

## **Peer Review: Children First – pilot local consultation platforms on child poverty (Belgium, 13-14 January 2015)**

**Malta<sup>1</sup>**

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### **1. Introduction**

Child poverty and social exclusion are perplexing due to their various multi-faceted aspects. They are particularly damaging because they negatively impact the life chances of the individual. Children coming from low income families suffer disadvantage and tend to exhibit low outcomes in education and intellectual development, employment, income, health, socialisation and behavioural or emotional development. As a result, there are long-lasting positive ripple effects in taking a preventative and early interventionist approach to child poverty.

Mainstreaming child well-being across different policy areas is, as a result, an important European and national policy objective in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. In view of its multi-dimensional and multi-level nature, the effective development, delivery and evaluation of policies for combating child poverty and social exclusion thus need to involve an extensive range of stakeholders, including regional and local governments, private partners as well as voluntary organisations and people (including children) experiencing poverty and exclusion.

The following discussion presents an overview of the context of child poverty and social exclusion in Malta, followed by an overall analysis on service provision within the field of early childhood education and care institutions in Malta. Subsequently, there is relevant information with regards to the coordination of child poverty and social inclusion policies and measures within the Maltese context, followed by a brief outline of the composition and growth of stakeholder involvement in the social field. It also presents an assessment of the peer reviewed 'Children First: local consultation platforms for prevention and identification of child poverty', and its possible transferability for the Maltese context.

### **2. The Context of Child Poverty and Social Exclusion in Malta**

In line with EU trends, in Malta, child poverty is higher than that of the general population. Moreover, in the last number of years, it has experienced an incremental effect. The number of children (0-17 years) in households at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion increased from 19,000 (22.2%) in 2006 to 24,300 (32.0%) in 2013, which translates into one in every three children. The majority of

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these children lived with families whose median equivalised disposable income was below the poverty threshold (€ 7,256 yearly). Since work intensity is one of the components of the risk of poverty or social exclusion, persons living in jobless households with dependent children are all at risk. In particular, Malta experienced a steep rise in the percentage of children living in households that are materially deprived from 15.5% in 2006 to 22.0% in 2013, as well as an increase in severe material deprivation from 4.9% in 2006 to 11.8% in 2013<sup>2</sup>.

The causes of poverty and social exclusion among children mainly emanate from the fact that they either belong to large families or single parent households or whose parents are working poor or jobless. Single parent households with dependent children and households with two adults and three or more dependent children experience the highest at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate among all other types of households, with 60.0% (9,131 persons) and 39.8% (6,673 persons) respectively in 2013. Conversely, households without dependent children experience a much lower at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate (19.8%).

### **3. The Institutional Coordination of Child Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion in Malta**

The main public service entities responsible for developing and implementing policy as well as delivering services for all in the area of social welfare, fall under the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity (MFSS). Therefore, the Ministry not only identifies child policy as one of the policy areas falling within its portfolio, but it is also the main administrative structure which provides for children's social protection and social inclusion issues in Malta. The primary goal of the Ministry is that every child should enjoy the right to adequate protection and participation to maximise personal and social development. Currently, the Government is in the process of formulating a National Children's Policy and Children's Act incorporating a Charter of Children's Rights, which will be fundamental toward this goal. Apart from the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity, other main strands relating to social inclusion and protection, such as education, childcare and health services, are covered by the Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE) and the Ministry for Energy and Health respectively.

Incorporating 'Sedqa', 'APPOĠĠ', and 'Sapport' agencies, the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) is the main provider of Government's social welfare services. These three main service provision structures offer a holistic combination of prevention, support and treatment services, within the fields of substance abuse; children, families and adults in need; and disability, both on a community and residential setting. Hence, apart from a specific focus on children, such services also provide for adults experiencing difficulties and vulnerable situations as well as persons with disability. Such disadvantaged situations may be present where children are directly related and thus such services help to sustain a child-friendly environment as well as prevent and support these children so as to mitigate the suffering emanating from their families' experiences or decisions. Another example of such services is the Housing Authority which is the main governmental body responsible for the provision of services to the homeless and the main policy maker on social housing, including housing exclusion and the prevention of homelessness.

