

COST Action CA20112

**GOOD PRACTICES AND
LESSONS LEARNED IN THE
EVALUATION OF SOCIAL
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ABOUT PROFEEDBACK

The COST Action PROFEEDBACK - PlatfoRm OF policy Evaluation community for improvED EU policies and Better ACKnowledgement (CA20112, MoU 052/21) 2021-2025 aims to foster the networking of the policy evaluation community at EU-level, raise awareness on the importance of evaluation policy research and improve its impact on policy-making. The Platform, following a bottom-up and open approach, **gathers** researchers and professionals from various scientific fields and sectors to present and evaluate theories, topics, tools and methods of policy evaluation. Results of the Europe-wide assessment of good practices **provides** direct and high-quality inputs for national and EU bodies responsible for policy evaluation. Policy evaluation is a key tool in understanding, developing and modernising EU policies, thus there is a growing demand for EU-wide and high quality evaluation services.

The main challenge is the shortage of sufficient bottom-up platforms for European researchers and professionals working in policy evaluation. They have limited possibilities to discuss common problems, assess country specific practices and share their knowledge in a mutually beneficial and effective way. The PROFEEDBACK Action aims **to contribute to these discussions during its four Grant Periods, 18/10/2021 - 17/10/2025 and beyond.**

The PROFEEDBACK Action has three key objectives to achieve during the Action period 18/10/2021 - 17/10/2025 and beyond.



Foster networking and knowledge-exchange of the policy evaluation community at European level



Raise awareness on the importance of policy evaluation research and improve its impact on policy-making



Reinforce state-of-the-art research in the policy evaluation field and contribute to evaluation standards

ABOUT PROFEEDbook5.1

In the framework of the PROFEEDBACK Action, one conference every half-year is implemented. After each conference thematic deliverables are issued, the so called PROFEEDbooks (D4.1-D4.8). They summarise the main presentations and results of the conferences.

PROFEEDbooks support multidisciplinary, the systematisation of different methodologies and the exact transfer of know-how for the policy evaluation community. These also serve the interests of European and national policy-makers in developing the frameworks of the next programming periods and of a common European evaluation culture.

In addition, the PROFEEDbooks enrich the literature of public policy, aiming to develop theory, knowledge, method and tool base of European evaluation policy as well as a common understanding of the current problems and challenges. PROFEEDbooks support the Action in reaching audience beyond the Action members

The **5h PROFEEDBACK Conference** delved into **evaluating social policies** across four key areas: social inclusion, social innovation, quality of life, and public health. It emphasized integrating disadvantaged groups into public services, innovative approaches to enhance working conditions, education, and community welfare, and the implications of digitalization. Discussions covered factors affecting quality of life, including the impact of COVID-19, and the success of various public health initiatives. Overall, the conference provided a comprehensive framework to guide future policies aimed at improving social welfare, inclusivity, and health outcomes for diverse communities.

PROFEEDbook 5.1 gathers abstracts and presentations as well as bios of the authors/speakers, to provide an overview of the Conference for a wider public. **PROFEEDbook 5.2** presents full articles related to a selected number of presentations, for a more detailed insight.

The conference has taken place in **Bucharest, Romania** on the **16th of May 2024**.

The event has been organized by the **National University of Political Studies and Public Administration**.

The title is presented on a white rectangular card that is slightly tilted. The card is overlaid with two horizontal ribbons: a light green one on top and a dark blue one on the bottom. The background of the entire page is a solid grey color.

Evaluation of Social Inclusion Policies and Programmes

Jiří Vyhlídal, Blanka Plasová

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DIAGNOSTIC DECISIONS OF FRONTLINE WORKERS IN THE ACTIVATION OF THE UNEMPLOYED

ABSTRACT

An individual approach to the client is a prerequisite for the effective performance of Public Employment Services (PES) in the field of counselling and placement. Individual approach means, first of all, the ability to take into account the current needs of the applicant, his/her life situation and possible limitations in relation to the labour market. However, the individual approach in PES will always have its limits. Line workers will always have a limited amount of information about a given client, will always be limited by the resources available (limited counselling capacity, limited number of places in active labour market programmes (ALMPs), etc.). Nevertheless, they have to make decisions about applicants. And these decisions will have a real impact both on individual clients, their future chances on the labour market, and on the whole ALMP system, its efficiency and effectiveness.

The decision-making processes of line workers and their daily activities are most often the subject of research based on methods referred to as ethnographic or qualitative (see Dubois 2009, 2010; Maynard-Moody & Musheno 2012). Such research approximates how frontline workers perceive their position in the overall system, or how they evaluate the decisions they make. However, they tend to suffer from a low degree of generalisability of results, as they are based on a limited number of interviews or observations. Nor do they provide sufficient information on which variables influence the decisions made and to what extent.

Quantitative methods, on the other hand, offer the possibility of statistically evaluating the influence of selected independent variables, which represent a defined set of characteristics of individual applicants (socio-demographic characteristics, work history, social situation, etc.) on one or more dependent variables. The most common representatives of these methods are various sample surveys, which have the character of observational data. These data usually provide sufficient information to describe selected characteristics of the population from which they come. However, they are limited when used as a source for identifying causal relationships between variables (Gerber, Green & Kaplan 2014).

The aim of the present study is to investigate how and to what extent a selected set of characteristics of fictitious jobseekers influences the decision-making of line workers of the Labour Office in one of the regions of the Czech Republic. The study is based on a survey of the population of Labour Office line workers involved in placement and counselling.

A factorial survey experiment (FSE) was chosen to investigate the influence of selected characteristics on the decision-making of line workers, which also allows the identification of causal relationships between variables.

The decision-making autonomy of frontline workers involved in mediation and counselling has been operationalised as a three-stage process: diagnosis, deliberation and intervention. In this paper we seek to clarify how the diagnostic ability of frontline workers is influenced by the characteristics of fictitious job applicants, the characteristics of frontline workers themselves, and the perceived characteristics of the organisational environment.

In particular, the analysis of the data shows that frontline workers use decision-making autonomy in ways that can potentially harm jobseekers. Crucial in this respect is the finding that differences in diagnostic judgement between frontline workers in the same workplace can be greater than differences between different workplaces. This may be due to the low level of professional competence of frontline workers.

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Blanka Plasová graduated from the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University in the field of social policy and social work, where she holds a position as an assistant professor and researcher at the Department of Social Policy and Social Work. She focuses on gender inequalities in the labour market and work-family policies.

Danijel Baturina, Jelena Matančević, Gojko Bežovan
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ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATE AND CAPACITIES OF THE CROATIAN WELFARE STATE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

ABSTRACT

The backbone of social Europe is the European Pillar of Social Rights. The European Parliament, the Council, and the European Commission proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights in 2017, confirming its value for European citizens (European Commission, 2017). Concrete measures for the application of ESSP are adopted by the EU through the Action Plan for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights in 2021 (Tumurad et al., 2023)

Croatia, as a member state, has accepted the ESSP and has shown a principled commitment to its implementation. The Republic of Croatia, as a welfare state defined by the Constitution, has developed a hybrid social regime that contains attributes of the continental model of social insurance, the communist legacy, and recent processes of privatization, individualization, and clientelism (Dobrotić, 2016). The current welfare state is based on relatively low social spending and constant attempts to reform (especially the pension and health system) (Bežovan et al., 2019). The retrenchment of the welfare state has been observed in the "traditional" sectors of social policy, such as pensions, health, and social assistance, where cost limitation and "rationalization" are highlighted among the priorities (Dobrotić, 2019). In general, social programmes in Croatia are aimed at solving "old" social risks. Due to broad social problems and the limited capacity of the state to respond to them, the social policy became divided by particular interests. Some social groups could mobilize and influence the public agenda and the redistribution of social resources (e.g., veterans, pensioners), while the problems of others (e.g., unemployed, citizens at risk of poverty) remained mostly neglected (Dobrotić, 2016; Bežovan, 2019). The welfare state relies more on passive benefits and cash transfers than on social investments in services, education, and programmes that could encourage the social integration of vulnerable groups (Babić and Baturina, 2016, Bežovan, 2019). On the other hand, it is slow in modernizing and recognizing important EU strategic frameworks and initiatives (Bežovan, 2019).

The goal of the research was to assess the characteristics and key challenges of the Croatian welfare state and the potential for the implementation of the ESSP in Croatia from the perspective of social policy experts. The research was conceived through semi-structured interviews with key experts in the field of social policy, nine of them from different sectors (policymakers, public officials, experts from the academic sector, trade unions, and civil society). The research was conducted in January and February 2023. The informed consent of the participants, who are familiar with the goals and purpose of the research as well as the principles of confidentiality and anonymization of the results, is ensured.

The obtained data were analyzed using the framework analysis procedure. The framework analysis was developed in the context of research into public (social, health, etc.) and applied policies to obtain specific information that will enable insights and recommendations in a shorter period. The primary goal is the description and interpretation of what is happening in a specific environment regarding specific social issues. What characterizes the framework analysis are pre-defined research questions that need to be answered (a priori questions) in a short period, and therefore a deliberately selected sample that is relevant to the research questions (Ritchie and Spencer, 2002).

The results of the research highlight certain challenges of the welfare state now and in the future. The lack of a general vision of the welfare state and the underdevelopment of social planning are visible. Social dialogue is held to be lacking. Possibilities for dialogue between different actors are often missing in the development and implementation of social policies. The capacity of the welfare state is estimated to be limited. There are many doubts about the possibilities of the welfare system in general as far as human resources and methods of operation are concerned. The need for additional work on strengthening the ability of local communities to address problems in their areas according to the principle of subsidiarity is highlighted. Civil society stands out as having the potential to act on solving certain challenges, especially regarding the provision of social services and supplementing the state's actions in the field of social policies.

In Croatia, the ESSP has been officially adopted, but it is not on the agenda, nor is it specifically discussed or taken into account when developing policies. The ESSP and the Action Plan have the potential to be the guiding thread of modernization and the direction of Croatian social policy. However, the results of the research show that the European Pillar of Social Rights is poorly recognized in the Croatian context. There is a significant effort to be made on its actualization and application by policymakers and practitioners on a national and local level. In the conclusion paper, we will put research results in the context of the challenges and characteristics of the Croatian welfare state. The paper will contribute to assessing, understanding, developing, and modernizing social policies and highlighting pathways towards enhancing social cohesion and social inclusion in Croatian society.

The research was carried out within the project: Strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights in Croatia, financed by the Active Citizens Fund in Croatia (with grants from Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway as part of the EEA Grants 2014–2021).

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B. Müge Vular

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REGIONAL PATTERNS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN TURKISH ECONOMY

ABSTRACT

The Russian war on Ukraine following the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the global economy, causing disruptions in supply chains and leading to fluctuations in food and energy prices. Fragile Turkish economy has been deeply impacted by global turmoil. The Consumer Price Index surged from 19.6 percent in 2021 to 72.3 percent as of 2022. The unemployment rate peaked at 13.7% in 2019 and remained persistent at 10.4% in 2022. The youth unemployment rate was 20.7 the same year, which was considerably higher than that of the population average. Türkiye also has the highest ratio of NEETs (youth not in employment, education, or training) among all OECD member states. From 2005 to 2016, the percentage of NEETs in the 15-29 age bracket decreased from 43.6 percent to 28.3. However, this is still two times higher than the OECD average of 14.21, which poses a serious risk of marginalization and exclusion. Poverty and marginalization may lead to a downward spiral, which in turn reinforces long-term unemployment and discourages the work effect. This research aims to investigate spatial patterns of social exclusion and its links to labor market developments. Persistent differences between western and eastern Turkish regions and the dual economic structure of the Turkish economy require an investigation from a regional perspective. Thus, this paper resorts to NUTS II-level regional data to characterize the economic nature of regions and spatial patterns in the labour market and social exclusion. Findings are expected to indicate important policy recommendations concerning employment-generating policies and social inclusion of youth.

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Meldina Kokorovic Jukan

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EVALUATION AND "DOS AND DON'TS" WHEN CREATING SOCIAL COHESION INITIATIVES: THE CASE OF SOCIAL COHESION INITIATIVE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

ABSTRACT

Manca, A.R. (2014) defines social cohesion as a social process that aims to consolidate plurality of citizenship by reducing inequality and socioeconomic disparities and fractures in society. The process of inclusion of minority groups in society, especially when those minority excluded groups are migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees who do not share similar cultural backgrounds, can be a rather complex task. To that end, initiatives need to be properly assessed in order to improve projects focused on strengthening the social cohesion between migrant, asylum seekers, refugee, and host communities. Ca, A.R. (2014) defines social cohesion as a social process that aims to consolidate plurality of citizenship by reducing inequality and socioeconomic disparities and fractures in society. The process of inclusion of minority groups in society, especially when those minority excluded groups are migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees who do not share similar cultural backgrounds, can be a rather complex task. To that end, initiatives need to be properly assessed in order to improve projects focused on strengthening the social cohesion between migrant, asylum seekers, refugee, and host communities.

The paper is twofolded. First, the paper will address theoretical background on social cohesion initiatives and project evaluations, following the presentation of main obstacles and recommendations on how to approach evaluations of social cohesion initiatives in light of OECD DAC standards and guidelines. Second, based on the case study, this paper will provide lessons learned and recommendations for policymakers on how to approach creating social cohesion initiatives.

This paper aims to contribute to very poor existing literature on evaluation of social cohesion initiatives with respect to the main limitations and lessons learned for evaluation practices of such types of initiatives, following some insights in how to create successful social cohesion initiatives. Using a case study of the final evaluation of the project "Bosnia and Herzegovina: Enhancing social cohesion in communities hosting people on the move" implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the author aims to provide guidance for general evaluation of social cohesion initiatives and projects and establish sound M&E frames for monitoring implementation of initiatives.

This research is based on the case study method combined with the literature review of the existing literature addressing the issues in social cohesion programs, projects, and initiative evaluations.

