

Changing perspectives – Researching child poverty and social exclusion in CEE/CIS

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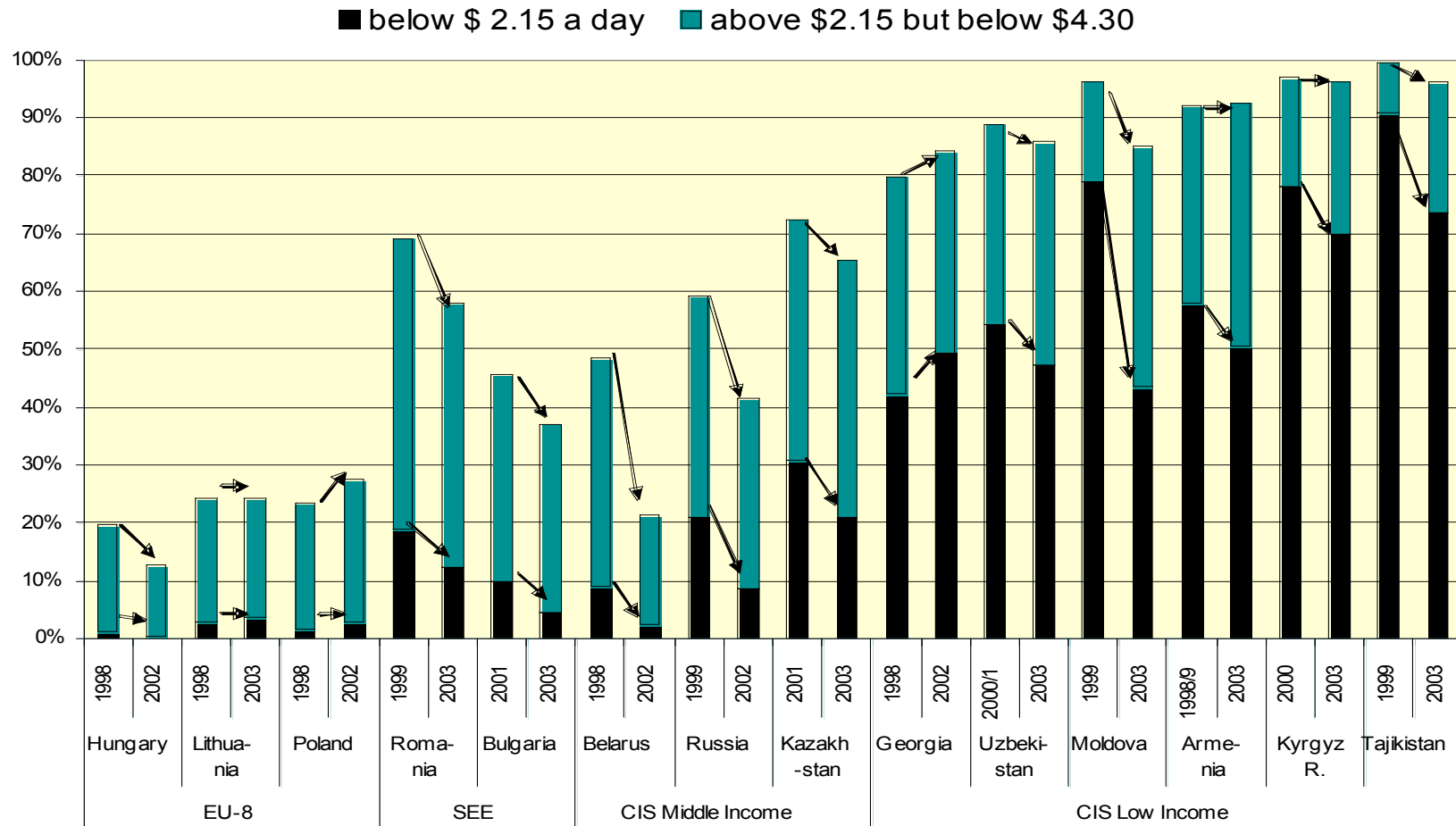
International Workshop ‘Children’s Experiences with Poverty
and Social Exclusion – Challenges for Research and Policies’

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Extreme Poverty is coming down, though vulnerability to poverty remains high