Aġenzija Appoġġ is the main Government agency that is formally entrusted to safeguard the well-being of children in Malta. While abused children receive a specifically targeted service from the Child Protection Services (CPS), other children in need are offered different support services from Appoġġ, thus ensuring a more

<sup>2</sup> These figures exclude children in out-of-home care and migrant children in open centres who as at May 2014 totalled around 700, of which 174 were migrant children.



holistic and integrated child welfare service. These services include the: Fostering Service; Looked After Children Service; Children's Services; Court Services; Supervised Access Visits; High Support Service; Supportline 179 (a 24-hour free confidential support service over the telephone); Out of Home Care Programme consisting of specialised home-based care (a specialised fostering service), Co-Management of residential homes; Adoption Service; and a Hotline for the reporting of sexual abuse or exploitation of minors. Further to these specialised services, APPOĠĠ provides immediate material support for children in need, as well as therapeutic, community and generic services for children and families.

Demand for social welfare services in the area of child protection has been increasing with, for instance, about 100 new cases of child abuse being reported to APPOĠĠ every month. In view of this, the CPS recognise the importance of educating parents in positive parenting. APPOĠĠ is also committed towards the de-institutionalisation of children in out-of-home care through the facilitation of fostering and adoption processes. As at May 2014, a total of 451 children were protected by care orders – an accelerated increase over the previous seven years. According to the Children and Young Persons Advisory Board (2014), the main reasons underlying the issue of a care order include: neglect; physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse; other social issues; and unaccompanied asylum seekers who constituted around one third (156) of such children. During the same month, around 500 children were in out-of-home care (APPOĠĠ, 2014). This figure, which excludes the 174 children of asylum seekers dwelling in open centres, has doubled in the past decade. Notwithstanding the continuous deployment of the country's limited resources, needs are still not being fully met with 302 children awaiting protection services and 95 children awaiting fostering placement (APPOĠĠ, May 2014).

Community-based initiatives also help in facilitating social welfare services for children in Malta. The 'ACCESS' model is a community one-stop shop offering multiple services, varying from information, professional advice and support in a number of areas, such as employment, access to training and child day care, to social work and community services with an outreach component for a comprehensive response to the needs of surrounding communities. In addition to the four 'ACCESS' Centres, the Government is committed to improving access to and quality of social services through the LEAP Project which aims to combat social exclusion and poverty through a number of interventions, including the development of a cluster based network system at both regional and local levels and fostering social cohesion and mobility in various vulnerable localities while contributing towards: i) increasing the female participation rate; ii) the integration, retention and progression of disadvantaged groups in the labour market, whilst addressing labour market segmentation, and; iii) preserving and strengthening families through social welfare services, particularly the provision of support for the consolidation of families who are undergoing difficult situations. Through this project, the wide participation of local stakeholders will be promoted in order to ensure that individuals receive the necessary support and guidance to improve their success prospects. Consequently, the 'ACCESS' Centres will be called LEAP Centres. Family Resource Centres (FRCs) at the local level and Regional Development Centres (RDCs) at the regional level are currently being developed as part of the LEAP project with the aim of providing a point of reference to all families within the community through the provision of various forms of support: professional information, advice, assistance, education, and holistic care. These Centres also provide a range of activities to enhance the family life and abilities of parents, children and other individuals within the community, especially those coming from disadvantaged groups in society. Apart from the already existing FRC and RDC,



another 12 Centres are expected to open around Malta and Gozo by September 2015.

In terms of and in compliance to the Commissioner for Children Act of 2003, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by Malta on the 26th of January 1990) "and such other international treaties, conventions or agreements relating to children as are or may be ratified or otherwise acceded to by Malta" (Commissioner for Children, n.d.), the Office of the Commissioner for Children was set up to promote children's best interests and well-being. The Commissioner for Children is responsible for the promotion of children's rights on a national level including that of overseeing the protection and participation rights of children. Thus, the entity communicates directly with children to acquire their experience, needs and opinions.

The Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity is not only responsible for these Departments, Agencies and Authorities, but also directs various other Agencies, Boards and Commissions which promote the well-being of vulnerable groups, of which children constitute a key group. These include the Children and Young Persons Advisory Board responsible for care orders of minors, the Adoptions and Fostering Boards, the Commission for Domestic Violence, the National Commission for Persons with a Disability, the National Forum on the Family and its related National Family Commission, the National Commission for Children's Strategy and Policy, and the Office of the Commissioner for Children as mentioned above. The Ministry additionally endorses structures relating to the professionalisation of workers engaged in the social welfare sector, such as social workers and psychologists. The Department for Social Welfare Standards also acts as regulator of social welfare services related to residential care and child daycare.

The Directorate General Social Policy within the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity which aims to develop an integrated policy framework in line with societal needs and aspirations so as to enhance social well-being in general and the prospects of vulnerable people in particular, upholds the overall responsibility of promoting social cohesion by reducing the risk of poverty and social exclusion across all sectors of society, whilst mainstreaming poverty issues across other national policies.

A vast range of voluntary organisations engaged in the social and humanitarian field as well as philanthropic religious organisations are also key actors for the provision of social welfare and support to children at risk of poverty and social exclusion in Malta. Voluntary organisations play a vital role in the area of social protection and the promotion of social inclusion by reaching out at a community level to the people who are the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. The wide spectrum of voluntary organisations includes well established NGOs and small self-help groups and support groups set up and managed by service users themselves. Thus, in the provision of social welfare services, the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity networks and collaborates with a wide range of stakeholders, including other government entities, voluntary and philanthropic organisations and private partners.

#### **4. Early Childhood Education and Care Institutions in Malta**

The role of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is divided into two major fields, namely Education and Care (Social Care Services and Health). ECEC in Malta encompasses children aged from 0 to 7/8. Malta is one of the eight countries which guarantees a legal right to ECEC for all children soon after their birth, often immediately after the end of childcare leave. Early years provision is divided into two sectors: the non-compulsory sector, which is further sub-divided into child-care



for those aged under 3 years and kindergarten (KG) for those aged between 3 and 5 years and; the first two years of compulsory primary education comprising those aged 5 to 7 years (Early Childhood Education and Care in Malta: the Way Forward, MEDE, 2013).

In June 2014, Malta presented its situation with regards to ECEC by its contribution to a report entitled 'Early Childhood Education and Care in the EU 2014'. It was noted that child care services (0-3 years old) in Malta have been underutilised with only 11% of one-year-olds and 26% of two-year-olds in childcare and family support centres in 2011 (Department for Social Welfare Standards - DSWS, 2011). Affordability, cultural beliefs regarding child rearing and lack of qualified services had been identified as the main challenges. In order to tackle affordability issues and facilitate female employment, from April 2014, Malta introduced free public ECEC to children whose parents are in employment and/or in education. Moreover, an increased deduction (from € 1,300 to € 2,000) in income tax for parents whose children attend private childcare centres was implemented. Currently, the provision of ECEC for children under 3 years can be divided into five categories: Government-run settings, 'Public' child-care services, Church-run child-care centres, 'Public-private-partnerships', and Private set-ups.

KG provision (for children aged 3-5 years) is currently available within all State primary schools, most of the Independent schools and several Church schools. The State offers free of charge education as from ages 3 to 16 years to all children of families residing in Malta. Although Independent schools charge fees and Church schools ask for voluntary donations, availability, accessibility and affordability do not appear to be issues for families to enrol children at Kindergarten. This is due to free of charge State-funded settings attached to every primary school located in all the towns and villages in Malta, offering a good quality service of informal holistic education. Moreover, the State also offers daily healthy snacks of fruit, vegetables and milk to each student, and recently introduced Breakfast Clubs to provide one hour care service before school hours.

Primary education also includes certain services which may be provided through other sectors, such as health and social welfare services. For example, the provision of learning support assistants (LSAs), assistance for speech and language development, and financial help for health necessities to children who are at-risk of poverty. These services promote support, inclusion and empowerment. Furthermore, other care services include free State healthcare, such as amongst others: Child Development Assessment Unit (CDAU), Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Early Intervention, and Medical Visits.

