
51. Kutsar D., visiting lecture: *From the centre to social periphery: A journey without return*, for the academic staff of ZUMA in Mannheim on 06 December 2006.
52. Leaman J., *Third Way Approaches to Combating Youth Unemployment: A Comparison of Employment Policy in Germany and the UK*, 7th European Sociological Association Conference: “Rethinking Inequalities”, ad hoc session: “Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities”, Toruń, 9th – 12th of September 2005.
53. Ludwig C., *Experience from PROFIT Field Studies in Germany*, 4th session of the UNESCO-MOST/ ISSC International Summer School “Comparative Research in the Social Sciences: Field Studies”, Sofia, 07-17 September 2006.
54. Maciulskyte S., Juraite K., *Inequality Transmission from Generation to Generation: the Blaze and Misery of Political Decisions*, 7th European Sociological Association Conference: “Rethinking Inequalities”, ad hoc session: “Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities”, Toruń, 9th – 12th of September 2005.
55. Melin H., *Challenges of comparative research*, 7th European Sociological Association Conference: “Rethinking Inequalities”, ad hoc session: “Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities”, Toruń, 9th – 12th of September 2005.
56. Melin H., *Finnish Experience in Carrying out PROFIT Field Studies in a Comparative Perspective*, 4th session of the UNESCO-MOST/ ISSC International Summer School “Comparative Research in the Social Sciences: Field Studies”, Sofia, 07-17 September 2006.
57. Melin H., *PROFIT - Comparing European Inequalities*, 3rd International Summer School, “Comparative Research in the Social Sciences”. periodical event organized by the UNESCO and the International Social Science Council held in Sofia, Bulgaria, 02.– 12. September, 2004.
58. Melin H., Sandberg J., *Poverii ja Jelppii (Power and help): the good practice from Pori (Finland)*, Final Dissemination Conference of the PROFIT Project, Spala (Poland) 12th- 14th April, 2007.
59. Mikutavičienė I., *Opportunities to overcome intergenerational social inequality and poverty: national and local policy perspectives*, conference in Jonava city: Who is Responsible for Overcoming Social Inequality: Person or the State?, Jonava 03 04 2007.
60. Mikutavičienė I., *Transmission of Inequality from Generation to Generation: local community perspective*, 4th session of the UNESCO-MOST/ ISSC International Summer School “Comparative Research in the Social Sciences: Field Studies”, Sofia, 07-17 September 2006.

61. Naumanen P., *Hidden or “forbidden” inequalities? - Finnish policy-makers speak about inheriting social inequalities and policies in overcoming them*, 7th European Sociological Association Conference: “Rethinking Inequalities”, ad hoc session: “Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities”, Toruń, 9th – 12th of September 2005.
62. Petelewicz M., Rek M., *Overcoming Social Inequalities on the Local Level: A Case of Middle Sized Town in Poland*, 4th session of the UNESCO-MOST/ ISSC International Summer School “Comparative Research in the Social Sciences: Field Studies”, Sofia, 07-17 September 2006.
63. Petelewicz M., *Selection processes and inequalities at the level of pre-school education*, Triple E-DOSE International Conference „Days of Socio-Economy: Education, Employment, Europe”, Jagiellonian University in Cracow, 21-22 Sept 2006.
64. Peterson I., *Co-ordination of social services for children and families: the good practice example from Pärnu (Estonia)*, Final Dissemination Conference of the PROFIT Project, Spała (Poland) 12th- 14th April, 2007.
65. Pukelis K., *Example of the best practice to overcome factors in intergenerational inheritance of inequalities from Jonava*, Final Dissemination Conference of the PROFIT Project, Spała (Poland) 12th- 14th April, 2007.
66. Pukelis K., Mikutavičienė I., *Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities: Challenges for Educational Policy in Lithuania*, 7th European Sociological Association Conference: “Rethinking Inequalities”, ad hoc session: “Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities”, Toruń, 9th – 12th of September 2005.
67. Pukelis K., *The main goals and objectives of the EU FP6 project “Policy Responses Overcoming Factors in the Intergenerational Transmission of Inequalities*, conference in Jonava city: Who is Responsible for Overcoming Social Inequality: Person or the State?, Jonava 03 04 2007.
68. Rek M., *British „Sure Start” as an example of governmental programme of equalizing opportunities of young generation*, V Festival of Science, Technology and Art – University of Lodz, Session on Social inequalities and policy to counteract them, 21st of April, 2005.
69. Rek M., *British „Sure Start” as an example of governmental programme of equalizing opportunities of young generation*, XV Assembly of the Polish Association of Social Work Schools: Research in the Social Work – Review of Achievements and Perspectives, Łódź, 11th -12th of October, 2005.
70. Rek M., *Good practice in education: examples from European countries*, Triple E-DOSE International Conference „Days of Socio-Economy: Education, Employment, Europe”, Jagiellonian University in Cracow, 21-22 Sept 2006.
71. Rek M., Woźniak W., *Educational system as a factor that could equalize opportunities of young generation. Cases of Finland, Germany, Lithuania and Poland*, Polish Sociological Association, Section: Sociology of youth and education. Conference: Youth and education in a process of social transformation, Wrocław 15th – 16th of May, 2006.