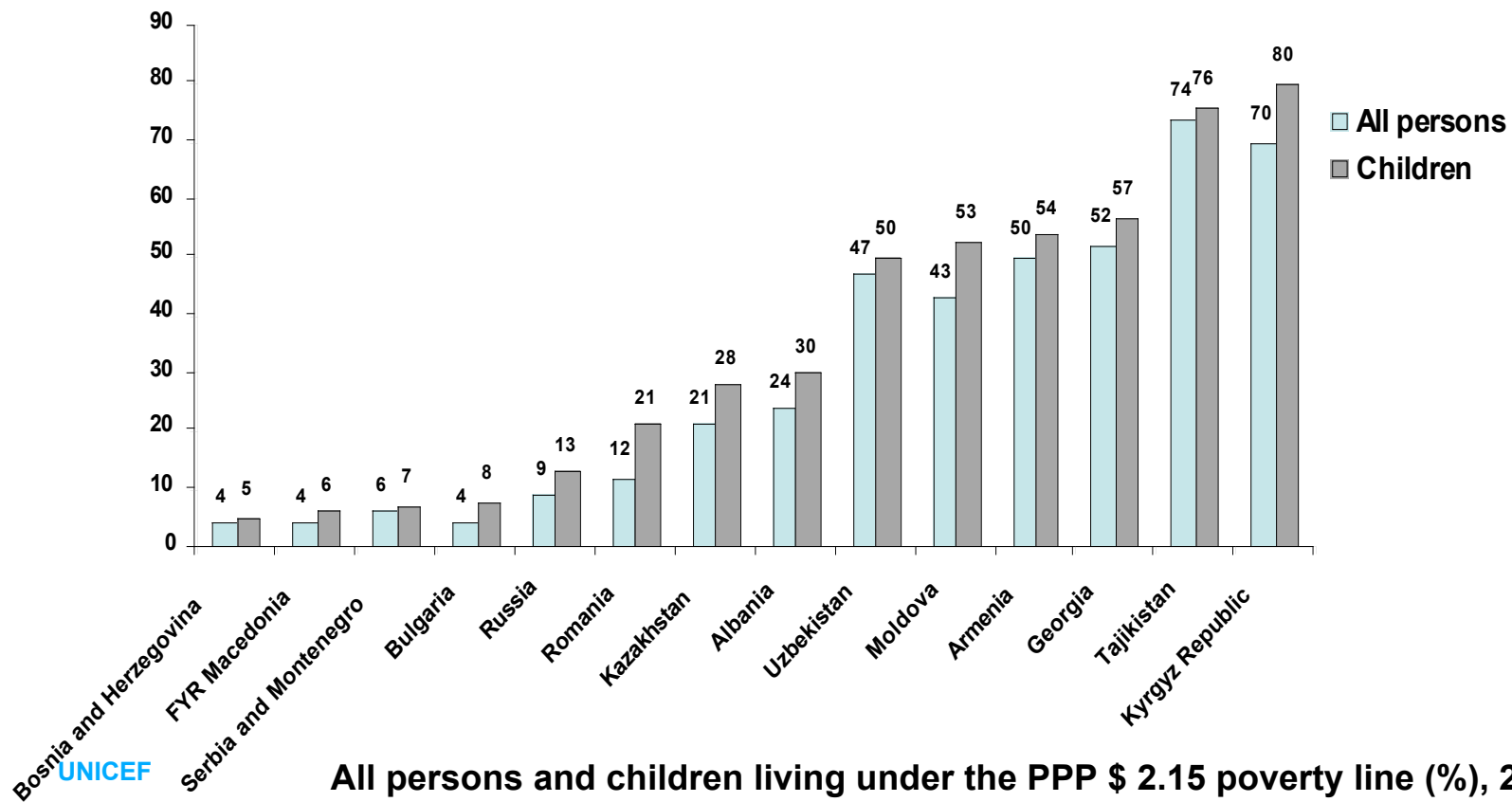


Children not benefiting...

- **Child poverty** rates remain very high
- **Disparities** in access to child care, education, health care and social services
- **Deterioration of quality** of health and education
- Old and new **risks for children**: institutionalisation, children left behind by migrants, increase in youths' alcohol and drug use, rising HIV/AIDS

Child poverty is also coming down - increasingly concentrating in certain groups

In all countries, children have a higher probability of being income poor than adults. During 1998-2003, relative poverty risk for children increased.