As this is a case study, the main source of data is the final evaluation report on the project

“Bosnia and Herzegovina: Enhancing social cohesion in communities hosting people on the move” implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The evaluation is completed by the Centre for Development Evaluation and Social Science Research (CREDI). preliminary results, limitations, and concluding remarks.

The main limitation of this paper is the fact that it is based on the case study, but it can provide some guidelines when evaluating complex initiatives with multiple donors and stakeholders.

As the theory suggests, the best approach to evaluation of social cohesion initiatives is to employ a mixed-method approach for data collection. The evaluation team should collect quantitative and qualitative data concurrently using the following data collection methods: desk review, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and online surveys. Crosscutting issues of human rights, gender equality, and the empowerment of women (GEEW), conflict sensitivity, and environmental sustainability should be considered as additional evaluation questions. Also, outcome harvesting methods should be considered for data verification. CAWI surveys seem not to be appropriate for data collection; hence, the CATI method should be used.

Project design and M&E framework are of great importance for tracking the progress of the social cohesion initiatives, where the main focus should be on developing adequate SMART indicators for output, outcome, and impact.

Adequate communication and stakeholder engagement should be in place. It is imperative that all stakeholders are involved in the planning phase of the social cohesion initiative. This will ensure better utilization and allocation of dedicated resources.

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A SMART WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SWAM) TO SUPPORT THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROWTH OF NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

It is no doubt that the sustainability of the management and provision of water resources has become very essential with the growing threat to human existence because of climatic change. In Nigeria, taking the south-west as an example, about 4,000 mm of rainfall is experienced annually, which is enough to process for small domestic needs. However, factors such as inappropriate water distribution, poor management/service, inadequate infrastructure, and excessive billing systems have been the major setbacks to safe, affordable, and sustainable provision of water to citizens [1], [2]. A recent study [3] has also shown inequitable access and distribution to public water supply is highly associated with the high deprivation in many regions of Nigeria. The poor management of water resources encompasses issues relating to water security, water quality, and poor policy implementation strategies. In addition, the adoption of the centralized approach to management of water resources and their distribution in Nigeria has also been seen as a major contributing factor to the water management problem. It has limited the involvement of private enterprises in the management and distribution of water resources across the nation, including the southwest of the country [4].

It has been established that the provision of sustainable water management and distribution in Nigeria can only be realized with the involvement of stakeholders, which has often involved only the private sector participation [5]. Despite the initiatives put forward by the federal government of Nigeria and various state administrators to provide sustainable water management and distribution across the country, there is little or no involvement of stakeholders's participation as part of these initiatives. Furthermore, the initiatives revolve around the encouragement of private participation, provision of water, and policies with the introduction of the so-called water law. Similarly, the need to control the demand for water usage for domestic and commercial purposes is advocated to require variation in household tariffs, improved and reliable industrial supply, and efficient management of water with appropriate technology and price mechanisms [6]. Therefore, introducing a more realistic technological and software-driven solution that is complementary to the existing proposals is a way of achieving better sustainable water management and distribution.

In this work, we describe the SWAMS approach, also known as Smart Water Management System. It is a distributed service-oriented approach incorporating the notion of the water market and flex-offers to enable on-demand water pricing, optimal scheduling of water distribution, and effective watermanagement policies. This approach can provide an

optimized technique for water distribution and efficiently support an advanced provision of the need for water, which will better support both domestic and industrial needs of the population, companies, etc.

Based on the report published by the National Bureau of Statistics as presented in Table I, the major sources of domestic water supply in Nigeria before 2000 were found to be mainly from pipe-borne water. This type of water supply comes from government or municipal water supply schemes.

Expressed as a percentage of water produced from other sources, the reliance on pipe-born water has continued to decrease over the years. There seems to have been an increase in water supply from wells, which are privately owned, hand-dug shallow water sources. Boreholes (privately and publicly owned water sources that can be powered by either a solar or electric machine or a manual hand pump) have also seen an increase as an alternative means of water supply since 2006. A recent survey data published by Statista in 20212 clearly shows that both boreholes and protected wells remain the major sources of water for households, with 41.6% and 44.7%, respectively. The reliance on streams, which are water from rivers, lakes, ponds, and other sources, mostly provides water for irrigation and agricultural purposes. Poor households that cannot afford the well or borehole also consider water supply from vendors using water tankers, trucks, and carts as alternatives. This has seen a continuous decrease based on the evidence provided in the survey and the table considered in this report. The decrease is also attributed to issues relating to climate change and other related human activities. Rainwater supply represents 27.1 percent in 2010 and has shown its lowest reliance for domestic use based on the survey conducted by Statista in 2020. The same reason can be attributed to the effect of greenhouse gases resulting in climatic change.

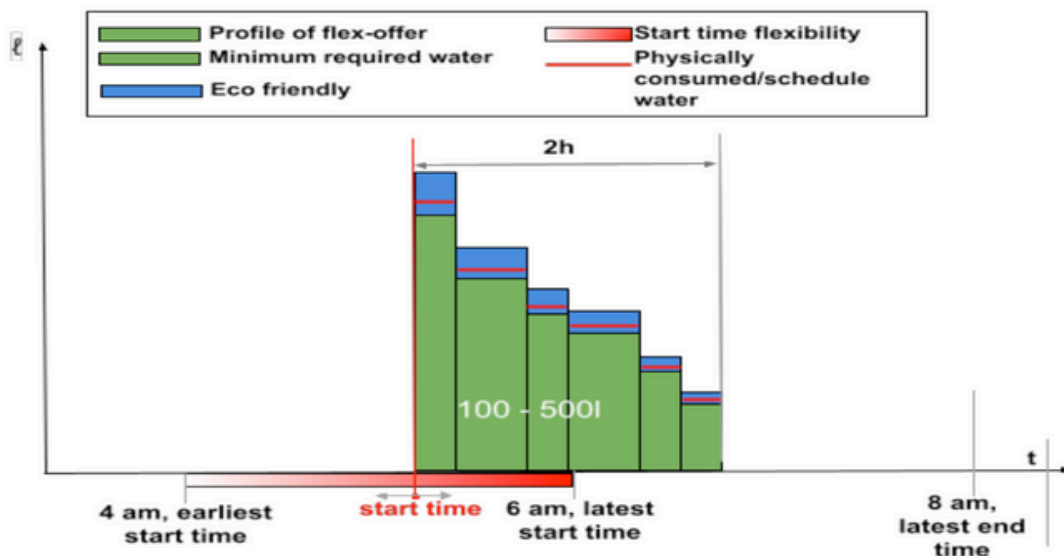
TABLE I
PERCENTAGE OF WATER SOURCES DISTRIBUTION

Water Source	1995 /96	1997 /98	1999 /2000	2006	2007	2008	2010
Pipe Water	61.60	56.57	54.10	11.37	10.40	8.80	9.50
Borehole	1.00	1.07	0.40	13.61	26.80	28.40	21.50
Wells	8.50	13.41	15.80	35.77	33.30	31.50	35.00
Streams /Ponds	28.90	28.97	29.70	21.45	24.40	27.10	13.90
Tanker /Truck	-	-	-	5.88	4.10	3.20	2.00
Rain	-	-	-	8.65	0.60	0.50	27.10
Others	-	-	-	3.26	0.3		1.00

In line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and furtherance to building sustainable cities and communities within developing nations such as Nigeria, the need for effective management of demand and supply of water resources is very important. Among the several challenges relating to sustainable water management resources in terms of demand and supply can be inferred from the study that was presented by [4].

To effectively manage the demand and supply of water, the application of technology to manage efficient water usage and appropriate pricing mechanisms will need to be put in place [6]. It is also mentioned that traditional methods of water resource monitoring have substantial limitations, as they do not address water quality, equity of access, or extra-household services, thus emphasizing the need for innovative monitoring and management techniques of this natural resource [7].

The proposed approach is based on the flex-offer concept. Flex-offer is a concept that allows exposing demand and supply loads with associated flexibilities in time and amount for water trading, load balancing, and other use-cases. In its simplest form, a flex-offer specifies an amount of water, a duration, an earliest start time, a latest end time, and a price, e.g., "I need 100 liters over 2 hours between 4 AM and 8 AM, for a price of 10 naira per liter." A more complete example is shown in Figure . 1. In the figure, we represent the window of the consumption starting moment in red. The power requirements are expressed in variable-length intervals, during which minimum and maximum water amounts are additionally specified (the blue color expresses the difference between maximum and minimum amounts). These limits are used to better accommodate a real situation, where the water consumption exhibits variations in adjacent time intervals. Flex-offers for supply are also possible, e.g., "I can deliver between 100 and 200 liters, between 1 PM and 5 PM, for a price of 10 naira per liter." Note that the amount of water represented in flex offers can be small, e.g., for household use, or large, e.g., for industry.

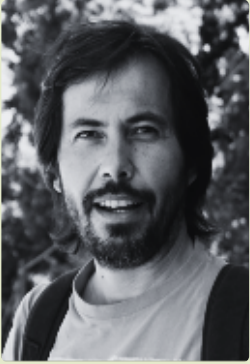


The water management landscape in Nigeria struggles with formidable obstacles characterized by a lack of adequate infrastructure, an uneven distribution of resources, and insufficient access to clean water, particularly in rural areas. These challenges are further compounded by the impacts of climate change, contributing to a heightened sense of water scarcity and the inefficient utilization of available water resources. In response to these challenges, collaborative endeavors involving both the public and private sectors have emerged as critical components of the solution. The concerted efforts aim to establish equitable access to clean water, bolster public health initiatives, and catalyze socio-economic development across Nigeria. As part of this endeavor, we propose the implementation of a distributed service-oriented software architecture based on the flex-offer concept. This technological approach is designed to optimize water distribution networks and facilitate the implementation of effective water management policies, marking a pivotal step towards ensuring a more sustainable and resilient water future for Nigeria.

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Dr. Christos Chrysoulas received his diploma and his Phd in Electrical Engineering from the University of Patras in 2003 and 2009, respectively. During his Phd (2004-2009) and PostDoc studies (2010-2015), his research was focused on Smart Grids, IoT, Industrial Automation, Machine Learning, Big Data, E-Learning systems, Computer Networks, High Performance Communication Subsystems Architecture and Implementation, Wireless Networks, Service Oriented Architectures (SOA), Resource Management and Dynamic Service Deployment in New Generation Networks and Communication Networks, Grid Architectures, Semantics, and Semantic Grid. He joined CISTER Research Center, Porto, as an invited researcher in 2013. He joined the University of Porto as a postdoctoral research fellow in 2014, and from July 2015 he was with the University of Essex, holding a senior officer researcher position. Currently he is holding a lecturer's position in software engineering at Edinburgh Napier University, UK. The outcome of this effort was properly announced in more than 60 technical papers in these areas. Dr. Christos Chrysoulas also participated as Senior Research/Engineer in both European and National Research Projects.

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EVALUATING THE INTRODUCTION OF SCOTTISH GAELIC PUBLIC BROADCASTING

ABSTRACT

Within the provision of cultural policy in the UK, speakers of the recognised minority language of Scottish Gaelic had long campaigned for a full television channel as part of the public broadcasting offer in Scotland. The grounds for such a channel were seen as a linguistic right under the UK's ratification of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, as well as a public good for the community. Moreover, the Welsh language broadcaster, S4C, had been created by the BBC and the Department of Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport already in 1982, and thus arguments were made that speakers of Scottish Gaelic should also be entitled to a similar provision on grounds of social inclusion. Following the Scottish Gaelic Act 2005 and the creation of a language board, a collaboration between the BBC and the organization responsible for Scottish Gaelic media content, MG Alba, led to the proposal for the creation of a full channel in Scottish Gaelic, eventually approved in 2008 after a public value test.

Media provisions for linguistic minorities can be evaluated as a specific type of cultural policy aimed at social inclusion, which seeks to redress the lack of provision, or at least its irregular or secondary status, which limits participation in the public sphere of one of the languages used within the area of a given administrative body. As has been argued in the last 40 years, media in minority languages are important for the vitality of a language in a variety of aspects, including its social recognition and presence, its economic contribution to the language-speaking minority, the development of language standardization and new terminology, as well as promoting and upkeeping traditions and the heritage value of the language, to name but a few of its contributions. Although further debates can be brought about a similar provision for immigrant languages, the case for local indigenous or traditional languages of a territory is stronger because of their historical presence within the political unit, its centrality in terms of national identity construction, and the lack of other media outlets elsewhere due to the uniqueness of the territory.

Because of the arguments brought forth, media in a minority language include different expectations of service than what would be the case of other forms of public service media. Because it includes an extra element of providing a space for a language that is often absent from media production, it creates a de facto space for standardized linguistic practices and provides material that can be used for education purposes. In that sense, its dual commitment to the Gaelic community, on the one hand, and to the wider Scottish

audience, on the other, might be considerably different when assessed for evaluation purposes.

This paper evaluates the policy decision to introduce BBC Alba and provide a public service to the Gaelic speaking community, focusing on the differing aims and mandates of the two funders – the BBC Trust and MG Alba. Our approach uses a logic framework to unpack the main aims and the strategy BBC Alba has adopted to produce related outcomes. We focus on the two main audience groups identified in the public value test, termed by the broadcaster as ‘the core Gaelic community’ and the ‘wider Scottish audience’, which largely align with MG Alba and the BBC’s differing mandates. For outputs, we utilize the data made available in the broadcaster’s annual reports, including size of audience, number of online streamers, and audience satisfaction. In attempting to evaluate the broader impact of the policy, we also use data from other sources, such as social attitude surveys and previous academic research. This would constitute the main limitation of the study, as it will only be based on the information currently available, and no new methods are undertaken to capture any extra information. However, due to the public service remit of BBC Alba, part of the evaluation could include a recommendation about further data capture that enables a more holistic assessment of its objectives.

