



Project No. CIT2-CT-2004-505978

**WELLCHI NETWORK**

The well-being of children: the impact of changing family forms, working conditions  
of parents, social policy and legislative measures

COORDINATION ACTION

Priority 7: Citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society

REPORT OF THE LOCAL AGENTS MEETING

**“The Well-being of Children in the European Multicultural Society”**

**National Centre for Social Research (EKKE)**

Athens, Greece

24<sup>th</sup> March 2007

Start date of the project: 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004

Duration: 36 months

**WELLCHI NETWORK PROJECT**  
**Third Meeting with the Local Agents**  
**The Well-being of children in the European multicultural society**

**National Centre for Social Research (EKKE)**

**Athens, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2007**

The third meeting with the Local Agents of the WELLCHI Network was successfully held at the National Hellenic Research Foundation (EIE) on 23 March 2007 in Athens. It was organized by the Greek team - researchers and external collaborators of the National Centre for Social Research (EKKE). **Academics and students, NGO representatives and policy makers participated. It was also covered by the press.** The Minister of Health and Social Solidarity Mr. Konstantopoulos and the EU MP Ms Panayiotopoulou-Chassiotou made introductory speeches.

### **Organisation**

The workshop was divided in 4 sessions with 20 speakers. Each session had a Chair whose role was to ensure that the session runs smoothly and to time and to reserve 10 minutes for a discussion period.

**Friday 23 March 2007, 9:30-10:30**

#### **A. Opening and welcoming session**

Opening and welcoming by **Prof. Ioannis Yfantopoulos**, President of the National Centre for Social Research. Professor Yfantopoulos gave a short speech on the well-being indicators for children.

The honorary guest **Maria Panagiotopolou-Kassiotou**, MEP and President of the inter-party committee of the European Parliament Committee for “Family and Child Protection” talked about children’s rights in the European Union. She said that although there is no legal basis for actions for the protection of children, European legislation and policies cover a wide range of issues that refer to the consolidation of the rights of children with the following objectives:

- **Reducing child poverty by 2010** as the Lisbon Agenda stipulates with particular emphasis on the most vulnerable children categories i.e. migrants, families with many children and single-parent families.
- **Preventing and combating violence** against children, women and young people (Daphne programme)
- **Promoting children's safe use of internet** and new audio-visual materials (programme **Safer Internet Plus (2005-2008)**).
- **Health protection** that includes actions for healthy nutrition, medicine control for children and against alcohol abuse and smoking.
- **Promoting educational programmes** in the context of lifelong learning.

Ms Pnagiotopoulou-Kassiotou also emphasized that the interest of EU for children is evident with the institution of a **European Strategy for the protection of the rights of children (4 July 2006)**.

The second honorary guest **Mr. G. Konstantopoulos, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Solidarity** highlighted some of the welfare policies in Greece and acknowledged the significance of maintaining social and economic research as a tool for the coordination of actions.

### **Session 1: Presentation of the WELLCHI project, 10:30 -11:00**

The first session involved a concise presentation of the WELLCHI project, main findings and conclusions. Dr. Laura Alipranti presented the findings and conclusions of the project while Dr. Niki Kalogiratou talked about the workshops and conferences that took place during the 36 months duration of the project and summarized their objectives and results.

#### **Presentation of the European Programme WELLCHI**

by the Greek project team

Dr. Laura Maratou-Alipranti, Research Director EKKE,

Dr. Niki Kalogiratou External collaborator EKKE,

### **Session 2: Children and adolescents in the Multicultural Society, 10.30-11.30**

**Children and adolescents in the Multicultural Society.**

Chair: Dr. Ioanna Tsiganou, Senior Researcher *EKKE*

Prof. Ioannis Sakelis, *EKKE - Panteion University*  
“Measuring poverty: EU-SILC Findings EKKE/NSSG”

Dr. Laura Alipranti, Anna Nikolaou, *EKKE*  
“Defining and measuring child poverty: Contemporary trends and issues”

Irene Fereti, *Institute of Child Health*  
“Violence against children: Research data and confronting policy”