72. Rek M., Woźniak W., *Inheritance of inequalities as a challenge for policy making. Perceptions of Polish MPs*, 7th European Sociological Association Conference: “Rethinking Inequalities”, ad hoc session: “Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities”, Toruń, 9th – 12th of September 2005.
73. Rek M., Woźniak W., *Policy towards the issue of social inequalities. Opinions of Polish MPs*, Conference: Faces of the changes. Social, political and economical aspects of Polish transformation, The School of Banking and Management in Cracow, 7th - 8th of May, 2005.
74. Rokicka E., *Intergenerational inheritance of inequalities - comparative analysis of results for 8 European medium sized towns*, Final Dissemination Conference of the PROFIT Project, Spała (Poland) 12th- 14th April, 2007.
75. Rokicka E., *Local Policy Targeted at Reducing Inheritance of Inequalities in European Countries*, XVI Conference of International Trade and Finance Association on “Globalization and its Controversies”, Lodz, 11-13 of May 2006.
76. Rokicka E., *PROFIT – overview of the project*, V Festival of Science, Technology and Art – University of Lodz, Session on Social inequalities and policy to counteract them, 21st of April, 2005.
77. Rokicka E., *Young European Adults at Risk. Constraints of Social Mobility*, Workshop: Poverty and Social Policy in Central and Eastern Europe, Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES), Sodertorn University College, Stockholm, 27-28.04. 2007.
78. Rokicka W., *Social mobility research as a source of knowledge about intergenerational transmission of inequalities*, 7th European Sociological Association Conference: “Rethinking Inequalities”, ad hoc session: “Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities”, Toruń, 9th – 12th of September 2005.
79. Trumm A., *About culture of poverty in Estonia and ways to overcome it*, seminar “Poverty and efficiency of social assistance” organized by The Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia for researchers and policy-makers in Tallinn, October 8, 2005.
80. Trumm A., *Estonia and Latvia; Poverty trends and structures in a comparative perspective*, International conference “Welfare States under Quadruple Pressure; Estonia, Latvia and Norway in a comparative perspective” organised by FAFO Institute (Norway), Riga, 08-10 May 2006.
81. Trumm A., *Experience from the field studies: Inheritance of poverty and local policy responses*, 4th session of the UNESCO-MOST/ ISSC International Summer School “Comparative Research in the Social Sciences: Field Studies”, Sofia, 07-17 September 2006.
82. Trumm A., *How Estonian elite perceives poverty inheritance?*, Annual Conference of the Finnish Social Policy Association, Turku, October 27-28, 2005.
83. Trumm A., *How poor is Estonia?*, seminar “Stratified Estonia” organised by non-governmental organisation Domus Dorpatensis, 1st of March 1, 2006.