Moreover, there are documents that can provide further information in this field, such as the: i) National Curriculum Framework for All 2012; ii) Early Childhood Education and Care: A National Policy; iii) National Standards for Child Day Care Facilities.

ECEC plays an essential role in combating child poverty and preventing the intergenerational transmission of poverty, as well as promoting social mobility and social inclusion.

## **5. The Composition and Growth of Stakeholder Involvement in Malta**

The Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties (MSDC) is the main entity responsible for the regulation of voluntary organisations as well as the coordination of consultation practices and dialogue with civil society and social partners. Apart from the provision of information and funding support on EU



policies, legislation and programmes, the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC), which falls under the remit of this Ministry, is responsible for the coordination of consultative sessions with civil society on EU policies and other decision-making processes with the aim of engaging stakeholders and fuelling national debate on European ideals, values, objectives and long term strategies. These tasks are accomplished through the structures of a Core Group<sup>3</sup> which deals with generic issues of national concern, and nine sectoral committees dealing with a number of specific policy areas, including one focussing on Employment, Social Policy and Health and another on Education, Youth, Culture and Sport<sup>4</sup>. Such fora offer a permanent and regular process of stakeholder dialogue and involvement, where social partners have increasingly become fundamental actors in the development and evaluation of policies developed at the EU level. The MEUSAC Employment, Social Policy and Health sectoral committee offers a multi-stakeholder representative structure to liaise with different categories of stakeholders engaged in the social field and has been successfully utilised as a platform for consulting with stakeholders on main social inclusion policy documents, such as the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) and the National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion (NSRs). Despite its effectiveness and wide representation, these fora are largely limited to the EU dimension and apart from being reserved to organised social partners, tends to be relatively technical, which factors may hinder the participation of the general public, particularly parents/guardians and children experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

Malta also has a number of consultative and advisory bodies, such as the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) and the recently appointed National Consultative Committee for the South of Malta. The MCESD engages in social dialogue on socio-economic issues with the aim of providing opinions and recommendations to the Maltese Government. The National Consultative Council for the South of Malta brings together experts from diverse fields, such as the environment, culture, health, industry and social development, with the aim of identifying and better understanding the problems found in the targeted areas. Such insight would in turn generate suggestions as to how these realities can be addressed. For this purpose, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2014, the Council published a preliminary report with proposals to regenerate the South of Malta, where one of the proposals is suggesting alternative schooling, lifelong learning and social inclusion.

The participation of people experiencing poverty is increasingly being acknowledged as a principal objective in the development of social inclusion and social protection policies, both as a tool for individual empowerment and as a governance mechanism. In this regard, Malta holds a relatively good experience of successful and meaningful engagement with service users and people experiencing poverty and exclusion. Some interesting examples include the consultation processes endorsed in the drafting of the NSRs for the 2006-2008 and 2008-2010 OMC cycles, as well as the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion (2014-2024).

Extensive consultations with stakeholders preceded the drafting of the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (2006-2008). A national consultation seminar in collaboration with the Anti-Poverty Forum was held for government departments, voluntary organisations and the general public. Feedback from policy makers,

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<sup>3</sup> The Core Group brings together Government representatives, political parties, constituted bodies, civil society representatives and Government appointees.

<sup>4</sup> The other sectoral committees deal with: Agriculture and Fisheries; Competitiveness and Consumer Affairs; Economic and Financial Affairs; Environment; General Affairs; Justice and Home Affairs; Transport, Telecommunications and Energy.



service providers and service users was gathered by a seminar for service users, service providers and policy makers organised to give service users the opportunity to engage in open dialogue with politicians and key policy makers in the area of social welfare. Malta's National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (2008-2010) built upon the mobilisation and involvement of stakeholders in the Social OMC process by providing more space to service users and service providers. The Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity organised focus group seminars targeting people who are at increased risk of social exclusion. Service users and service providers were consulted via separate seminars addressing issues concerning various sectoral issues. Focus groups on these same issues were also held in Gozo to address regional specificities.

