Falling through the cracks

Improving outcomes for vulnerable populations through evidence-based policy and practice

Magdi Birtha, Sonila Danaj, Eszter Zólyomi, Veronica Sandu
A selection of our recent & current research projects on vulnerable groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persons with Disabilities</td>
<td>• Towards inclusive employment of persons with disabilities: Comparative study of six social economy organisations and companies in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Combating discrimination in the workplace: Collecting promising practices on employing persons with disabilities in the open labour market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary labour migrants</td>
<td>• Con3Post: Posting of third country nationals: Mapping the trend in the construction sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• POW-BRIDGE: Bridging the gap between legislation and practice in the posting of workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless persons</td>
<td>• Mapping trends and policies to tackle homelessness in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>• SOS Children's Village Worldwide: Feasibility Study, reforming child protection systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• UNICEF Croatia: Situation analysis of children and adolescents in Croatia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market

• Strong legal framework in EU - Anti-discrimination legislation with provision of reasonable accommodation (Employment Equality Directive, UN CRPD)

• Policies to support labour market inclusion of vulnerable groups

• Yet, persistent gap between persons with and without disabilities – leading to poverty & social exclusion

• #EUvsDiscrimination campaign – collecting promising practices from both in public and private sector, how to make reasonable accommodation work?
Inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market: Policy gaps & challenges

- : Regulatory
  - Inflexible legal framework
  - Lack of enforcement mechanisms
  - Gaps in employment and social protection policies
  - Benefit traps

- : Systemic
  - Inadequate, rigid transition policies
  - Exclusion from mainstream education system
  - Lack of qualifications
  - Finding suitable candidates

- : Attitudinal
  - Stereotypes
  - Reluctance of employers
  - Resistance of employees
  - Lack of knowledge sharing on methods and practices

- : Financial
  - Lack of state aid for social enterprises
  - Costs (perceived & real)
  - Inadequate financial incentives and non-financial support for employers
Cross-border temporary labour migrants: a quick overview

• Multiple forms of cross-border labour mobility: long-term migration, seasonal work, temporary migration, commuting, the provision of services through posting
• The fastest growing form of EU cross-border labour mobility: from approximately 1 million in 2010 to almost 3 million in 2018
• Main sending countries: PL, DE, ES, IT, SK, BE, SI
• Main receiving: DE, FR, BE, NL, AT
• Sectors: construction, transport, industry, services
• TCN posted workers
Cross-border temporary labour migrants: risks and vulnerabilities

| Tensions between national and EU regulation: e.g. the PWD with the Anti-wage and Anti-dumping law in Austria |
| Tensions between different regimes: free movement of services, migration regimes, welfare regimes, national/sectoral collective bargaining agreements: e.g. TCN posted workers between sending and receiving country regulatory frameworks |
| Tensions and gaps among enforcement agencies at the national level and complications of transnational cooperation practices among national enforcement agencies |
| Language barriers and unequal access to information and protection |
Homelessness: Main policy gaps and challenges

- Access to affordable, good quality, secure housing
- Legal recognition & enforcement of the right to adequate housing
- Integrated approach & better coordination btw different services
- Preventive support & housing-led approaches
- Monitoring & data gaps
- Services to reflect the specific needs & diverse situations of the homeless

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND RESEARCH
Monitoring homelessness OR who is being counted?

Main challenges and data gaps

- Different definitions of homelessness used
- Variety of data collection systems and methods: registers (e.g. DK), street counts, census, ad-hoc surveys
- Systematic and regular data collection is lacking in many European countries
- Cross-country comparability: EU-SILC 2018 module on housing difficulties

Source: OECD Affordable Housing Database, 2020
*Figures include more than persons 1) living rough, 2) living in emergency accommodation, and 3) living in accommodation for the homeless
Framework for a rights-based approach to adequate housing and homelessness

- 5 domains with corresponding measures (structure-process-outcome model)
- Incorporates main attributes of the right to adequate housing, as well as access to housing, homelessness services, social security and healthcare
- To serve as a basis for a comparative assessment of national policies and their outcomes in preventing and tackling homelessness
## Child vulnerability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual attributes</th>
<th>Family circumstances</th>
<th>Circumstances related to specific risk</th>
<th>Humanitarian situations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>Abandon</td>
<td>Social breakdown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>Migration</td>
<td>Domestic violence</td>
<td>Displacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific education and healthcare needs</td>
<td>Ethnicity and language</td>
<td>Trafficking</td>
<td>Natural disasters and conflicts, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addiction, conflict and contact with law</td>
<td>Geographic area, etc.</td>
<td>Neglect, abuse and exploitation, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aptitudes and skills, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Family circumstances**
  - Poverty
  - Migration
  - Ethnicity and language
  - Geographic area, etc.

- **Circumstances related to specific risk**
  - Abandon
  - Domestic violence
  - Trafficking
  - Neglect, abuse and exploitation, etc.

- **Humanitarian situations**
  - Social breakdown
  - Displacement
  - Natural disasters and conflicts, etc.
Policy Design Gaps

1. Little consideration for **systemic vulnerability factors** (e.g. persistent poverty, lack of education & healthcare services, lack of early intervention) **Solution**: family-centered approach, work with communities.

2. Little research and policy solution for “**intersection of vulnerability**” (e.g. young Roma girls, children with disabilities form poor families, displaced children of ethnic minority).

3. Little consideration for **social norms, believes, attitudes and practices** (e.g. the DI reform in Armenia, and continuous institutionalization in Belarus, Roma inclusion programs in Croatia).
Policy Implementation Gaps

1. **Good regulations versus bad reinforcement** (e.g. Juvenile justice system reform in Croatia, the reinforcement failed due to unpreparedness of human resources in the sector).

2. **Central level performance versus local level struggles**, central level initiatives poorly implemented at local level due to lack of understanding and commitment, limited human and financial resources, over-complicated and bureaucratic procedures, etc.

3. **Prevention policy versus reactive policy** (the child protection system is predominantly reactive and lacks cross sectorial preventions mechanisms such as: child risk detection mechanisms, parenting programs, family support programmes, child friendly information and education programs).
Our contribution to improving outcomes for vulnerable populations

- **Multiple** projects on **diverse** target groups, themes and approaches
- Identifying **gaps** in research, policy and practice
- Providing evidence-based **best practices**
- Building a **joint** knowledge-base through **collaboration** with policy-makers, community organisations and other relevant stakeholders
- **Involving** vulnerable groups in our research (e.g. through participatory methods, interviews, focus groups etc.)
Thank you for your attention!

Views expressed in this presentation are those of the authors and may not reflect the views of the funders.