All persons and children living under the PPP \$ 2.15 poverty line (%), 2002-2003

A change in perspective – from macro-economics...

Most research on poverty focused on:

- Income poverty
- Inequality
- Labour market and cash transfers
- Access to health and education

Focus is on **systems** and on **adults**, parents speak on behalf of children

In the end the results are very detached from children's lives...

... to child well-being

Focus on **children's rights and experiences**

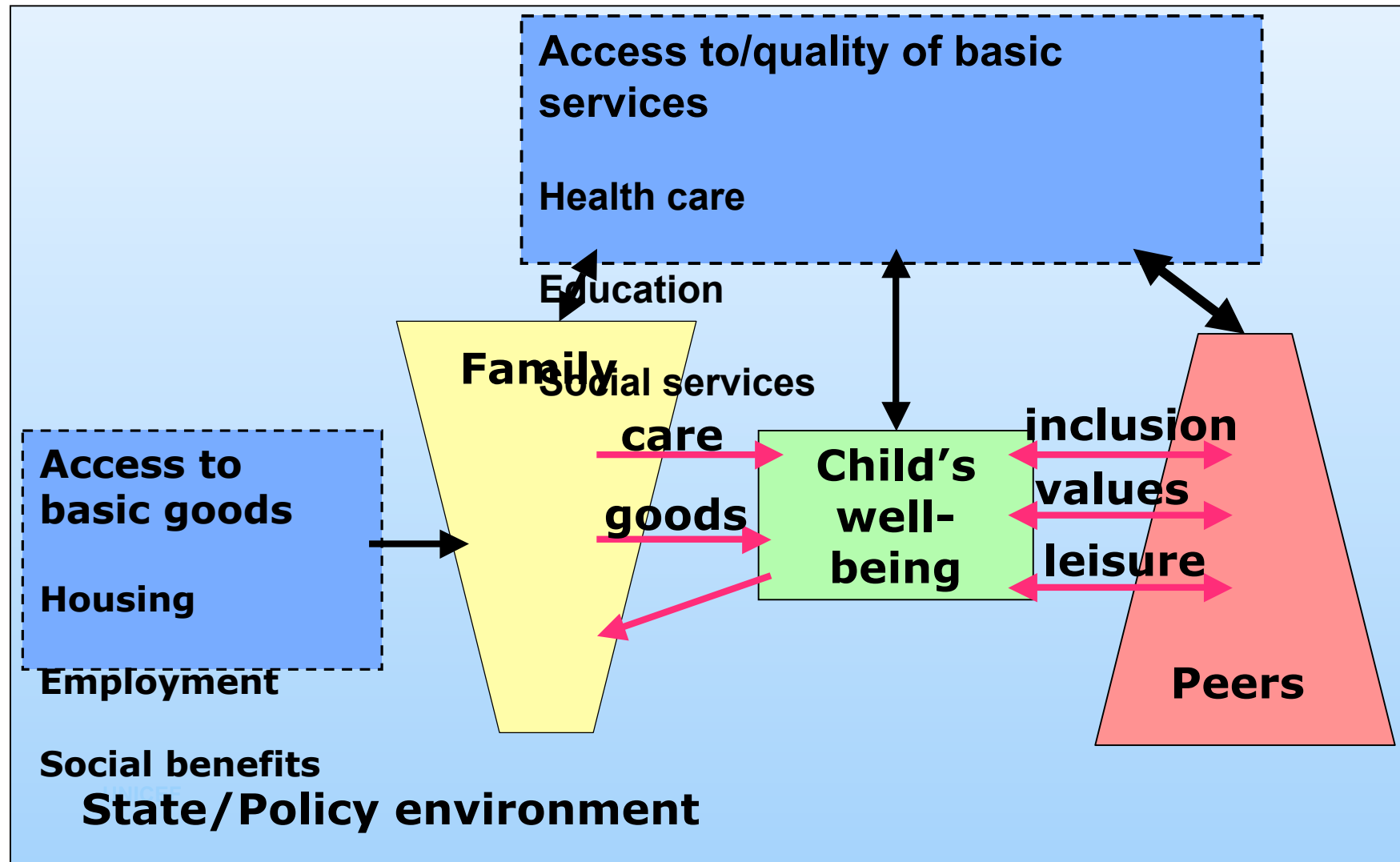
Main issues:

- Children as actors in creating their own well-being, children's agency
- Multi-dimensional
- Children as unit of analysis

A switch in perspective: **Asking different questions**

Quantitative and qualitative approaches

How does poverty impact on children's well-being?