Malta's National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion (2014-2024) aims to deepen current awareness of poverty and social exclusion and illustrate the different experiences of people by a more experiential and evidence-based approach. It is important to note that whilst acknowledging the fact that no one is spared from the possibility of falling into poverty and social exclusion, the strategy focuses on four main populations: children, elderly persons, unemployed persons, and the working poor. Besides children being classified as a main target population, the other three target population groups within this policy also influence and correspond to the situation of children with regards to poverty and social exclusion. Prior to its publication as a Green Paper, extensive outreach-oriented consultations were carried out with a wide range of stakeholders, including national and regional government entities, the private and voluntary sectors and the general public. The process included three tiers of consultations on the goals, measures and mechanisms to combat poverty and social exclusion within the local context. Moreover, the Strategy was first issued as a Green Paper in order to further enable the general public to put forth their comments and reactions. Indeed, the Strategy is viewed as offering a public involvement continuum, from information gathering and sharing, dialogue and awareness-raising, to engagement and partnership in the decision-making process. Apart from various universal policies, this national strategic policy also places a more targeted approach to the promotion of social inclusion prospects of children and young people, being classified as a main vulnerable group, by the following recommended strategic policy actions:

- consolidating outreach and preventative services to enable early identification and intervention of high-risk children and youth;
- setting-up of crisis residential centres for abused and neglected children;
- consolidating community-based placements for children in out of home care by facilitating adoption, fostering and other community-based settings and supporting those leaving residential care;
- promoting social participation and voluntary work among young people and facilitating the transition from education to the labour market and;
- expanding the setting-up of Youth Hubs.

In 2015, Malta shall continue to address the well-being of society in general and vulnerable people in particular, through the introduction of innovative measures emanating from the national budget such as in-work benefit, the payment of a new child supplement<sup>5</sup> and the tapering of benefits for single parents<sup>6</sup>. These three

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<sup>5</sup> Malta consolidated child benefit provision by the introduction of a € 400 yearly Child Supplement to low income parents. This supplement is subject to a number of eligibility (including yearly income of parent/s) and conditional criteria (such as regular school attendance, necessary medical visits and participation in sports and cultural activities). If these conditions are not met, the benefit is deposited in a bank account on behalf of the child to be utilised for education and training purposes. The supplement is granted until



measures, amongst others, shall contribute towards increasing disposable income and promoting quality of life. In addition, to promote the activism of vulnerable groups which influence child poverty, Malta granted a credit (between € 200 and € 1,000) to single parents who receive social assistance upon enrolling in vocational course or entering the education system on a full time basis and; increased the allowance for children with disability (from € 16.31 to € 20 per week).

Consultative sessions on poverty and social inclusion issues which endorse more directly the views of service users and people experiencing poverty and social exclusion have also been held on a regular basis by the voluntary sector. In 2013, the Anti-Poverty Forum (APF) Malta organised two conferences, focussing on poverty amongst children and elderly people with the aim of engaging stakeholders on these issues and influencing national and EU level policy and practice, including amendments to legislative provisions. Additionally, although not directly linked to poverty and social exclusion, children have been involved in the Draft National Children's Policy which aims to facilitate the well-being and healthy growth of all children.

The recently set up President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society also strives to detect and address poverty and social exclusion through its four entities and eight fora to act as consultation platforms, of which one entity was entrusted to focus on the specific theme of childhood and three of the fora assigned to address children, families and the community. These structures provide an additional platform to empower children and young people to voice their views and opinions on matters that concern them as well as provide a solid framework for research development in the area to promote more evidence based policy.

The participation of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion from the consultative policy context has been diminished as a result of the Europe 2020 strategy requesting National Reform Programmes. Previously, consultation prior to the publication of national policy documents had resulted in the institutionalisation of stakeholder involvement. The Europe 2020 strategy has various positive aspects arising from the coordination of economic, environmental and social policies, however the economic dimension is given greater importance over social issues.

## **6. Relevance of the Belgian Consultation Platforms for Malta**

Belgium's federal measure for the support of local consultation platforms for the prevention and detection of child poverty provides a good practice example of an effective mechanism for engaging relevant stakeholders in the development and coordination of preventing and detecting child poverty. Moreover, through the Belgian Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion and the Public Centres for Social Welfare (PCSWs), particularly the creation of local consultation platforms, it encourages and enables the participation of all stakeholders in the planning and early implementation stages.