Our analysis suggests that the stated aims of BBC Alba have largely been met and were done so quite quickly after launch. However, we suggest that the original aims were very much skewed towards the wider community rather than contributing to language maintenance/revitalization. Here we discuss criticism of the channel and some of its broadcasting and programme commissioning policies, then offer suggestions on how the aims—and consequently inputs and outputs—could be tweaked to improve the overall impact of the policy on the speakers of the language. We conclude therefore that the impact of BBC Alba has mostly been limited to the wider Scottish audience, with the core community still not being adequately served by this policy.

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**Evaluation of Social Inclusion
Policies and Programmes –
Women and Youth Inclusion**

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EVALUATION OF THE EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR LEADERSHIP ROLES PROJECT IN JORDAN USING THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE (MSC)

ABSTRACT

The study evaluates the Empowering Women for Leadership Roles project in Jordan, employing the Most Significant Change (MSC) evaluation strategy. The MSC approach focuses on collecting qualitative data through participants' stories and assessing them at three distinct levels involving various stakeholders. The analysis of selected stories informs changes at individual, institutional, community, and environmental levels. The report incorporates figures and tables illustrating project outcomes, targets, and norms.

The primary objectives of the study are to assess the impact of the Empowering Women for Leadership Roles project in Jordan using the MSC strategy. Specific objectives include identifying significant changes in participants' stories, evaluating the outcomes at different levels, and understanding the influence of the project on decision-making processes, knowledge transfer, and inclusivity in leadership.

The MSC approach involves collecting qualitative data from participants' stories and assessing them through three levels involving various parties. The selected stories were analysed and classified to inform changes on individual, institutional, community, and environmental levels. The study relies on stakeholder opinions and perceptions, utilising an evaluation matrix, an invitation letter, and general project information as annexes.

The MSC stories, selected based on predefined criteria, highlighted changes not only in the immediate outcomes but also on individual, institutional, environmental, and community levels. The analysis phase revealed the extent of women leaders engaging in decision-making and knowledge transfer. The results, presented in a table, identified MSC stories corresponding to the four immediate outcomes, showcasing the project's effectiveness in achieving its goals.

The evaluation acknowledges certain limitations, such as the subjective nature of qualitative data interpretation and potential biases in stakeholder opinions. The study also recognises that the selected MSC stories may not capture the entirety of the project's impact, and there may be external factors influencing the observed changes.

The Empowering Women for Leadership Roles project in Jordan, evaluated through the MSC strategy, demonstrated significant positive changes on individual, institutional, community, and environmental levels. The active participation of stakeholders, as seen in the selected MSC stories, indicates the success of the project in achieving its immediate outcomes. Despite limitations, the evaluation provides valuable insights into the transformative impact of the project, emphasising the importance of women's inclusion in decision-making and leadership roles. Further analysis and ongoing monitoring will contribute to refining strategies for sustainable and inclusive governance.

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Tala Khrais is a seasoned professional in international development and public policy, currently serving as the Country Director for the Forum of Federations in Jordan. With a focus on empowering women and enhancing governance, she has led impactful projects, such as the "Empowering Women for Leadership Roles" initiative funded by Global Affairs Canada. This project significantly improved policy quality and empowered nearly 5,000 women leaders across Jordan. Tala's research interests include local economic development, gender awareness, and participatory governance. Her notable achievements encompass a 10% improvement in policy quality, the development of 44 new policies, and fostering key collaborations that enhanced governance inclusiveness in Jordan. With extensive experience in project management and international cooperation, Tala Khrais continues to drive positive change and sustainable development in her community and beyond.

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IMPACT OF POLICY MEASURES ON YOUTH INCLUSION. A CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS OF MAIN POLICIES FOR YOUTH INCLUSION IN THE LAST 12 YEAR

ABSTRACT

The economic crisis that has affected EU countries since 2008 has revealed one of the most important problems they face, namely the low or precarious employment of young people. Youth unemployment represents one of the main challenges of the European Union due to its economic and social impact (e.g., lack of social support, lack of social insurance, being more vulnerable to physical and mental problems, feeling of shame and low self-esteem, and increased likelihood of experiencing periods of unemployment at later ages, etc.). (Brandt and Hank 2014; Gregg 2001; Vancea and Utzet 2017; Shore and Tosun 2019).

The policy framework developed by the European Union from 2009 on youth (Youth Strategy 2010–2018, Youth Strategy 2019–2027, Youth Guarantee 2013–2020, Reinforced Youth Guarantee from 2020, educational programmes, and others) aims to tackle some of the main issues young people face: unemployment, poverty, youth not in education, low participation in the decision-making process, health problems, etc.

Youth unemployment represents one of the main challenges of the European Union due to its economic and social impact (e.g., lack of social support, lack of social insurance, being more vulnerable to physical and mental problems, feeling of shame and low self-esteem, and increased likelihood of experiencing periods of unemployment at later ages etc.) (Brandt and Hank 2014; Gregg 2001; Vancea and Utzet 2017; Shore and Tosun 2019).

The YGP aimed to address two main issues that affect the NEETs' employment: the school-to-work transition and the support for employment. This involved a major shift from passive labour market policies to active ones. For the European Commission (EC), the YGP's implementation represented a structural reform in each member state that included reinforcement of the public employment services (PES) and educational system (European Commission 2014). At the same time, this was also an innovative active labour market policy due to the wide variety of measures proposed which included: (a) education programmes better adapted to the labour market requirements – e.g., initial vocational education, entrepreneurship courses; (b) remedial education school dropout measures – second chance education, or other routes to re-enter education and training; (c) apprenticeship, traineeship, or internship schemes; (d) entrepreneurship and self-employment guidance; (e) training programmes; (f) labour market intermediation services; e) active labour market policies – direct employment creation, hiring subsidies, employment/labour mobility and start-up incentives (European Council 2013).

The YGP, the EU flagship initiative that aims to address the issue of NEETs, has achieved different results in different EU member states due to factors related to the PES capacity of implementation but also to cooperation/partnership between actors involved in the

programme's implementation (Trein and Tosun 2021). At the same time, it was a trigger in the development and improvement of policies dedicated to youth inclusion (Petrescu et al., 2024).

This paper presents an analysis of the main policy measures dedicated to youth between 2010 and 2022 in seven EU countries (Bulgaria, Estonia, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, and Spain). The main objective of the cross-country comparison of the last 10 years policies on youth employment influencing NEETs is to analyse: 1) the commonalities and differences in policy goals; 2) policy instruments used; 3) types of active labour market policies proposed to be implemented; and 4) specific NEETs targeted. The methodology for this study includes a policy analysis of the employment policy trends affecting youth in seven European countries (Bulgaria, Estonia, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, and Spain) between 2010 and 2022, a desk review of the main reports at EU level on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee and on the situation of NEETs (EUROFOUND reports, European Commission reports), a secondary data analysis of the data on NEETs in each country, and a scoping review of 112 academic papers dedicated to NEETs published in top-academic journals between January 2010 and November 2022.

The public policy analysis includes policies, strategies, and programs targeting NEETs employment in the seven EU countries in the last 12 years (2010–2022). For each country, the analysis started with active labour market policies for youth included in the LABREF database and was extended to other policies relevant at the national level. All the public policies were coded in MAXQDA using a common coding framework. The coding protocol includes as main dimensions for analysis: type of policy, level of government that implements the policy, targeted areas (rural, disadvantaged areas), category of NEETs targeted (re-entrants, long-term unemployed, short-term unemployed, illness, disability, family responsibilities, discouraged, other NEETs), policy goals (equality of access, targeting unemployment, incentive reinforcement, regional focus), policy instruments (information, financial support, regulation, direct provision by the state, financing services provided by NGOs), types of active labour market policies (incentive reinforcement, employment assistance, occupation, human capital investment/upskilling).

Across the EU member states and associated countries, the share of NEETs within the resident population aged 15-29 ranged in the second quarter of 2022 between 3% (Netherlands) and 4% (Iceland) to 19% (Romania) and 20% (Montenegro, North Macedonia). Estonia (16%), Italy and Spain (14% each), as well as Bulgaria (12%), were among the EU countries that faced a higher number of youngsters not in employment education or training. Lithuania (6%) and Portugal (7%) were the only countries in our sample that had fewer NEETs in the second quarter of 2022. When considering the difference across age categories, it turns out that the older ages

(24-29) display much higher NEET rates as compared to the age group 15-24. This is valid at the level of the entire European Union, but also in all seven selected countries. However, different patterns are noticeable. Countries like Italy and Romania have a high distance between the two groups, and the distance remains almost constant during the 2010s. Portugal and Spain maintain a smaller distance, while Bulgaria, Estonia, and Lithuania start with distances comparable to Romania and Italy and manage to decrease them to the levels of Spain and Portugal.

The focus on individual characteristics rather than on contextual ones observed in our comparative analysis is an indication that tailored policies are rather requested, in line with part of the existing literature. Based on the local or regional context, the policy measures for NEETs should be adapted to the needs of the youth or NEETs in order to be efficient. Our analysis shows that most of the policy measures are developed at the national level and local ones are not so common. Comparative analysis shows that active measures are the most salient in the regulations since the term NEET was coined out in the 1990s, and that the NEET policy evolves and develops in spite (or maybe being favoured) by the absence of a definitive definition of NEETs, which is rather a dynamic, contextual construct. Considering the dynamics for each type of labour market policy, unemployment benefits faded in more recent years, job-search programmes increased their importance, and start-up incentives decreased it, while on the other hand, we observe stability or unclear patterns in changing the frequency of mentioning in the studied documents. Overall, human capital investments and active occupation measures are the most common when considering the whole corpus of documents. Human capital investment through training for increasing the specific competencies for the labour market is the most important measure included in the public policies during the time periods analysed. Also, measures for increasing transversal competencies (e.g., ITC skills, communication, green skills, etc.) are present in around one-third of the policy documents analysed from 2014. Internship, traineeship, and apprenticeship represent the measures promoted by the Youth Guarantee Programme.

Measures dedicated to various categories of NEETs are not a common feature of the public policies analysed. These types of measures may be found in the strategies, plans, or programmes and not in the main legal framework. Due to the heterogeneity of the NEETs categories, the policy framework includes measures dedicated to NEETs in general and not for a specific category. These NEETs categories should be analysed periodically to discover new ones that should be addressed through specific measures.

Despite the progress made in the seven countries in reducing the NEETs rate, including in rural or disadvantaged areas, it is necessary that interventions are integrated and

individualised, and the partnership between public and private actors is one of the factors that can ensure the success of an intervention. The provision of complementary measures increases the success rate of the intervention, and the Reinforced Youth Guarantee highlights the need for integration of the services offered.

The main policy problem identified at the national level is represented by the limited specific measures dedicated to rural NEETs or NEETs from disadvantaged areas at national, regional, or local levels. Although evidence from EUROSTAT at EU level indicates a high rate of NEETs in rural and other disadvantaged areas where their employability problems are amplified by other issues related to access to services or the labour market, Member States have only to a very limited extent developed actions dedicated to them.

The paper is based on the results of Tr@ck-In project.

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BREAKING THE SILENCE: INVESTIGATING SEGREGATION AND DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION FOR MINORITY YOUTH IN ALBANIA

ABSTRACT

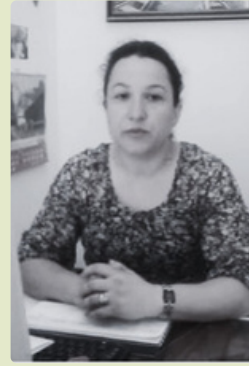
This qualitative study aims to investigate the educational challenges faced by minority youth in Albania, with a specific focus on the Roma and Egyptian communities. The primary objective is to understand the perceptions of youth aged 14-20 regarding discrimination and segregation within the educational system.

A qualitative approach was employed, using focus group discussions as the primary data collection method. Four focus groups were conducted during March-April 2023, involving 32 participants from the Roma and Egyptian minority groups. The discussions were designed to explore these youth's lived experiences and perspectives concerning educational opportunities, discrimination, and segregation in Albania.

The findings reveal a high level of discrimination and segregation experienced by Roma and Egyptian youth within the Albanian educational system. Participants expressed concerns about unequal access to educational resources, limited opportunities for advancement, and instances of social exclusion. The themes emerging from the data shed light on systemic issues perpetuating the marginalisation of these minority groups.

The study highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions to address the pervasive discrimination and segregation faced by Roma and Egyptian minority youth in Albania. Policymakers, educators, and community leaders should collaborate to develop inclusive policies, promote cultural sensitivity, and create equal educational opportunities for all youth, regardless of ethnic background.

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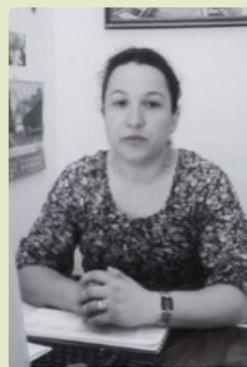


Eglantina Dervishi (Associate Professor Ph.D.) is a lecturer at the University of Tirana, Albania, known for her expertise in clinical psychology, with a particular focus on mental health and positive youth development. Graduating with a doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology from the prestigious Alma Mater Studiorum, University of Bologna, Italy, in 2013, Ph.D. Dervishi has since been deeply engaged in advancing the understanding of youth well-being. She is deeply committed to unraveling the complexities of youth well-being and is dedicated to enhancing the holistic development of young individuals. In addition to her scholarly pursuits, Ph.D. Dervishi plays a pivotal role as a valued partner in the international project "Positive Youth Development Cross-National Project," based at Bergen University, Norway. Her collaborative efforts within this project underscore her unwavering dedication to advancing research on youth development on a global scale, fostering cross-cultural understanding and collaboration.