84. Trumm A., *Impact of social policy on poverty and social inclusion in Estonia*, seminar in the Institute of Applied Social Research FAFO, Tallin, June 9-10, 2005.
85. Trumm A., *Intergenerational inheritance of inequalities in Estonia*, Conference of the Department of Sociology and Social Policy of the University of Tartu in Kääriku, 05 February 2006.
86. Trumm A., *Lack of education as a main reason for restricted social mobility in Estonia*, Triple E-DOSE International Conference „Days of Socio-Economy: Education, Employment, Europe”, Jagiellonian University in Cracow, 21-22 Sept 2006.
87. Trumm A., *Long-term indicators of poverty and social exclusion*, Estonian Statistical Union “Welfare Statistics”, Pärnu, February 2005.
88. Trumm A., *Poverty in Estonia today*, international seminar: “Aspects of poverty in Russia, Baltic States and Finland”, National Centre for Social Welfare and Health of Finland (STAKES) in Helsinki, September 8-9, 2006.
89. Trumm A., *Poverty in the East and the West of Europe: Are they comparable?*, 7th European Sociological Association Conference: “Rethinking Inequalities”, ad hoc session: “Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities”, Toruń, 9th – 12th of September 2005.
90. Trumm A., *The role of social assistance in tackling intergenerational poverty*, national seminar on social problems and social policy, Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia in Tallinn on January 12, 2007.
91. Walters L., *Child Poverty and Inheritance of Inequality*, 4th session of the UNESCO-MOST/ ISSC International Summer School “Comparative Research in the Social Sciences: Field Studies”, Sofia, 07-17 September 2006.
92. Walters L., *Intergenerational Continuity: What Continues and Why*, XVI International Sociological Association Congress: The Quality of Social Existence in a Globalising World, session: Intergenerational Transmission of Inequalities, Research Committee 19, Durban, South Africa, 23 – 29 of July, 2006.
93. Walters L., *PROFIT. Final comments*, Final Dissemination Conference of the PROFIT Project, Spała (Poland) 12th- 14th April, 2007.
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95. Warzywoda – Kruszyńska W., *How to succeed in competition for EU grant?*, MOCEE: Expert Meeting on "Promoting Internationalisation of the Social Sciences in Central and Eastern Europe", European Science Foundation in Bucharest, 17-18. April 2007.
96. Warzywoda-Kruszynska W., *Child Poverty and Intergenerational Transmission of Inequalities as a Challenge for Developed European Countries*, XVI Conference of International Trade and Finance Association on “Globalization and its Controversies”, Lodz, 11-13 of May 2006.

97. Warzywoda-Kruszynska W., *Child poverty in a society that grows rich. Attention: inequality reproduction*, seminar on “Intergenerational Inheritance of Poverty in Poland. What is known about it and how to alleviate it?”, Regional Welfare Agency”, Cracow, 28 of June, 2006.
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100. Warzywoda-Kruszyńska W., *Intergenerational inheritance of inequalities – omitted field of sociological research*, 7th European Sociological Association Conference: “Rethinking Inequalities”, ad hoc session: “Intergenerational Inheritance of Inequalities”, Toruń, 9th – 12th of September 2005.
101. Warzywoda-Kruszyńska W., keynote paper: *Child poverty – a social and political issue* at conference “Child poverty and malnutrition”, Polish Humanitarian Action, Warsaw 10-11.09.04
102. Warzywoda-Kruszyńska W., Krzyszkowski J., *Intergenerational inheritance of social inequalities and social policy, welfare and social work*, XV Assembly of the Polish Association of Social Work Schools: Research in the Social Work – Review of Achievements and Perspectives, Łódź, 11th -12th of October, 2005.
103. Warzywoda-Kruszynska W., *PROFIT project - its objectives and expected results*, XII Congress of Polish Sociological Association, Poznan, September 2004. Session: “European Research Area – Opportunity or Risk for Polish Sociology”
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108. Warzywoda-Kruszynska W., Rokicka E., *Local policy targeted at reducing transmission of inequalities*, XVI International Sociological Association Congress, , 2006: The Quality of Social Existence in a Globalising World, session: Intergenerational Transmission of Inequalities, Research Committee 19, Durban, South Africa, 23 – 29 of July.