Dr. Gitsa Kottaridi, Eleni Adam, *EKKE*  
“Growing up in Athens: Quality of life of children and adolescents”

Prof. Froso Motti-Stefanidi, *University of Athens*  
“ Psychological tolerance of immigrant and repatriated adolescents”

The second session was focused around the themes of poverty, violence, children’s quality of life and migration. Professor Sakelis provided an overview of how poverty is measured in the EU and presented child poverty rates in Greece. He emphasized that social transfers are ineffective because they do not reach the poor population. He suggested that a State intervention policy with particular emphasis on Education by improving the public school combined with a national income for the families that are really poor constitute two basic priorities for combating child poverty. Dr. Laura Alipranti and Anna Nikolaou talked about the problems of child poverty measurement and Eurostat’s so far unwillingness to introduce non-income related well-being indicators for children in the SILC or to extend poverty research to children. They argued that there is considerable international experience and expertise in the field of child poverty and well-being. By drawing examples from national large-scale surveys they presented indicators that could qualify for the assessment of children’s overall well-being in relation to poverty. Irene Fereti highlighted some of the problems of family violence and child abuse and how vulnerable categories of children are often exposed to physical and psychological, neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation and bullying exacerbating the risks of victimisation at home, school, community and society.

Dr. Gitsa Kottaridi and Eleni Adam presented research findings about different perceptions of the quality of life between Greek and migrant students based on a large-sale survey in Athens. Also Professor Frosso Motti-Stefanidi presented a

case study that links poverty and exclusion to the issue of psychological tolerance among Greek, migrant and repatriated adolescents in Apropyrgos which is a poor area in Attica. Her research showed that psychological tolerance is an intrinsic characteristic of each individual that relates to his/her ability to adopt to harsh conditions. Poverty is common among Greeks, migrants and repatriated adolescents that reside in the particular area and the speaker argued that unless there is state provision in the long run disruption may follow.

**Session 3: Round Table discussion, 12:30-13:30**

**“The role of Social agents in the wellbeing of children: Contemporary trends and perspectives”**

**Chair: Dr. Laura Maratou – Alipranti**  
*EKKE, National Centre for Social Research*

**Giorgos Mosxos**  
*Assistant Ombudsman of Children*

**Giorgos Nikolaidis**  
*Director of Family Relationships Institute of Child Health*

**Evi Chatzivarnava**  
*Research director of IKPA*  
*Institute of Social Protection and Solidarity*

**Irene – Ira Valsamaki**  
*President of the Municipal Nursery, City of Athens*

The round table discussion produced a great deal of information about the status of children in the Greek society and policies and actions for their protection. Mr **G. Mosxos**, Assistant of the Greek Ombudsman for Children talked about children’s demands and the need for communication. In the past few years a team of experts has visited a number of schools, institutions and prisons and talked with children and adolescents who expressed their problems. Also members of the team have exchanged valuable information with representatives of private and public agencies (i.e. Justice, police). Mr Mosxos emphasised children’s major demand for communication with the adult society. A child may face problems of inclusion and poverty or educational

problems and he/she cannot find support. The family, the school and society do not communicate with the children allowing them to express their feelings, state their needs, become accepted as equal members of the society and gain the trust of the adults. Children want to know what the society's norms are, what their rights are, what the rights of others are and how to handle their rights and responsibilities of adolescence. They do not know to whom they can talk about their most personal problems without experiencing further abuse. This is particularly the problem children most commonly face in small towns as there are no decentralised social services that could intervene and support a family for a very long period of time.

*Ms. Evi Chatzivarnava*, Research Director of the Institute of Social Protection and Solidarity, provided an overview of key activities and actions that the Institute has taken in the past year to enable collaboration between the Ministry of Health and Solidarity and other agencies for the protection of families. Ms Chatzivarnava briefly referred to the following actions:

- Combating social exclusion
- The Institute issued a translated version of the European Council recommendations for institutionalised children.
- Supporting the volunteers' network that supports families with preschool children.
- Network for preventing and combating physical punishment of children

The "Institute of Social Protection and Solidarity" is a research, documentation, evaluation, training and specialised practices organisation that is collaborating with a wide network of governmental and non-governmental organisations in promoting actions and changing practices in relation to children's education.