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Albana Canollari-Baze (Ph.D.) is a senior lecturer in psychology recognized as a Chartered Psychologist from the British Psychological Society. Ph.D. Canollari-Baze has 16 years of expertise in lecturing psychology as well as conducting research and offering consultancy. Drawing from a developmental and cultural psychological approach Ph.D. Canollari-Baze's research focused on youth cultural identity development as well as migrating parents' social representations on their children's education. Ph.D. Canollari-Baze has engaged as a national and international research expert in two major Council of Europe projects on the education systems in Albania and Kosovo.

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Blanka Bálint, Ede Lázár, Balázs Telegdy

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QUALITATIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: A POSSIBILITY IN EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

ABSTRACT

There is a widespread belief that quantitative evaluation methods are more reliable than qualitative approaches to evaluation. While randomised experimental designs are more effective in demonstrating the impact of an intervention, they are not always feasible. At the same time, including qualitative aspects in evaluation studies is beneficial, as they allow for deeper insights and qualitative methods to assess better participants' development and the extent of social change. Among these, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) bridges small-sample qualitative and large-sample quantitative methods.

Developed by the American sociologist Charles Ragin (1987), the method is suitable for use with medium cases, typically between 10 and 50, when the number of items is fewer than required for statistical analysis and higher than for qualitative, case-study-type methods. The method is suitable for dealing with multivariate complexity and inductively identifying relevant factors (conditions) influencing the research question (the outcome). It can help explain why change occurs in some cases but not others.

One of the methods we used in the evaluation was QCA to assess whether the project we studied contributed to the employability of project participants since the main objective of the project under review was to prepare disadvantaged young people for employment. (Find Your Way to the World of Work, n.d.). To do this, we interviewed young people involved in the project and those who were not. Employability was measured using an employability questionnaire. (Foglalkoztathatósági Skála, n.d.)

To properly assess the impact of the intervention, we determined which components we believed to be necessary and/or sufficient. This entails more than just identifying the project-related activities; it also calls for recognising the mediating elements and broader contextual aspects that may support the project's success (Baptist & Befani, 2015). In addition to participation in the project, we have defined four conditions: negative school experiences (Lőrinc et al., 2020), school-level career guidance (Musset & Kurekova, 2018), work-related experiences (Finch et al., 2013), and future orientation (Masdonati & Fournier, 2015).

The evaluation results have demonstrated the positive impact of participation in the project and the importance of additional conditions that other methods may not have discovered.

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WHAT IS (BEHIND) THE GENDER GAP IN SICKNESS BENEFITS? EVIDENCE FROM ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

ABSTRACT

The gender gap in sickness benefits collection, where women are observed to receive benefits more frequently and in larger amounts compared to men, raises significant questions about underlying causes and implications. This study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of this phenomenon within the Portuguese social security system. By examining individual and spell data, we seek to quantify the gender gap and explore its dynamics across different demographics and types of sickness benefits (non-hospitalisation and hospitalisation scenarios). Our objective is to uncover the factors contributing to this disparity, including biological, socioeconomic, socio-psychological, and job-related influences. Furthermore, we aim to distinguish between potential overuse of benefits by women and underuse by men, considering societal and policy-driven aspects influencing sickness benefit claims.

This research is pivotal in understanding the intricate relationship between gender and health within the labour market. It contributes to the discourse on gender equality, healthcare accessibility, and the effectiveness of social security systems in addressing the needs of different demographic groups. By identifying the nuances of the gender gap in sickness benefits, we aim to inform targeted policy interventions that promote fairness, equality, and optimised support for individuals requiring sickness-related financial assistance.

To explore the gender gap in sickness benefits in Portugal, the study utilised social security administrative records from the Portuguese Ministry of Labour, Solidarity, and Social Security, focusing on individuals aged 16 to 80. The dataset spanned from January 2005 to February 2012, capturing monthly observations of employment and sickness benefits, including the start and end dates of sickness spells and the total amount of benefits paid. Sociodemographic data such as sex, age, nationality, monthly salary, and place of residence were analysed, but the dataset did not specify occupation or disease type.

Logistic regression models were applied to assess the impact of gender on the likelihood of receiving sickness benefits, incorporating control variables like age, foreign status, and salary level to account for potential influences.

The dataset encompasses 203,877 sickness spells, attributing 2,176,105 days of sick pay to 75,522 individuals. Notable gender disparities emerge, with females dominating in the number of spells (65.52% for females vs. 34.38% for males; $p < 0.001$) and length of the qualification (11 days for females vs. 10 days for males; $p < 0.001$). Additionally, the total mean amount paid per spell was substantially higher for males compared to females (respectively, 174€ vs. 136€; $p < 0.001$). Subgroup analysis reveals age-related variations, with the most pronounced gender gap at 30 years of age and the lowest at 60 years old. Salary distribution impacts the gap, being more significant for lower values and eliminated for higher bands. However, when considering hospitalisation-related sickness benefits, this gender gap is reverted, with females having the same propensity to receive sickness subsidies and a higher likelihood of shorter qualifications, even after controlling for other variables.

Looking at hospitalisation-related sickness benefits helps to reduce cases where sick leave might have been taken unfairly. Potential explanations for these results are differences in healthcare-seeking behaviour, the prevalence of certain health conditions, or occupational factors that affect the health of individuals. This might also be attributed to a scenario where women mitigate the escalation of diseases to more severe levels due to preemptive interventions. The related wage-based disparities can potentially be attributed to the systematic issues in wage structures, echoing gender-based healthcare inequities. Our findings emphasise the need for further research to uncover underlying factors and inform targeted policies addressing gender-specific concerns within the social security system. This understanding can foster fairness, equality, and improved support for individuals in need of sickness-related financial assistance.

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João Rocha-Gomes is a medical doctor and health economist with experience in both clinical and digital health sectors. Currently pursuing a PhD in Health Data Science at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Porto, his research aims to leverage data-driven approaches to improve healthcare outcomes. As an invited lecturer at the same institution, João teaches Digital Health, where he integrates his expertise in health economics and technology. In addition to his academic contributions, he holds leadership positions in biotech and digital health ventures. His work is dedicated to bridging the gap between academic research and industry, with a focus on developing scalable solutions to democratize access to healthcare globally.

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A white rectangular card with a slight perspective tilt, centered on a grey background. The card is overlaid with two horizontal stripes: a light green one on top and a dark blue one on the bottom. The text is centered on the white area.

Evaluation in the Field of Social Innovation

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MULTIFACETED FAMILY IMPACT ANALYSIS IN ITALY: COUNTERING INEQUALITIES BY CREATING FAMILY IMPACT CHECKLISTS TO HELP PROFESSIONALS “THINK FAMILY”

ABSTRACT

The assessment of the impact of policies and services on families in Italy has been on the agenda of the government, through the National Observatory on the Family, since 2012, with the approval of the National Plan on the Family. The present project aims to give impetus to the evaluation of the effects of policies and practices on the well-being of families, supporting government action with multidisciplinary research orientated to the reduction of inequalities.

Families constitute a fundamental cornerstone for individual and community well-being across the entire life course. A large amount of research has consistently demonstrated that family-centred approaches for family services result in more positive outcomes for both individuals and family relationships. This underscores the pivotal role families play in enhancing educational success, fostering social competences, facilitating work-life balance, and mitigating the impact of various risk factors. But the role of the family in welfare must be guaranteed by a correct application of the principle of subsidiarity, which cannot generate a corporatist-conservative regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990), but through their involvement in a strategy of co-design and co-production (Connolly, White, & Satka, 2017; Donati, 2011; Pesenti & Lodigiani, 2013; Prandini, 2018) that is enabling them (Nussbaum & Sen, 1993; Carrà & Moscatelli, 2021) and non-delegating.

In Italy, the issue of family impact has been in the academic debate for some time, and starting from the American model of the Family Impact Lens (Bogenschneider et al., 2012), several studies have been developed to adapt this approach to the Italian context (Belletti, Bramanti, & Carrà, 2018; Carrà, Moscatelli, & Ferrari, 2020). In particular, during the pandemic, some interdisciplinary research (Carrà & Moscatelli, 2021; Centro di Ateneo Studi e Ricerche sulla Famiglia, 2020; Manzi & Mazzucchelli, 2020; Mazzucchelli, Bosoni, & Medina, 2020) developed a scale of family impact administered to families, thus exploring the possibility of observing the impact from the point of view of families perceptions and relating this perception to typically sociological dimensions such as the breadth of support networks and gender inequalities, as well as to some psycho-social constructs.

Despite the acknowledged significance of supporting families through policies and practices and the political interest in them, there exists a lack of specific instruments and tools for designing policies and services with a “family thinking” approach. This deficiency leaves practitioners inadequately equipped to design programmes addressing diverse ranges

of family dynamics. To address this gap, this study explores how the Family Impact Lens (Bogenschneider, Little, Ooms, Benning, Cadigan & Corbett, 2012) and its Italian adaptation, the FamILens (Carrà, 2023), can align policies and services with the specific needs of families. As recently realised in some health contexts (Crandall et al., 2019), the project aimed to develop four Family Impact Checklists to gauge services' attention to family well-being. This multidisciplinary tool, known as the modular Family Impact Checklist, assesses ex-ante, in itinere, and ex-post the effects of four specific interventions on families, enabling the implementation of appropriate corrective measures if necessary. Specifically, the study's objective was to define and validate the Family Impact Checklist for use in four key intervention areas: family mediation, elderly home care, human resources management, and child protection social services.

A large and diversified research group (35 resources, belonging to 5 faculties of the Catholic University in Milan) was involved in the project to overcome sectoralism through a collegial and collaborative approach. In setting up the working group, the aim was to reflect as much as possible the plurality of policymaking areas, also introducing skills capable of outlining the demographic and legal framework within which policies and services are designed.

Each of the four studies incorporated co-design sessions and a two-round Delphi involving over 15 experts in each domain for validation.

In the co-design session, four working groups were created, led by two facilitators, which involved, in addition to members of the research team, other professionals belonging to different disciplinary fields, called external experts. The groups met three times between June and September 2023, and each produced a draft of the checklist using a co-design methodology.

For the validation, a two-round Delphi was carried out with a panel of 20–25 operators/professionals for each of the four areas investigated, coming from different contexts and throughout Italy. Panellists in each area received in the first phase the checklist and were invited to judge the clarity and usefulness of each item and in the second phase to review the changes made, introducing any additional changes and improvements. This consensus method led, after the second round, to define a different specific checklist for professionals in each of the four key areas. After this phase, four large-scale family impact analyses will use surveys through the validated checklists targeting statistically significant samples of professionals from each different field studied. This phase is in progress and will be carried out during 2024. The four checklists, although different from each other, all maintain the same internal structure. Encompass a variable

number of items across six “think family” principles: family responsibility, family stability, family relationship, family diversity, family engagement, and family networking. These principles proposed by the FamILens model are declined in a series of operational items that include actions and/or practices typical for each area and provide for various response options organised on a Likert scale (very, adequately, to a limited extent, does not respond), depending on the extent to which said action or practice is implemented in the scope under analysis. All checklists have between 20 and 30 items in total. The co-design was a moment of sharing knowledge and ideating key elements; strategic practices were identified to promote family well-being in each of the 4 specific fields. The validation was carried out in 6 months with an online questionnaire and one drive document. It identified how many times each principle of one specific checklist was modified and when it was judged less useful in the checklist economy. In some cases, some proposed principles were therefore removed from the final version, and many elements of each individual item were modified, according to experts’ remarks. For example, in the mediation checklist, two items were judged less useful. On average, each item received 1.5 modification proposals, and overall, 27 suggestions were made to the tool. However, the outcome of the validation of the checklist on child protection was radically different: in that case, 5 items were proposed for elimination; more than 122 modification suggestions were made, averaging 3.5 per item.

These four developed tools can aid professionals in formulating impactful, family-friendly programmes that ultimately lead to enhanced individual and community well-being. The adoption of the Family Impact Checklist in the design of policies and interventions could bring about real change in the well-being of families, their generative capacity, and the efficacy of policy or intervention. Taking the perspective of family impact involves a real cultural revolution for those who work at an administrative level, in social services, in companies. Therefore, the process of change will be long, also because in the application of this framework will be first extensive modulation created in Italy. A specific limitation of the study was the continuity of participation of Delphi experts who took part in the validation of the first and second rounds. Another challenging factor was obtaining involvement from individuals representing various national entities and from across the entire Italian territory.

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RISK ASSESSMENT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE DIGITALIZATION OF SOCIAL SERVICES WITHIN THE RESTART SOCIAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM REFORM

ABSTRACT

The pandemic context has underscored the critical role of digitalisation in the effective execution of government-to-person (G2P) social transfer programmes. Countries that have leveraged investments in public digital infrastructure (PDI), including identification (ID), payments, and secure data sharing, have demonstrated enhanced preparedness in implementing social assistance programmes during the crisis, reaching a wider range of beneficiaries. Moldova can glean valuable insights from these experiences to bolster its social assistance system through digitalisation.

This study aims to assess the risks associated with the implementation of the strategic framework for digitalisation within the RESTART Social Assistance System Reform in Moldova. The primary objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive risk assessment associated with the implementation of the Strategic Framework for the Digitalisation of Social Services within the RESTART Social Assistance System Reform in Moldova. The study aims to identify potential risks, challenges, and vulnerabilities inherent in the digitalisation process and provide informed insights to guide mitigation strategies.

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data for a comprehensive analysis. The qualitative data is derived from case studies of countries that have successfully implemented digital social assistance programmes. The quantitative data, on the other hand, is obtained from surveys and administrative records, providing empirical evidence of the impact and effectiveness of digitalisation efforts.

Preliminary results indicate that digitalisation can significantly enhance the efficiency and reach of social assistance programmes. However, it also presents certain challenges, such as data privacy concerns, digital literacy gaps among beneficiaries, and the need for robust cybersecurity measures. Successful case studies highlight the importance of addressing these challenges proactively.