109. Warzywoda-Kruszyńska W., Szukalski P., *Access to ICT perceived by policy-makers as new cause of social inequalities*, (poster presentation), XXV International Population Conference, International Union for Scientific Study of Population, Tours, 18-23 of July, 2005.
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114. Woźniak W., PROFIT project in the 6th European Framework Programme, conference: “6th EU Framework Programme in the light of Regional Innovation Strategy. Preparations for 7th FP”, International Research Programmes Office, University of Lodz, 26-27 June, 2006.
115. Woźniak W., *System of education as a creator of social inequalities – case of Finland and Poland*, V Festival of Science, Technology and Art – University of Lodz, Session on Social inequalities and policy to counteract them, 21st of April, 2005.
116. Woźniak W., *The role of the Polish educational system in creating and preserving social inequalities*, XV Assembly of the Polish Association of Social Work Schools: Research in the Social Work – Review of Achievements and Perspectives, Łódź, 11th -12th of October, 2005

Media releases

1. Polish TVP3, local branch in Lodz, reportage in TV News about PROFIT project and its findings, 13.04.2007.
2. Gazeta Wyborcza, *Biedni, radźcie sobie sami (Poor people, take care on your own)*, interview with Wielisława Warzywoda-Kruszyńska* 2007-04-12
3. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Polski ksiądz jak fiński rząd*, (Polish priest like Finish government), article by Marcin Markowski 2007-04-14
4. Local Lithuanian Jonava TV canal “AVVA” reported on the PROFIT findings, 03.04.2007.

5. Giessen Anzeiger, *Mit Ganztagsschulen gegen vererbte Ungleichheit*, 30.03.2007
6. Dziennik Łódzki (Łódź Daily), *Miasto przebadane (Researched town)*, 20.02.2007.
7. Tomaszow Weekly News Directory, *Genetics of poverty*, 02.02.2007
8. Respublica, Lithuanian Daily, 26.04.2006. Article by Inga Mikutaviciene.
9. Radio Krakra, local TV in Pernik Bulgaria, presentation of the PROFIT project, 27.09.2005.
10. Web portal of the Łódź Voivodeship Office – interview with Prof. Wielisława Warzywoda – Kruszyńska, 27.11.2004
<http://www.uw.lodz.pl/index.php3?str=913&datar=2004-11&id=27>
11. Sprawy nauki, *Bieda nie zna granic (Poverty knows no borders)*, 01.10.2004
http://www.sprawynauki.waw.pl/?section=article&art_id=1339
12. Forum Akademickie, *Łódzka specjalność, (Speciality of Łódź)*, 02.06.2004
<http://forumakad.pl/archiwum/2004/06/02-kronika.htm>
13. Kronika – pismo UŁ – interview with Rector of the University Prof. Wiesław Puś, nr 4(87)/2004. http://www.uni.lodz.pl/portal/kronika.php?akcja=pokaz_tekst&id_tekstu=59
14. Gazeta Wyborcza, Łódź edition, *Projekt przeciw biedzie (Project against poverty)*, 21.05.2004
<http://serwisy.gazeta.pl/metroon/1,0,2086564.html>
15. Gazeta Wyborcza, *Milion euro dla Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego od UE, (Milion euro for the University of Lodz from the EU)*
<http://serwisy.gazeta.pl/edukacja/1,51805,2085974.html>

Planned activities

Conferences

Scientific Conference “Children, Ethics, Economy”, The Bialystok School of Economics, Augustów, 13-15 of May 2007.

P. Szukalski, Family – private or public matter?

Poster presenting Profit project was presented during the conference celebrating 400 anniversary of Justus-Liebig University Giessen in Giessen, 15-16.05.2007

Scientific Conference: Polska polityka społeczna – środowisko – badania – dydaktyka, Karol Adamiecki University of Economics in Katowice, Ustroń, June 2007

P. Szukalski, Inheritance of social inequalities in Europe. Reflections on participation in the PROFIT project

Change and Resistance. An International Conference on Social Transformations and Education, University of Gdansk, University of Wolverhampton, 15 – 17 of June 2007, Gdańsk.