*Irene-Ira Valsamaki*, Deputy Mayor of Athens, President of the Municipal Nursery of the City of Athens, argued that the state lags behind in the field of social and psychological support for children. Greece does not have welfare structures similar to those that exist in other countries. For example, the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs has centres only for children facing learning difficulties. When children have problems at home or at school they do not know to whom they can talk about their problems and in most cases they try to deal with the problem alone or by talking to a friend. Ms Valsamaki also pointed out that there is almost lack of coordination between various agencies and that the country was

unprepared to receive a large number of migrants and their children. The Municipal Nursery has 95 nurseries with almost 5,700 children and 1,700 staff.

Mr **G. Nikolaidis**, Director of Family Relationships in the “Institute of Child Health”, suggested that differentiations in health indicators based on social inequalities seem to affect mortality and morbidity indicators among children and adolescents. In particular, he argued that in a society that the rich become richer, even if the poor do not become poorer, child mortality increases. The economic status of the family in the social hierarchy is closely linked to the health status of children.

#### **Session 4. Comments on Good Practices from NGO Representatives** **13:30-14:30**

**Chair: Dr. N. Fakiolas**, Researcher A’, EKKE

**Foundation for the Child and Family**, Ino Konstandopoulou

**Child’s Smile**, Mahi Lazaridi, Hara Grosdani

**SOS Children’s Villages**, Niki Avgerinou

**KMOP**, Konstandina Bitsi

**ACTIONAID**, Voula Papagianni

**ARSIS**, Katerina Poutou

The focus of the third session was on the perspective of NGO representatives and their initiatives to improve the well-being of children. Ino Konstandopoulou presented the initiatives of the “**Foundation for the Child and Family**” regarding child abuse, trafficking, multiculturalism, the promotion of peace and various joint ventures with foreign NGOs. She stressed the importance of vision for the betterment of society.

Hara Grosdani from the NGO “**Child’s Smile**” remarked that the wellbeing of children also concerns adults, because today’s children will be tomorrow’s adults. She observed that in conferences people meet to discuss the same problems without ever finding solutions. “It is therefore better to sit down and think” for solutions, in order to advance as a society.

Voula Papagianni presented the activities of **Actionaid** in Greek schools, concerning four programs on the education of children as citizens of the world, with the moto “think globally, act locally” as a philosophy of life, in secondary education.

Konstantina Bitsi enumerated various **KMOP (Centre for Protection of Family and Children)** initiatives on the prevention of students dropping out from primary and secondary education in the area of Perama, a downgraded suburb of Piraeus. This includes assistance with educational, psychological and social needs for students in the area's schools.

Niki Avgerinou gave details on the background of children in **SOS Children's Villages in Athens, Thessaloniki** and (soon in) Thrace. These include abandoned children, or those coming from families whose parents face problems of substance abuse, psychiatric or prison incarceration.

Finally Katerina Poutou highlighted the initiatives taken by the NGO **ARSIS** in five Greek and a foreign city (Tirana), where they assist educationally (and otherwise) children from poor, immigrant, abusive or negligent families, or children working in the streets as well as children with substance abuse problems, confinement sentences and criminal offences.

All the participants in this 3<sup>rd</sup> Local Agent Meeting were very interesting to hear about WELLCHI project and was concluded with the remark that little has been done by the state in the last years to improve the situation of children from problematic social backgrounds. Fundings drawn from the 6<sup>th</sup> European Framework were used with little effect. As a result, the situation in Greece has stagnated on the domain of children's welfare, with various relevant indices showing a deterioration rather than an improvement.