The study acknowledges its limitations, including the potential for selection bias in the case studies and the difficulty of isolating the effects of digitalisation from other concurrent reforms. Furthermore, the rapidly evolving nature of digital technology means that the findings may need to be periodically updated to remain relevant. Addressing these challenges will be essential for the successful implementation of digitalisation strategies.

In conclusion, while digitalisation holds immense potential for improving social assistance delivery, careful risk assessment and mitigation strategies are crucial to ensuring its successful implementation. The study ends with recommendations for a more inclusive and resilient social assistance system in Moldova, emphasising the need for continuous stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and policy adjustments in response to emerging challenges and opportunities. The Centre for Policies and Initiatives encourages ongoing collaboration and dialogue to refine and optimise the digitalisation process within the RESTART Social Assistance System Reform.

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HOW TO OVERCOME “MIDDLE WELFARE TRAP” : LEVERAGING WELL-BEING THROUGH SOCIAL INNOVATION

ABSTRACT

“Development” paradigm focusing solely on national income (GDP) has recently been replaced by a more comprehensive approach that centres on human and social development. Although GDP (national income) was created to be used as an indicator of economic output, it is currently erroneously used as equivalent to development, including social development.

In this paper, we propose the "Middle Welfare Trap" (MFT), which argues that so-called welfare can progress up to a certain point with conventional methods. Further progress will be possible with social innovations along with technical innovations.

specific to the region and time.

The claim of the article is to emphasise that developing countries should pay attention to as much as the "middle income trap": "Middle Welfare Trap".

The concept of "middle welfare trap" put forward within the scope of this article refers to the situation in which developing countries have difficulty going further than a certain level in social and human development. The national income-orientated development paradigm, which stands out in the development approach, has pushed social and human development into the background. Although development often has an economic meaning in developing countries, it generally means total progress that includes cultural, human, and social areas. Many developing countries have determined a development paradigm focused on national income, with the assumption that national income and social and human development will progress in parallel. The concept of "Middle Welfare Trap" emphasises the danger that the expected prosperity and well-being may not be achieved even if the national income reaches the expected level.

From the perspective of the middle income trap, it is essential for a business that has achieved a certain income level by producing textiles to produce products that will include nanotechnology in order to increase its income. From the perspective of the middle welfare trap that we put forward, moving the education system further is possible as a result of social and technical innovations. Furthering the quality of education, which has been brought to a certain level with conventional, well-known approaches, requires the implementation of social and technical innovations, as in the textile industry's need to use nanotechnology. Just as technological innovations are required to get out of the middle

income trap, social innovations are also necessary to get out of the middle wealth trap. With an aim to conceptualise the leveraging effect of social innovation in overcoming the MWT, we examine the social progress indicators according to the level of innovation in three distinct groups. In the second step, the paper will categorise the social progress indicators with a particular focus on social innovation. We will also frame the so-called “Classical Material Development Approach” and “Human and Social Development Approach” in a way to crystallise the distinctive features.

Getting out of the middle welfare trap may be possible by integrating the "Human and Social Development" approach into classical national income/material development-orientated development policies.

This requires supporting technological innovations with social innovations, integrating the third sector into the public and private sectors, and developing practices that depend on time, region, subject, and community instead of universal rules and practices. Requirements for innovation in the education system are very similar to a textile business that needs to integrate nanotechnology in order to be competitive and increase its income. The formation of a healthy legal system depends on social innovative initiatives and transformations that will be carried out together with the physical and technical infrastructure. For example, initiatives such as the ombudsman system, which is a complement to the legal system, the online complaint system in Türkiye (CIMER) at the first stages of a dispute, or mediation systems, neighbourhood courts, and "community court" applications, which are also found in practice in different countries, aim to overcome the "middle welfare trap" that is likely to arise in the field of law.

The contemporary discourse surrounding the efficacy of the national income-orientated development paradigm has emerged as a focal point of scholarly inquiry. This paradigm, rooted in economic theory and policy frameworks, traditionally prioritises the augmentation of national income as a primary driver of socioeconomic progress within a given nation-state. However, in light of evolving global dynamics, including shifting economic landscapes, changing patterns of international trade and investment, and growing recognition of the multidimensional nature of development, scholars and policymakers alike have initiated critical discussions regarding the validity and relevance of this established paradigm. These deliberations encompass multifaceted considerations ranging from the adequacy of conventional metrics for assessing development outcomes to the nuanced interplay between economic growth, income distribution, environmental sustainability, and social welfare.

We are currently observing a growing emphasis on social progress indicators. These indicators encompass various facets, ranging from infant mortality rates at birth to the availability of healthcare professionals per capita. For instance, there is increasing scrutiny on the extent to which schools incorporate 21st-century skills into their curricula, the efficiency of law enforcement response times, and levels of civic engagement, such as voluntary participation in community associations.

This shift underscores a broader recognition of the multifaceted nature of development, extending beyond traditional economic metrics to encompass social well-being and human rights considerations. Indicators show that social and human development and monetary term well-being may not increase at the same rates as national income.

The middle welfare trap theory we put forward in this article states that cumulative prosperity can progress up to a certain point with conventional methods, and further progress will be possible with social and technical innovations specific to the region and time.

The main argument of the paper is as follows: Just as technological innovations are required to get out of the middle income trap, social innovations are also necessary to get out of the middle wealth trap.

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SOCIAL INNOVATION IN THE TRANSFORMATIVE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AGENDA - A RATIONALE FOR A BROADER UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL INNOVATION BEYOND THE SOCIAL POLICY FRAME OF REFERENCE

ABSTRACT

The research question underlying this paper is how social innovation (SI) can be more closely linked to the transformative research and innovation agenda (Schot and Steinmüller, 2018; Geels 2020). After a brief description of the central cornerstones of this new R&I policy paradigm, which is included in many national research programmes as well as in Horizon Europe (e.g., via the mission approach), it is argued that SI should and can also play a central role for transformation policy (Moulaert et al., 2017). However, for this to succeed, SI—and this is the probably unorthodox plea in this paper—has to be taken out of the predominantly social policy niche, which usually focuses on better need orientation and need fulfilment of marginalised groups and which has long been the central point of reference for understanding social innovation.

The aim of this paper is to present a practice-theoretical approach to social innovation in order to enable a better anchoring of social innovation in transformation processes and accordingly in the new transformative research and innovation agenda. The paper is a contribution to the further development of the theory of social innovation, which at the same time questions the prevailing social-policy understanding of social innovation. The consequences of this paradigmatic shift for the evaluation of this particular understanding of social innovation, which aims to change practice(s) rather than just doing good for marginalised people, are discussed in conclusion. It should be noted that this is a theoretical input not based on an evaluation of a social innovation measure.

The paper is a theoretical reflection of different perceptions and foci of SI from a theoretical-historical perspective, which is contrasted with the new paradigm of transformative R&I policy. Then the paper elaborates in which aspects SI research, which aims to make a contribution to understand transformation, differs from social-policy-orientated SI research and why this leads to new analytical focal points (also for evaluative purposes), such as the change of target groups, actors, and policies, but also the emphasis on changed practices and the connection to social change. To better fit the new transformative R&I policy paradigm, the paper's argument "why we should re-evaluate the "social" in "social" innovation" is considered from the perspective of practice theory (Howald and Schwarz, 2017) and from the theoretical history of social innovation (Godin and Schubert, 2021). What both perspectives have in common is that they are not limited.

to the dominant narrative in the SI discourse. Although there is nothing bad about “doing something good” for marginalised groups, the dominant normative orientation associated with it sometimes obscures the actual substrate of a SI, namely the change of social practices adopted and implemented by groups from society to meet a particular need better than by traditional practices. For understanding transformation challenges, it is further important to recognise needs and practices also in areas that do not fall under a social-policy primacy. Indeed, to transform our societies towards greater social, environmental, and economic sustainability, changes in a wide variety of prevailing practices, such as how we consume, produce, reproduce, and adapt ourselves and our culture, how we treat animate and non-animate nature, and how we ascribe meaning, are essential.

Transformative SI as part of a larger transformative innovation agenda calls for changed practices in all strata of society, but especially in the middle class, to generate impact. In addition to the change in importance of the target groups (middle class instead of marginalised groups), other aspects are also changing, such as the actors of SI, the placement and orientation of policies to support SI (Edler, Otertag, and Schuler, 2022), and the design of conducive SI ecosystems. The paper discusses these shifts and offers examples, which should also be taken into account for future evaluations.

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EVALUATION OF POLICIES AND POLICY CHALLENGES FACED BY INFORMAL CAREGIVERS WITHIN THE EU

ABSTRACT

The proposed paper will explore the critical policy challenges facing informal carers within the European Union (EU) and delve into the strategies employed to support this invaluable demographic. Informal carers play a pivotal role in sustaining the well-being of individuals with chronic illnesses, disabilities, or ageing-related needs. However, the increasing demand for informal care, coupled with societal shifts and demographic changes, has brought to light a range of policy challenges.

The authors will navigate through the complex landscape of policy issues affecting informal carers, encompassing financial strains, limited access to resources, and the impact on carers' physical and mental health. Furthermore, the study will investigate the adequacy of existing policy frameworks in addressing the diverse needs of informal carers across EU member states.

The paper shall also shed light on innovative strategies and policy interventions adopted by various EU countries to mitigate the identified challenges. These strategies may include financial support mechanisms, respite care services, and the integration of technological solutions to enhance carer support networks.

By assessing the existing policy landscape and identifying successful strategies, we aim to contribute valuable insights for policymakers, healthcare professionals, and stakeholders involved in shaping policies that address the unique needs of informal carers within the European Union.

Assessing the existing policy landscape and identifying successful strategies within the complex landscape of policy issues affecting informal carers requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach. This work will consist of a thorough review of existing academic literature, policy documents, and research studies related to informal caregiving in the European Union. Identify key policy challenges and strategies that have been proposed or implemented in various member states; a detailed analysis of current policies at both the EU and member state levels will allow us to evaluate the extent to which these policies address financial strains, limited access to resources, and the impact on carers' physical and mental health, followed by a comparison of the policies and strategies adopted by different EU member states; identify variations in approaches and outcomes, considering the cultural, social, and economic contexts of each country. This comparative analysis can highlight successful strategies that may be applicable in a broader EU context.

This methodology will allow us to identify and analyse best practices and innovative initiatives that have demonstrated success in addressing the identified challenges. Explore

the scalability and adaptability of these practices to different cultural and regional contexts within the EU.

This comprehensive assessment approach combines qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a holistic understanding of the policy landscape and facilitate the identification of successful strategies for supporting informal carers in the EU.

Based on the assessment findings, develop policy recommendations aimed at addressing gaps, improving existing policies, and promoting effective strategies to support informal carers in the European Union.

The findings from this analysis may influence future policy development, fostering a more supportive and sustainable environment for informal carers across the EU.

A white rectangular card with a slight perspective tilt, centered on a grey background. The card is overlaid with two horizontal stripes: a light green one on top and a dark blue one on the bottom. The text is written in a bold, green, sans-serif font.

**Evaluation in the Field
of Social Inclusion for
Children**

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A CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF THE QUALITY AND EQUITY OF ECOSYSTEMS POLICY FOR ENHANCING SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN

ABSTRACT

Critical theory highlights the idea that there is social injustice not only in the world but also in the communities we live in and in the institutions we work in (Kincheloe, 2008). Bourdieu (1998) critiques schools as institutions to reproduce the current social order and maintain unequal power relations in society. When policies and practices are examined from an ecosystems model, they may look promising to bring equality and quality for all children at all levels at first sight. However, when delving into research from a sociopolitical and social justice perspective, it is easy to capture that power relations in local and broader society are reproduced. (Freire, 2000).

The challenges related to equity and quality that have been highlighted by the OECD 2018 report indicate that in order to improve access to education, value and excellence of education offerings are key features of policy ecosystems. Thus, the educational success of children of tomorrow is shaped by the early investments in children's knowledge and skills acquisition that will prepare them for their future educational and employability aspirations. The quality indicators of schools in that sense will make a difference regardless of the household backgrounds the children are from.

The purpose of this paper is to make a critical discussion of the reproduction of children's future through the policy ecosystems enacted in Turkey based on empirical data. In our paper, we will report on children's emotional and cognitive outputs about school-based factors and household factors to provide implications for education-related ecosystem policies via evidence-based data utilising the PISA 2022 open data repository. We will focus on the need for developing equitable policies that will embrace all children based on their multiple learning and development needs and developing curricula and instructional experiences from a social justice perspective to enable a more just world for all children.

The data is from the PISA 2022 open data repository, including output from the student questionnaire and school questionnaire. The variables that measure students' emotional outputs are "curiosity," "persistence," "emotional control," "stress resistance," "assertiveness," and "empathy" (PISA 2022 Database Volume II, Chapter 2). The variables that measure students' cognitive outputs are mathematics, science, and reading scores. The hypothesis is that the student emotional and cognitive outputs are correlated with school-based factors and household-based factors. The variables that measure school-based factors are school practices, policies, and infrastructure (PISA 2022 Context Questionnaire Framework:

Balancing Trends and Innovation). The variables that measure family-based factors include an index of economic, social, and cultural status derived from three variables related to family background: parents' highest level of education, parents' highest occupational status, and home possessions, including books in the home (OECD Pisa 2018 Results Volume III: What School Life Means for Students's Lives). Annex A1 (Construction of Indices). Cluster analysis will be used to group students according to different levels of emotional and cognitive variables. School-based and household-based differences across groups, according to different levels of emotional and cognitive factors, will be assessed using analysis of variance.

The limitation of the study is that the analysis will use data from Türkiye. Further research is needed to explore and generalise the finding to other countries in the PISA framework, especially in Europe.

We suggest a socially just ecosystem where communities and institutions will enable children with opportunities to "reduce prejudice and incorporate multiple knowledge construction processes" (Banks, 2008) and competencies so that they will be able to "share power, knowledge, and resources equitably (Bogotch, 2000, p. 2).