The Child Well-Being Index

It started in the EU: Luxembourg presidency conference on 'Taking forward the EU Social Inclusion Process': **child mainstreaming** & call for development of child well-being **indicators**

Main question: How can we make the most out of the data we have?

- ⇒ Jonathan Bradshaw, Petra Hoelscher and Dominic Richardson: **Index of child well-being in the EU** for UK EU Presidency
- ⇒ UNICEF Report Card 7 on child well-being in rich countries 2007
- ⇒ Index of child well-being in CEE/CIS (UNICEF)

How does this work for the CEE/CIS?

A **pragmatic** approach

Not always the ideal indicators

Data gaps, areas we don't know much about

Make the best with what we do have

Data Sources - everything that is relevant:

Survey data (MICS3, ESPAD, TIMSS, PIRLS)

Series data (TransMONEE, UNICEF, World Bank, WHO)

54 indicators contribute to **21 components** in **seven dimensions**

No country has data for all indicators but **all have data for most dimensions**

7 Dimensions of child well-being in the CEE/CIS

Material situation

Housing

Health

Education

Peer relationships

Family forms and care

Risk and Safety

Overview: child well-being in the CEE/CIS

	Average rank	MATERIAL	HEALTH	EDUCATION	FAMILY FORMS AND CARE	HOUSING	RISK AND SAFETY	PEER RELATIONSHIPS
Serbia and Montenegro	5.8	5	11	6	5	3	5	1
Croatia	7.0		2	7	10		9	
Bosnia Herzegovina	7.2	4	16	19	2	1	1	
Ukraine	7.5	1	1	9	17	2	15	
FYR Macedonia	8.8	7	4	15	6	9	12	3
Armenia	9.0	17	8	10	3	14	2	4
Kazakhstan	9.2	8	9	4	11	13	10	
Belarus	9.3	14	3	1	14	7	17	
Bulgaria	9.3	6	6	3	18	4	19	2
Azerbaijan	9.7	3	19	20	1	12	3	
Russia	9.7	2	5	2	19	10	20	5
Uzbekistan	10.3	16	10	17	9	6	4	
Kyrgyzstan	11.3	15	12	8	8	18	7	
Romania	11.5	9	13	5	15	16	11	6
Turkmenistan	12.2	13	15	16	4	17	8	
Turkey	12.6	10	14	18		5	16	
Albania	13.0	12	18	13	7	15	13	
Moldova	13.2	18	7	12	16	8	18	7
Georgia	13.7	11	20	14	12	11	14	
Tajikistan	14.2	19	17	11	13	19	6	

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Researchers on child poverty coming!!!



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“Anthropologists! Anthropologists!”

Participatory research?

- **Change of attitudes** rather than methods – applicable to all elements of research with children
- Full involvement of all people affected by research in research process
- Children are **experts for their own situation** - Reality of children might differ considerably from adults' perceptions
- Giving back control and ownership to participants
- **What matters for children?** Focus not only on problems and difficulties but also on children's strengths and resources

Ethical issues

Child protection

Informed consent

Confidentiality

Raising expectations

Equality and non-discrimination

Fair return for participation

Data and publication

Staff safety

Wider accountability

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In: Laws, S.; Mann, G. (2004) "So you want to involve children in research?"
Save the Children Sweden.

Children's participation in different parts of research project

- Consultation on research questions
- Involvement as peer researchers
- Feedback of results to participants
- Consultation on results
- Involvement in dissemination
- etc.

Participation needs to be meaningful and not just tokenism

Participatory research with children...

- Requires sufficient **time and resources**
- Demanding in terms of social skills, sensitivity for children's situation and flexibility
 - Training of fieldworkers
 - Local support network
- Offers unique insights to get to the story beyond statistics

Conclusions: What brings children on the policy agenda?

- The well-being of children as indicator for well-being of society
 - A generation at risk
 - Intergenerational cycles of poverty and social exclusion
- Data that captures multiple dimensions of child well-being
- Research that captures the experiences of children and their families → community development

MANY THANKS!

**For more information:
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