Wojciech Woźniak, Political Decisions and Their Social Costs. Estonia, Finland and Poland: Three Ways Out from Soviet Dominance.

Magda Rek, Spending the youth during the transition period. Life stories of young adults from post-socialist countries

An International Conference: Youth Culture/s in Europe 28-29 of June 2007, Loughborough University, UK Department of Politics, International Relations and European Studies, Loughborough Ewa Rokicka, Wielisława Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Poverty and unemployment of the Young Europeans in intergenerational perspective

8th European Sociological Association conference in Glasgow (September 2007) “Rethinking Inequalities”

Session “Rethinking Inheritance of Inequalities” is scheduled, organized by the Profit project. Following papers will be presented:

Harri Melin, Raimo Blom, Class position of young adults in 8 European countries

Ewa Rokicka, Wielisława Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Jolanta Grotowska-Leder, Perception of intergenerational inheritance of inequalities in 8 European countries

Lynda Henley Walters, Child Poverty and the Inheritance of Inequality,

Avo Trumm, Kairi Kasearu, Is the youth poverty and unemployment inherited? Perceptions of elites of Estonia, Germany and Great Britain in comparison

XIII Congress of the Polish Sociological Association: What unites us? What divides us?, 13-15 of September 2007, Zielona Góra

Plenary session “The better – the worse” will be chaired by the coordinator of PROFIT project and paper on “Risk of intergenerational inheritance of inequalities in European medium-size towns” will be presented by Ewa Rokicka

Working group on „Social inequalities and their intergenerational transmission” will be organized by Ewa Rokicka. Two papers based on project findings will be delivered:

Magdalena Rek, Marta Petelewicz, The role of significant others in a process of intergenerational transmission of inequalities. Examples from biographies of young Polish adults

Tomasz Drabowicz, Wojciech Woźniak, Digital divide = political divide? Digital inequalities as perceived by some European policy makers

Publications

“European Studies on Inequalities and Social Cohesion”, Lodz University Press.

Volume 5, 6/2006

Content:

Wielisława Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Ewa Rokicka, Magdalena Rek, On factors influencing social mobility of young adults from low status families in Tomaszów Mazowiecki

Valentina Longo, Emilio Quadrelli, Devi Sacchetto, Intergenerational inheritance of inequalities in experiences of young adults in middle-sized town of Italy

Dragomir Draganov, On factors influencing social mobility of young people from low status families in Pernik

Aile-Rahel Ausna, Kairi Kasearu, Avo Trumm, Intergenerational inheritance of inequalities in perceptions and experiences of young adults in middle-sized town of Estonia

Christina Kokoroskou, Jeremy Leaman, On factors influencing social mobility of young adults from low status families in Loughborough

Kestutis Pukelis, Kristina Juraite, Inga Mikutaviciene, Sonata Maciulskyte, Transitional stages in the life of young adults in Jonava city: education, work, family

Päivi Naumanen, Harri Melin, Taina Kuokkanen, Structural Constrains and Individual Choices. Young adults in Pori reflect upon their life opportunities

Dieter Eissel, Carmen Ludwig, Corinna Zakikhany, Two generations at risk – Life situations and life chances of young adults in Giessen

Special volume of “Przegląd Socjologiczny” (Sociological Review) will be devoted in 2007 to publish in English results of Profit project.

Special issue of periodical “Polityka Społeczna” (Social Policy) on “Inequality inheritance” will be devoted to publish in Polish results of Profit project.

Results of the third year of the project will be published in a series “European Studies on Inequalities and Social Cohesion”, edited by the Lodz University Press. National research teams will present there the results of the research based on the survey and in-depth interviews with young adults. Electronic version of the series will be attached to the PROFIT main web-site: www.profit.uni.lodz.pl

Two doctoral dissertations based on the project findings are being prepared in the Institute of Sociology, University of Lodz by Magdalena Rek and Wojciech Woźniak.