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ABSTRACT

In the course of 2021-2023, HÉTFA Research Institute conducted an evaluation of the ESF-funded project 'FAGYI[1] on integrated services around early childhood development run by the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, which is part of the government programme 'Long-term programme for emerging settlements' (hereinafter referred to as FETE). The Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, along with a consortium of 18 organisations, has been implementing the programme across the most disadvantaged regions in Hungary since 2019. It was launched in 30 villages, followed by an additional 36 locations in 2020. From 2021, a further 51 joined the initiative, and another 183 will join until 2025.

The project aims to reduce the impact of marginalisation and poverty and more specifically address inclusion of children through locally available intensive, complex social work, intensive family accompaniment, and professional-methodological support for further social inclusion and local development activities. The evaluation aimed to identify results and impacts around the primary focus area of the programme, that is, early childhood development. The research was conducted in multiple phases and applied a mixed method to cover multiple perspectives of the interventions. This paper reports about the findings based on the first two phases of the data collection.

The impact mechanisms of early childhood development programmes are complex, as shown by previous evaluations, and the impacts may only become apparent in the long term; therefore, some of the interventions' effects may not be fully measurable within a 1-3 year timeframe. In the first months, beyond physical conditions of the home environment and access to health services during pregnancy and around birth, the level of task sharing, daily routine, and a broad range of parental attitudes within the family play a key role in achieving results linked with later school performance and resilience and integrative capabilities. It is important to note that interventions have a reinforcing effect on each other, especially if they target siblings, parents, and institutions around the family in a coherent way. The FAGYI programme has been designed accordingly, acknowledging that multiple simultaneous interventions are necessary to achieve the desired effect of the developments. Its three main focuses, also taken as key pillars of the evaluation, are as follows: 1. Childhood development and health; 2. social services; 3. family and parenting. The evaluation employed a mixed methodology, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative elements to address the evaluation questions. Data collection was carried out

[1] EFOP-1.4.5-20 'Focus on the Child' initiative, referred to as 'FAGYI' (Fókuszban a Gyermekek).

both at the family and at institutional/service levels. Qualitative interviews focused on service staff and policymakers and were carried out in a set of villages in the course of 2022 and in another set in the course of 2023. A household survey was carried out in 2021, then a sub-sample of respondents was selected and included in a 2022 panel survey, and in 2023, a new exit sample was selected that covered families that were already in touch with the local programmes for two years.

The quantitative methods were used to investigate status gaps and shifts relative to the children's own age groups. This included 0 to 48-month-olds' development data at entry and exit, as well as changes in the families' social parameters and childrearing conditions such as parenting attitudes, school career plans, home environment, and daily routine. The entry sample included approx. 2000 questionnaire responses in late summer 2021. The first exit survey (September and October 2022) covered a panel of 457 families. A control survey was carried out in a subset of the FETE municipalities. In parallel, in the summer of 2022, family mentors and coordinators involved in the programme completed an online questionnaire regarding their work and experiences thus far. The second panel exit survey (élate summer and early autumn 2023) covered a sample of 428 families.

The study also included qualitative case studies from seven locations in 2022. During the on-site visits, 67 interviews were conducted with various professionals, including family mentors, community service staff, family nurses, nursery school managers and carers, primary social care professionals, school staff, and other relevant professionals. Additionally, six focus groups were held with parents involved in the programme. In 2023, further six qualitative case studies were conducted.

The results of the input measurement indicate that children in the villages of the 'Focus on the Child' programme are lagging behind their peers in several areas. For instance, 11% of them, one and a half times as many, were born with low birth weight compared to the national average. Furthermore, in 25% of the families, the family mentors did not find a suitable place for children to play. Only 80% of homes permitted children to crawl on the floor to develop basic motoric skills, and 10% of homes had unsafe interiors for infants and children. By the age of 4, children had a gap in their vocabulary of approximately 1.5-2 years. In terms of speech, abstraction, and generalisation, a 4-year-old FAGYI child achieved the expected developmental level of an average 3-year-old. Further child-rearing conditions regarding supportive care attitudes and daily routines were also lacking in a large share of families.

The programme's initial results in the area of early childhood health and development were promising based both on the first and second panel families' data. The progress in measurements connected with vocabulary and syntax was significant (improvement from 45% to 68% as a ratio of the national average peer groups). In the field of motor and neural development, there have been several improvements, too, especially in the age group of 2 and 2.5 years: kids became more active in gross motor skills, communication, and independence. Despite these developments, there is still a significant gap for three-year-olds in various fields that may hamper their future school performance. During interviews, respondents were careful not to make subjective evaluations regarding changes in parenting skills. They emphasised that not enough time had passed to report a lasting change in attitudes. Still, they cited improved activities around parenting such as storytelling, reading, and being less hesitant to put children on the floor. Nursery staff, on the other hand, reported noticing differences in both children's and parents' behaviour and attitudes in several cases. Positive changes in socialisation were also observed. The data from the panel sample also indicates improvement in parenting skills as measured by the HOME toddler index, CRPR, and PSDQ.

One of the programme's greatest accomplishments is improving access to services that were previously lacking at the local level or were difficult to access. These include physiotherapists, psychologists, speech therapists, various tests and developmental check-ups for children, and, very importantly, pregnant women at gynaecologists and other health services. Professionals have also observed reductions in the area of removals and sheltering of children. At the same time, the programme has not had a discernible effect on the rate of teenage pregnancies.

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EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES SUPPORTING CHILDREN AT RISK OF POVERTY, SOCIAL EXCLUSION, AND DROPOUT

ABSTRACT

The evaluation represents the assessment of effectiveness and impact of the educational programme of a corporate foundation, implementing the corporate social responsibility of an important IT company, by providing educational programmes to children at risk of poverty, social exclusion, and dropout. Thus, the evaluation examines the capacity of educational activities to generate or contribute to the breaking of the cycle of poverty. The key challenge of evaluations remained the “attribution” of the change observed to the intervention that has been implemented. Is the change due to the implementation, or would it have occurred anyway? Another challenge was quantifying effect regarding the expected results that are mainly referring to children's capacity to continue education, to identify and take advantage of educational and development opportunities, and to eventually break the cycle of poverty in the future. In this context, for the programme implemented, the counterfactual impact evaluation was not possible due to the lack of baseline data from a control group and because most of the programme indicators are not quantitative indicators but qualitative estimations of the children's motivation and interest in learning and capacity to grow. They may be measured with psychological tests, but the educational programme under evaluation is not planned to address psychological traits but to offer opportunities for children; therefore, although theoretically useful, the psychological tests are not the best tool for the evaluation of the educational programmes. Therefore, the evaluation used a realist, theory-based evaluation. This methodological approach stresses the importance of context-mechanism-outcomes (CMO) configurations basic to policies and programmes. The context refers to the external factors to the program and, in some cases, the programmes, e.g., the local variation in a programme implementation. The mechanism often refers to the psychological and socio-psychological reaction of the programme beneficiaries and stakeholders to the programme implementation. The outcomes are the results, expected or unexpected, of the programme. The purpose was to determine whether and how the programme worked in a particular setting. The programme theory described how the intervention is expected to lead to its effects and in which conditions it should do so. (Realist Evaluation | Better Evaluation) Realist data analysis is driven by the principles of realism. Realist evaluation explains change brought about by and intervention by referring to the actors who act and change (or not) a situation under specific conditions and under the influence of external events (including the intervention)

itself). The actors and the interventions are considered to be embedded in a social reality that influences how the intervention is implemented and how actors respond to it (or not). The difference between realist and other kinds of programme theory-based evaluation approaches is that a realist programme theory specifies what mechanisms will generate the outcomes and what features of the context will affect whether or not those mechanisms operate.

The evaluated programme started acknowledging that functional illiteracy and high dropout rates are proportional with the level of poverty and marginalisation. The reasons for the failed educational path for marginalised children identified in 2019 include: lack of resources of the parents; lack of clothes, shoes, and educational materials that ensure participation in school and engagement of children in work necessary to support the entire family; distance and associated transport costs to reach the school; and lack of support from teachers in providing a quality educational process in schools from poor communities (high fluctuation of teachers affects the coherence and constancy of the educational process); lack of positive role models that achieved a high standard of living due to education; lack of learning opportunities and limited access to quality information. In this context, the educational programme main sets of activities, for a target group of about 300 children, include: providing basic needs support: the scholarship, clothes, books and educational materials (including tablets during the COVID-19 pandemic), medical and psychological support when needed; learning and implementing educational programmes for children, including additional/tutoring lessons linked to the school curricula, English lessons, educational activities aiming at developing digital skills; empowerment educational summer camps; other leisure opportunities; providing children with role models, especially through the mentorship programme, with young professionals as mentors, but also through meetings with other role models. Based on the planned activities and the analysis of the target group, I reconstructed a theory of change, identifying potential changes for different sub-groups of children and intervening factors in the context of the programme implementation.

Analysed data included interviews with beneficiaries and stakeholders of the evaluated programme, as well as the analysis of questionnaire answers reflecting the opinion of beneficiaries and stakeholders of the evaluated programme regarding the results of the programme.

As mentioned, the evaluation of the educational programme focused on a realist approach: on what works for whom', 'in which contexts particular programme elements/activities do and don't work', and 'what mechanisms are triggered by what programme elements/activities in

what contexts'. There was an underlying assumption of the Programme that, if it works best, it will be able to generate long-term results reflected in children's capacity to take advantage of all opportunities and to break the cycle of poverty. The main conclusions show that the programme is effective and impactful, but its results are different for different children:

- The financial and material support works well to ensure children's participation in education (school and the educational activities) in almost all cases, either by providing parents with essential help (e.g., some parents are not able to cover children commute to school or high school without the scholarship) or by motivating parents to support more the education of their children (the scholarship is an incentive for parents). This support is particularly important for children with issues related to their physical or geographical access to education and other opportunities.
- The tutoring lessons work well for children that are (internally) motivated to learn (are conscientious and enjoy learning) and, to a lesser extent, for children with large education gaps, as they are able to partly close the gap. The online tutoring sessions are not effective for children that are not motivated to learn, or before children are motivated to learn in another way.
- The summer camp and other similar activities work very well as a confidence booster for children. These activities are also essential for all children for the development of their communication and teamwork competences.
- Children's motivation to learn and their ability to develop a vision for their future, which triggers the motivation, are the main mechanisms leading to good results of the programme for children.

As shown, children's internal motivation to learn and their vision for their professional (and personal) future are the main mechanisms leading to good results of the educational programme. Although both the motivation and vision are supported by the programme, there is both a positive feedback loop based on a good motivation and good school results that are reinforcing each other and a negative feedback loop, where a low level of motivation generates less attention to school, tests, and exams, and poor results in school, tests, and exams underline the motivation.

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Irina Lonean conducted the evaluation of international, national, and local initiatives promoting wellbeing and support services for children and young people since 2015. She participated in the youth policy evaluation review and draughted the insights into social inclusion and digitalisation, both published by the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership in 2020. Since February 2021, she has been part of the team working on the development of the online Knowledge Hub: COVID-19 Impact on the Youth Sector, developed and hosted by the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership.

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THE EFFECTS OF THE CROSSROADS PROGRAMME ON EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CHOICE

ABSTRACT

In our article, we present the first results from the evaluation of the „Crossroads: A complex digital programme for a successful career” programme (EFOP-5.2.1-17-2017-00011) managed by the Hungarian Reformed Church Aid.

The Crossroads Programme had started in September 2018. In two waves, it enrolled more than 120 disadvantaged students from the most deprived areas of Ózd, a former industrial town in the north-eastern part of Hungary. The programme has started providing social mentoring, career guidance, mentoring, and mental wellbeing services from the start of the 7th grade until the end of the 10th grade, so it helped through the last two years of the primary school, guided through the choice of the secondary school, and the first two years of the secondary school. At the time of the evaluation, the students of the first wave were already in their third year in the secondary school, and those from the second wave, who started in September 2019, could have ended the 10th grade. Our task was to do the impact assessment of the programme.

As the programme was voluntary, thus whole classes could be enrolled, we tried to decrease the selection bias by grouping the similar primary schools in Ózd and swapping the treated and control schools between the different waves within these groups. We have more or less managed to follow this plan, but in some cases, there were insufficient volunteers from the designated schools, so we had widened the sample of schools.

During the programme, we have collected data from different sources. At the beginning of each wave, every enrolled student’s family filled out a family background questionnaire; additionally, we used the administrative data from schools (as the social workers were in daily touch with the schools and teachers) and from the national assessment database. We have interviewed teachers and principals in primary and secondary schools and conducted interviews with the social workers in the programme. The students filled out questionnaires at the beginning, halftime, and end of the programme.

Comparing the characteristics of the treated and control group, we have found that, on the one hand, there are differences between the waves: in the first wave, there were more girls, and the students had a better family background and better results in the 6th grade national assessment test; and on the other hand, there are also significant differences between the treated and control group within the waves. But if we analyse the two waves together, then the only significant difference is that the students in the control group tend to be older; in case of other attributes like the parents’ highest level of schooling, 6th grader national assessment results (mathematics, reading comprehension), and family

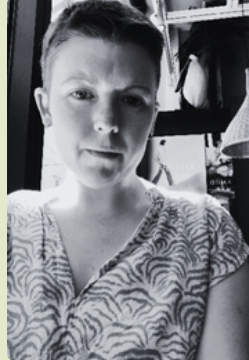
background index, the two groups (treated and control) are indistinguishable. We have also investigated the characteristics of the students who dropped out of the programme as a separate subgroup. They tend to be older boys with a lower family background index. Accordingly, in case of a future expansion, the programme should be revised to better reach this subgroup as well.