Through the Children First project, the local platforms strive to detect child poverty and social exclusion of children in a preventive and proactive way, by the improvement in information flow and coordination among different key stakeholders involved in the work with children in order to collectively find and actualise solutions. By virtue of the local consultation platforms operating in various municipalities across Belgium, the Public Centres for Social Welfare (PCSWs) are

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the child reaches the age of 23. For the first three children, the supplement will be given in full (€ 400), and for every subsequent child, the supplement will be halved (€ 200).

<sup>6</sup> Employed single parents will retain 65% of social assistance for the first year, 45% in the second year and 25% in the third year. Their employers will also benefit from 25% of the benefit for the first three years.





the main point of reference in guiding the battle against child poverty on the local level. Via various inter-sectoral services, the PCSWs provide an integrated and tailored service to combat child poverty and social exclusion.

Being a main contribution to the Europe 2020 and SIP goals, the Belgian Children First programme will prospectively prevent the intergeneration transmission of poverty, develop effective and efficient policies on early intervention and prevention, provide better integrated prevention and intervention services and, strengthen stakeholder coordination.

Despite being of interest and utility, the fact that Malta is a small island State and has close-knit networks contributing to better social cohesion, it is far easier to reach relevant stakeholders such as service providers and service users for consultation purposes. As a result, whilst providing a highly interesting and innovative initiative, the platform may not be fully relevant/transferable for the local context.

As observed from the above discussion, Malta provides a somewhat similar community development structure through the ACCESS centres and the LEAP project. Moreover, similar to the Belgian National Plan to Combat Child Poverty which invited children and young people to participate in a dialogue with policymakers, in Malta, children were involved in the drawing up of various policy documents such as the Draft National Children's Policy, as mentioned in the previous section, and the standards for residential homes developed by the DSWS. Indeed, as observed by the above-mentioned examples, Malta has had quite a valuable, though ad hoc experience in the involvement of children in the policy process, including children and young people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

On a national level, Malta endorses the Europe 2020 strategy main headline targets by undertaking to lift around 6,560 people out of risk of poverty or social exclusion. As mentioned earlier, in December 2014, Malta published the 'National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion', a strategy which is expected to contribute positively towards this target. This strategic policy addresses all forms and multi-faceted aspects of poverty, particularly targeting the four main groups which are at highest risk of poverty in Malta. One of these targets groups which this strategy addresses is children (0-17 years) and young persons (18-24 years). Hence, although Malta does not have a strategic policy focused solely on child poverty as Belgium, it outlines various strategic policy actions aimed towards the promotion of social inclusion prospects for children and young people. Preceded by months of consultations aimed at creating national awareness and promoting a nationwide appraisal of poverty and social exclusion, this national strategic policy also provided a good opportunity for enabling all stakeholders to participate in the policy making process to identify the challenges ahead.

Within the 2014 National Reform Programme (NRP), child poverty is not only featured as a subtitle with specific measures focusing particularly on the most vulnerable children such as out-of-home care and fostering services, but also mainstreamed throughout various other sections and policies, such as increasing labour participation by amongst others: the introduction of free childcare centres; initiatives to open schools earlier; support to after-school care services, and reduction of income tax for the use of childcare centres for parents who send their children to childcare centres against payment. This concurs with the Belgian national child poverty reduction plan actions aimed at parents to overall improve the situation for families.

Malta acknowledges the dimension stressed by the Commission for effectively tackling child poverty in the Member States by: i) the adoption of comprehensive



and integrated multi-dimensional strategies and policies; ii) the effective mainstreaming of children's policies and rights; iii) the effective coordination of universal and more targeted policies; iv) stakeholder involvement (including children's participation) and; evidence-based policies. Indeed, in the fight against child poverty and social exclusion Malta adopts a 'progressive universalism' approach by endorsing both universal as well as means-tested initiatives for safeguarding vulnerable children and effectively promoting a good quality of life for all children.

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