# **ANNEX**



## THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN IN THE EUROPEAN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Third meeting with Local Agents

National Hellenic Research Foundation  
48 Vas. Konstantinou, Room L. Zervas

Athens, 23 March, 2007



National Centre  
for Social Research



WELLCHI NETWORK  
The well-being of  
children



6<sup>th</sup> Framework  
Programme of the  
European Commission



## PROGRAMME FRIDAY 23 MARCH

9:00 - 9:30 Registration

9:30 -10:30 Welcoming and Introductory speeches by

Prof. Y. Yfantopoulos (University of Athens), President of EKKE

M. Panagiotopoulou - Kassiotou, Nea Dimokratia MEP, President of the Inter-party Committee of the European Parliament for “Family and Child Protection”.

“The interest and actions of the European Union for the well-being of children”

G. Konstantopoulos, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Solidarity

10: 30-11: 00

Presentation of the European Project WELLCHI  
by the Greek project team

Dr. Laura Maratou-Alipranti, Research Director EKKE,

Dr. Niki Kalogiratou External collaborator EKKE,

Anna Nikolaou, External collaborator EKKE

11: 00-11:15 Break

11:15-12:30

Children and adolescents in the Multicultural Society.

Chair: Prof. Y. Yfantopoulos, Director of EKKE

Prof. Ioannis Sakelis, *EKKE - Panteion University*

“Measuring poverty: EU-SILC Findings EKKE/NSSG”

Dr. Laura Alipranti, Anna Nikolaou, *EKKE*

“Defining and measuring child poverty: Contemporary trends and issues”

Irene Fereti, *Institute of Child Health*

“Violence against children: Research data and confronting policy”

Dr. Gitsa Kottaridi, Eleni Adam, *EKKE*

“Growing up in Athens: Quality of life of children and adolescents”

Prof. Froso Motti-Stefanidi, *University of Athens*

“Psychic tolerance of immigrant and repatriated adolescents”



- 12:30 - 13:30 Round Table discussion  
"The role of Social agents in the wellbeing of children:  
Contemporary trends and perspectives"  
Chair: Dr. Laura Maratou - Alipranti  
*EKKE, National Centre for Social Research*
- Giorgos Moschos  
*Assistant Ombudsman of Children*
- Giorgos Nikolaidis  
*Director of Family Relationships Institute of Child Health*
- Evi Chatzivarnava  
*Research director of IKPA  
Institute of Social Protection and Solidarity*
- Irene - Ira Valsamaki  
*President of the Municipal Nursery, City of Athens*
- Lampros Kanellopoulos  
*President of UNICEF Greece*
- 13:30 -14:30 Comments - Good practices  
by NGO representatives  
Chair: Dr. N. Fakiolas, Senior Researcher *EKKE*
- Foundation for the Child and the Family, Ino Konstantopoulou*
- SOS Children's Villages, Niki Avgerinou*
- Family and Child Support Centre KMOP, Vivi Papadimitriou*
- Children's Smile, Machi Lazaridi, Chara Grosdani*
- ACTIONAID, Voula Papayianni*
- ARSIS Social Organisation for Supporting the Young,  
Katerina Poutou*
- Together for the Child*
- 14:30 Cocktail

WELLCHI Network [www.ciimu.org/webs/wellchi/](http://www.ciimu.org/webs/wellchi/)

ΣΥΜΜΕΤΕΧΟΝΤΕΣ ΦΟΡΕΙΣ



**National Centre for Social Research Athens**  
Greece



**University of Edinburgh**  
United Kingdom



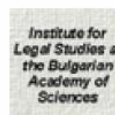
**Göteborg University**  
Sweden



**University of Manchester**  
United Kingdom



**The London School of Economics and Political Science**  
United Kingdom



Sofia Bulgaria



**École Nationale de la Santé Publique Rennes**  
France



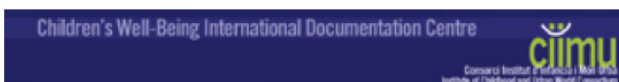
Oslo Norway



**Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam**  
Netherlands



Hamburg Germany



CIIMU: ΣΥΝΤΟΝΙΣΤΗΣ ΦΟΡΕΑΣ

**EKKE ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ**  
Λ. Μεσογείων 14-18 Αθήνα 11527 [www.ekke.gr](http://www.ekke.gr)