The programme has affected the choice of secondary school: programme participants have a 16.5% higher probability to choose a secondary school where students can graduate (grammar school, vocational grammar school, technical school), creating the opportunity for tertiary education. Dropping out of the programme decreased the probability of the positive outcome.

Investigating the drop-out chances, we also found that the programme significantly helped the participants to stay in their chosen secondary schools. On average, students from the programme have a 28-percentage point higher probability of being enrolled in a secondary school at the end of the programme than those from the control group. Those students who left the programme have a 47-percentage point higher probability to drop out of the school as well. Students from the first wave also have a 15-16 percentage point higher probability to leave school early.

Our surveys also showed that the programme affected some parts of the students' future plans. Students staying in secondary education had higher academic goals at the end of the programme than they had in the 7th grade when the programme had begun. In addition, the proportion of students who plan to stay in the city decreased by 50 percent.

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ASSESSMENT OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES, WITH A FOCUS ON THE VULNERABLE ONES

ABSTRACT

The report presents the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and families, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable ones and suggests response actions to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and help minimizing its negative impacts on human development. The study was issued by UNICEF Romania.

The study had the following objectives:

- Gain a better understanding on how the Covid-19 pandemic and its immediate aftermath and response impacted the lives of communities/children and their families, with a focus on the vulnerable ones;
- Ensure the voice of children and families are heard and they have the opportunity to speak about the most pressing problems they face, about their needs and propose solutions that build on their existing capacities and coping mechanisms;
- Generate well founded and evidence- based policy and programme recommendations to address the situation of vulnerable children.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

The decline in GDP per capita in 2020, that was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, increased the probability of children dropping out of school. The regression model showed that if GDP/capita increases by 1%, school dropout rate decreases by 1,8% on average. GDP per capita decreased by 3.4% in 2020 while unemployment rate soared during the pandemic, from 3.9% in 2019 to 5% in 2020 and to 5.1% in the second semester of 2021. Thus, given the findings of the model and the recorded decrease in in GDP per capita, it is likely that the COVID-19 pandemic increased school dropout rate in Romania due to the decrease in GDP per capita.

As the COVID-19 pandemic reduced access to vegetables, one of the main determinants of morbidity, it is likely that the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to an increase morbidity rate. The regression model showed that a 1.99% increase in annual vegetables consumption, is likely to lead to a 1% decrease in morbidity. The findings of the survey show that 7.1% of the population consumed less fruit and vegetables during the COVID-19 pandemic while 1% did not consume at all fruit or vegetables in 2020. Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to an increase of morbidity, as access to vegetables (the main determinant of level of morbidity) has been reduced during the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the increase of the material deprivation rate in Romania. The regression model showed that if a 1% increase of share of health expenses in GDP is made, it may lead to 0.44% reduction of general morbidity. The data from the survey show that 14.1% of the households from the population did not earn enough to cover all basics in 2020 while data from the National Institute of Statistics showed that the unemployment rate increased during most 2020. Therefore, given the results of the regression analysis and survey, it is likely that the material deprivation rate increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The decrease in the material deprivation rate caused by the COVID-19 pandemic decreased life expectancy. When the share of expenses in the family's income increases by 1%, the material deprivation rate increases by 10.53% on average. As the material deprivation rate was shown that it likely to have increased due to the pandemic, life expectancy is likely to have been impacted as well. Our model shows that if the material deprivation rate increases by 1%, the healthy life expectancy decreases by 0.027% on average.

The analysis of the constructed Multiple-dimensional Poverty Index shows that 3.4% of households from the population have a total income that is below the poverty line. The poorest are households with children aged 4-5 years old, especially in the ural areas. The households that are the most deprived lack most access in the living standard and education dimension. This finding is available for both samples that were used for the analysis of the MPI, general sample and boost sample.

Concerning the households that are considered deprived, the general population that is deprived registers the most lack of access in the income and living standards dimensions. When the researchers focus solely on the most vulnerable families that are considered deprived, the dimensions when the biggest roadblocks are met are the income and health dimensions. The most impactful benefits, in terms of household income and thus, reducing poverty, are the universal child benefit and the family support allowance. The increase of the value of the two benefits, as per the model, would lead to:

- The total income of poorest households increases by 23.69% in Scenario AA (universal child allowance) and by 22.38% in scenario AB (family support allowance), the family support allowance having a bigger role in contributing to income increases for households with total income below 2000 RON, while for the households with total income above 2000 LEI, the contribution of both benefits is similar;
- Roma households would be the biggest beneficiaries with a total increase of 29.19% in Scenario AA (universal child allowance) and by 26.82% in Scenario AB (family support allowance);

- Impact on poverty is highest among Roma households, if the two benefits are increased: Headcount poverty decreased by 5.82 percentage point, poverty gap decreased by 12.27 percentage point while squared poverty gap decreased by 10.81 percentage points;
- According to Eurostat, Romania's government spending in 2020 was 91.964.800.000 EUR. Currently, the expenditure on the payments for the universal child allowance represents 1.82% from the total spending, while the expenditure on the family support allowance stands at 0.073% from total spending. Given the impact of the family support allowance on total income of the poorest households and the impact on the poverty rates of the population, an increase of 0.12 (Scenario AB) or 0.16 (Scenario AA) percentage points is justified. Concerning the universal child benefit, due to the universal character of the benefit, the financial burden is much higher, as an increase of 2.66 percentage points in both scenarios (AB and AA) is likely.

Limitations

- Due to in-depth analysis for an alternative modelling solution (MODA instead of MPI), the timeline for implementing the methodology and realising the report was shortened so that we considered it necessary to extend the period of the contract with a reasonable agreed period, which will be discussed after the inception phase is finalised.
- Social distancing due to COVID: regional focus groups, the workshop, and the panel of experts will be conducted online so that we can avoid the risk of infections. But this will also mean that we should adapt to a less engaging environment and make sure that everyone has the chance to speak, even if we are not discussing face-to-face.
- Each poverty measurement (headcount poverty index, poverty gap, squared poverty gap) has shortcomings in its intuitive appeal.

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Evaluation in the Area of Public Health

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IMPACT OF AIR POLLUTION ON BURDEN OF DISEASE IN TURKEY

ABSTRACT

Air pollution is one of the most important and well-known public health hazards. Globally, about 90% of the world's population is at risk due to air pollution, which poses a significant threat to the world's population. WHO estimates that globally, people exposed to air pollution cause approximately 7 million deaths every year and cause an estimated economic loss of US\$5.11 trillion. As in many parts of the world, air pollution negatively affects health in Turkey. Air pollution is defined as the occurrence of polluting factors in the atmosphere, such as gas, water vapour, smoke, and dust, to a harmful level in terms of the environment and health. Apart from natural causes such as volcanoes, dust, and forest fires, human beings cause air pollution; they also cause artificial causes that occur because of their activities. There are many studies related to the identification of ambient air pollution (AAP) as one of the most important causes of premature death and health problems worldwide. Air pollution is one of the most common problems, especially in low-income countries. The most important reason for this situation is the use of solid fuels such as wood, dumplings, and plant residues when cooking indoors. Many scientific studies have shown that ambient air pollution contributes to the burden of disease, especially in the elderly, infants, pregnant women, and people with concomitant diseases, as well as people with respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. It is among the most important risk factors for the development of many diseases, such as air pollution in homes and particulate matter pollution in the environment. This study aims to determine the disease burden and trend of air pollution in Turkey between 1990 and 2019.

This descriptive type of research was obtained from the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2019, conducted by the Institute for Health Measurements and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington, the data of which are publicly available. The GBD study is a scientific and systematic scientific study that measures the loss of health caused by diseases and risk factors by age, gender, and region. In many studies, it has been found that air pollution is attributed to the burden of diseases, especially affecting the burden of various diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases. In this study, life years arranged according to mortality and disability due to air pollution (DALYs) were determined in Turkey from 1990 to 2019. SPSS and MS Excel package programmes were used in the research. The data used in this study does not require approval because access is open source.

In this study, DALYs and mortality rates per 100,000 population attributable to air pollution have been determined in Turkey from 1990 to 2019. Over a period of about 30 years, air pollution-related deaths and mortality rates have decreased in the world and in Turkey. The attributable air pollution mortality rate in Turkey was determined as 45.2 per 100,000 (CI: 34.4-57.3) in 2019, while it was 52.4 per 100,000 (CI: 43.3-63.9) in 1990. Air pollution has been identified as the 4th most important risk factor, the highest as a health problem. It has been found that 40% of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in the world is caused by air pollution.

As a result, air pollution, which continues to pose a significant threat to environmental safety and public health, continues to be an important risk factor in the world and in Turkey. If the sources of air pollution in Turkey are not brought under control immediately, the burden of diseases related to air pollution will increase. Legal regulations and organisations have been made to prevent air pollution in Turkey. Along with legal and managerial regulations, energy preference has also been effective in reducing air pollution. In Turkey, the transition of most provinces to natural gas has reduced air pollution. It is observed that there are relatively improvements in the air quality, especially in large cities, but this problem has not been completely solved in small cities. For this reason, air pollution prevention and control policies are urgently needed in Turkey to reduce the burden of air pollution-related diseases.

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ECONOMIC CRISES AND HEALTH EQUITY: A MICRODATA STUDY USING ADEPT SOFTWARE FOR THE BRAZILIAN CASE BETWEEN 1998 AND 2019

ABSTRACT

According to the 2017 United Nations Development Programme Report, as an effect of the economic crisis at the beginning of this century, social and economic inequalities have been accentuated since 2015, especially in global and regional areas. John Kenneth Galbraith argued in 1992 that inequalities, especially those of social class, are part of capitalist social reproduction, especially in the most complex and industrially developed economies. It is the classes composed of minorities, usually racial minorities, living in the peripheries, where access to public services is complex and housing conditions are precarious, that make up the workforce destined for tiring, mentally dull, and socially degrading services. Rising inequalities raise concerns about increasing barriers to care for vulnerable populations. When we look at the performance of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in terms of care, it is possible to observe a pattern of decline in the growth of public health expenditures and a reduction in the availability of services after economic crises. It is precisely in these scenarios that marginalised populations are hardest hit, as they are more likely to face reduced income, job loss, and increased barriers to health care. Adopting austerity measures has already shown negative results in maintaining welfare schemes in several European countries. The reduction in employment, the worsening of quality of life and health, and a reduction in access to health, mainly due to the inability to pay out of pocket, highlight the need for public provision of services. The population's health status is essential and affected by the material and social reproduction system. Therefore, this study aims to analyse how health conditions in the population varied based on a case study: the Brazilian context between 1998 and 2019. This territorial and temporal framework allows us to evaluate a case from the beginning of the socioeconomic transformation provided by the process of re-democratisation, the intensification of the Universalist Social Welfare Regime, implemented after the post-1980s economic stabilisation, and the effects of the 2008 crisis and the expansion of the polarising right in recent years.

This study aims to understand how changes in the guidelines of the Brazilian Ministry of Health have impacted the quality of life perceived by public and private health system users through an innovative quantitative analysis of data available over the last twenty years. To this end, variables were used to capture the evaluation of these users regarding the level of equity in access to health and the level of horizontal equality in the population's health outcomes by income stratum between 1998 and 2019.

The methodology of this work is divided into two parts. Initially, the population's demographic, socioeconomic, and epidemiological profile changes will be presented through the data in the Health Survey Reports carried out between 1998 and 2019. In the second part, a set of indicators was elaborated, composed of the standard Gini Concentration Index and extended with parameters of aversion to inequality, the Lorenz Concentration Curve, and the decomposition of the Index by the Social Determinants of Health, in order to measure the variations in the level of equity of access and horizontal equality in health outcomes between the years 1998 and 2019. The microdata was extracted from the National Household Sample Survey (PNADs in Portuguese) of 1998, 2003, and 2008 and the National Health Survey (PNS in Portuguese) of 2013 and 2019. After the treatment of the microdata and the creation of the complete databases for each year, with microdata of the individuals and their households, in the statistical software STATA, for the generation of the Living Standard Index, the Lorenz Concentration Curve, the Gini Concentration Index, as well as their decompositions, a statistical tool called ADePT was used, a programme created by the World Bank to perform statistical analysis from socioeconomic databases. Among its analysis packages, the Health Outcomes module was used to explain inequalities in health outcomes and health services by groups of variables. Inequalities in access to and use of health services in Brazil are not as significant as one might expect, given the persistent social inequalities in the country. The preliminary results seem to be in line with what the literature had already highlighted: the trend towards more significant horizontal equity in health outcomes and greater equity in access to health services are potential indicators of success in efforts to improve access to care, especially among the most vulnerable population, both in terms of income and vulnerability in access to services. The following limitations can be pointed out: some database differences were caused by altering the questionnaires over these two decades. In addition, the health status assessment is based on individuals' self-reports, which can hinder a comparative analysis between individuals. The construction of the variable that refers to the per capita family income level was based on income before taxation, a point that some authors debate in the literature. Despite these limitations, the methodology of the study incorporates all the recommendations presented in the work entitled *Analysing Health Equity Using Household Survey Data*, from 2008, and was previously used by other works by the authors of this work, which is a reference in this field of analysis.

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BRIDGING THE GAP: HOW CAN WE USE A QUALITATIVE SYNTHESIS EVALUATION TO ASSESS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTH SYSTEM STRENGTHENING AND POLICY AND PERFORMANCE DRIVERS?

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to fill a gap identified in the literature on the analysis of public health policies that refers to disability, or in some contexts, the absence of a set of qualitative indicators that can assess the relationships between the cycle of a public policy (formulation, design, implementation and evaluation) and the strengthening of the health system (HSS), especially in low- and middle-income countries. Based on this gap, this paper presents a set of indicators capable of evaluating this relationship between the cycle of a health policy and the strengthening of the public health system based on a case study: the implementation of the Programme for the Improvement of Access and Quality (PMAQ), a pay-for-performance policy within the scope of primary health care of the Unified Health System (SUS) in Brazil. There is a need for a systematic evaluation that includes the multilevel scenarios of health policy and management directly involved in formulating and implementing the PMAQ in the country, in national and local governments, and in the front line of primary health care. This also includes the governance arrangement (external evaluation) created for the PMAQ. These contextual variables will be relevant for identifying the factors contributing to different policy integration and performance levels and their strengthening.

Thus, the article develops a comparative political framework analysis exploring whether and how the PMAQ implementation process has affected performance drivers and system strengthening (leadership and workforce) in health units with diverse management arrangements and organisational capacities in six Brazilian municipalities

in the states of Pernambuco and Goiás. This objective aims to produce indicators that can answer the following questions:

- 1.To what extent were frontline health workers aware of the programme and participated in its implementation?
- 2.Whether and how have different types of policy dissemination and feedback contributed to improved performance?
- 3.To what extent has the implementation been characterised by changes in the work process, affecting performance drivers?
- 4.How have performance factors (organisational, structural, behavioural) impacted leadership and the frontline workforce?

The political framework establishes relationships between implementation, performance drivers, and system-strengthening concepts. Interviews were conducted with municipal and frontline health managers and teams (doctors, nurses, and community health actors) in six Brazilian cities in Goiás and Pernambuco. Interview transcripts were coded and analysed according to the framework's policy, performance drivers, and system-strengthening concepts. Combinations of policy drivers were associated with adequate levels of implementation (Low, Medium and High) (ELIs). In contrast, combinations of performance drivers were classified as levels of perceived impact on performance (LPIPs). In the case and comparative analyses, we have explored the relationship between ELIs and LPIPs and their effects on HSS. Other related methods: To verify the strength between the three variables, we have also performed crosstabulations between those three variables, transforming those qualitative synthesis indicators into numeric variables to perform regressions to verify the role of context-measurable variables. Moreover, we have established relationships between those qualitative synthesis indicators and official indicators on management and organisational capacity.

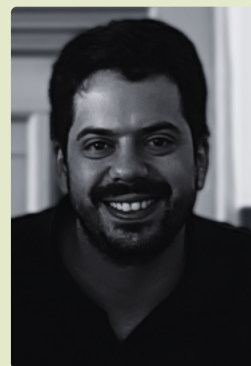
The central assumption is that High ELIs and LPIPs can enhance HSS. The framework analysis enabled us to understand better how and in what conditions (of management and organisational capacity) the implementation process (ELIs) can affect performance and strengthen the leadership and workforce.

Although the political scenario and policy capacity of municipalities and health units varies among the cities, the implementation of the programme is generally characterised by low-middle levels of implementation drivers (policy dissemination, knowledge, motivation, participation and changes in the work process), generating

low levels of changes in performance drivers and system strengthening. Exceptions occur in units with higher levels of management and organisational capacity. Qualitative analyses of crosstabulations and Regressions show a significant relation between the three variables and a more significant relation between Performance drivers and system strengthening. Higher levels of Implementation drivers explain higher levels of Performance drivers. Higher levels of Performance drivers explain higher levels of Systems Strengthening, both workforce and leadership strengthening.

Despite the mix of policy effects, managers and frontline interest/involvement explain higher levels of system strengthening. Management/training tools/strategies could foster sustainable development of PMAQ. More qualitative and policy process research is needed – there is a lack of studies focusing on the formulation. Public policy managers and implementers can use systematic qualitative evidence to learn how to improve leadership and strengthen the workforce. This would entail focusing on strategies that would improve policy drivers, such as policy knowledge and policy feedback at the front line of primary care. Research results can, therefore, be used to increase health professionals' knowledge about programmes or even to implement a more sustainable evaluation/planning culture of their work at the front line.

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EHEALTH TECHNOLOGIES IN HELP TO IMPROVE PSYCHOLOGICAL QUALITY OF LIFE IN ELDERLY PEOPLE

ABSTRACT

Ageing is associated with a variety of specific issues and higher rates of chronic difficulties, which usually leads to reliance on external support to maintain or improve wellbeing (Ogrin et al., 2020).

Maintaining physical health is considered a main priority for elderly individuals. A decline in physical health is often associated with feelings of shame and stigma, which can prevent individuals from seeking medical care.

Studies by Huang et al. (2020) and Stolz et al. (2017) show that higher age is related to significantly higher risk of financial stress. As individuals age, their housing and environmental requirements may change since accessibility features become essential, especially for those with mobility challenges. A safe and comfortable living environment that accommodates changing physical abilities helps maintain general well-being (Li et al., 2022; Rantanen et al., 2012).

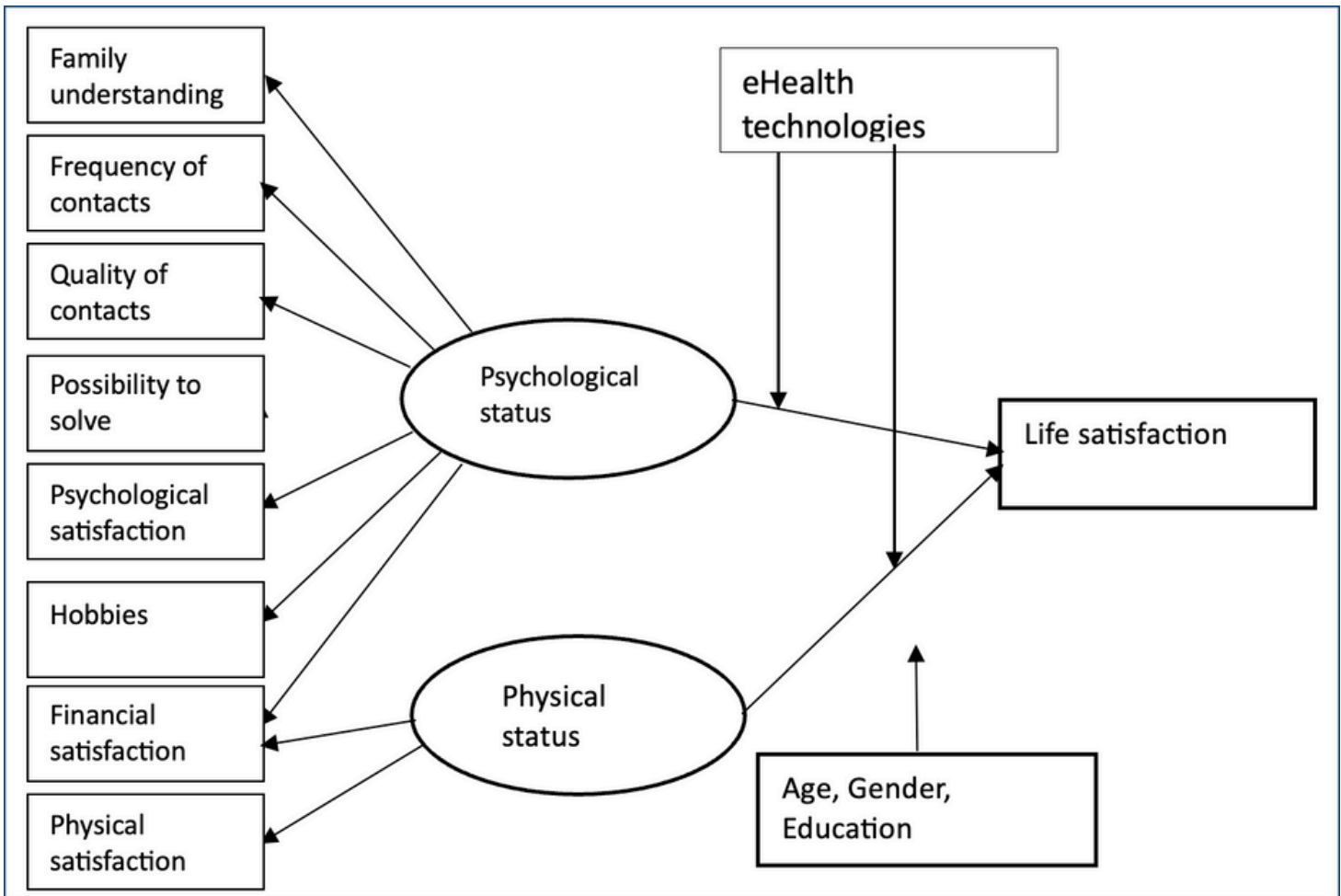
eHealth technologies like remote monitoring devices and wearable sensors enable elderly individuals to receive healthcare services and monitoring from the comfort of their homes, which reduces the need for frequent hospital visits and enhances convenience and adherence to the healthcare regimen (Laver et al., 2018).

In our study, we aim at answering whether use of eHealth technologies by elderly people increases their psychological well-being.

Data used in this analysis were collected in interviews and in surveys. We conducted two waves of interviews with staff of elderly people care organisations (46 interviews in total). Furthermore, we collected data from two waves of surveys of clients and patients of these organisations (206 responses) and from a survey of family members of clients and patients (67 responses).

We apply partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) (see, e.g., Haire et al., 2014; or Venturini and Mehmetoglu, 2019) to establish the causality behind the relationship between assistive technology use, perceived psychological and physical well-being, and their impact on overall client satisfaction. We applied it to selected variables from the dataset collected in the questionnaire surveys. We construct reflexive latent variables of physical and psychological aspects of satisfaction.

Obrázek 11: Testovaný model PLS-SEM



In the estimations of the impact of eHealth technologies and their influence on overall client satisfaction, we did not confirm the influence of assistive technologies on overall client satisfaction. All estimates (direct and moderated) of the impact of eHealth technologies were statistically insignificant.

Psychological well-being has a very strong and significant effect on overall satisfaction (0.494, p-value 0.000). Physical well-being comes out as a weaker positive factor in this model (0.022), while being non-significant (p-value = 0.614). From the project perspective, the effect of the eHealth technologies is important. The latter moderates the effect of psychological and physical well-being in this model. The results show that we cannot confirm the hypothesis that technology contributed to overall client satisfaction.

We are aware of the limited size of our sample.

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Evaluation in the Area of Quality of Life

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SOCIAL INCLUSION IN REMOTE TEAM-WORKING DURING COVID19: LESSONS LEARNED FROM MANAGERS AND WORKERS

ABSTRACT

This study analyses the data obtained from a survey shared with workers and managers of IT companies in Ireland on social inclusion through remote team working during the COVID-19 outbreak and as continued after that. It examines the advantages and disadvantages of remote team-working for a range of age groups, the effects of online tools and online safety, and working with people of different time zones. It also studies problems faced during these projects, training received, and the impacts of pandemic particulars.

Results show that workers were mainly happy about how digital tools impact their project progress but were not confident with the online security, time zone difference, and communication with their colleagues in the long tThe report gives useful advice for company bosses and project leaders. It stresses the need for unique plans to increase social inclusion, gender equality for remote working, design stronger data safety, and deal with time-zone differences.

Ireland is the hub for many IT sectors, pharmaceutical manufacturing lines, which have been seriously affected during the pandemic outbreak. However, the Irish firms could quickly convert from office work to remote working mode to deliver their projects during COVID-19. However, complications of Ireland's geographical dispersion from the US and Asia and the time-zone differences, as well as the lack of social inclusion in teamwork, could influence the performance of the workers and managers in delivering their projects within the given deadline. Noting that managers are also responsible for the mental health of their workers with regards to the company's policy, the managers would have to add a new task in their calendar to promote social inclusion of their workers while working through online platforms from home.

This study looks at the abilities and knowledge that project managers need to successfully manage projects in the digital age when people may not be physically close. In these circumstances, strong leadership is essential for project managers to foster team cohesiveness, motivation, and productivity. The main purpose of this research is to ascertain the way virtual and digital teamwork could leverage social inclusion during the pandemic and how that fits into managing projects in Ireland's settings. The following objectives were designed:

- To assess the remote team-working environment on workers and managers's social inclusion.
- How remote working with colleagues of different time zones will impact workers efficiency.

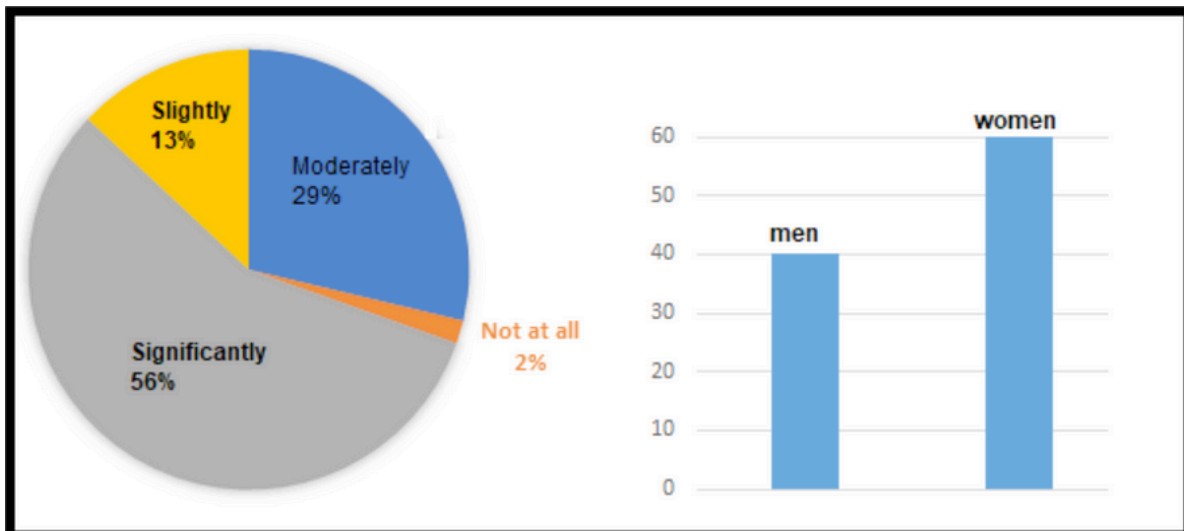
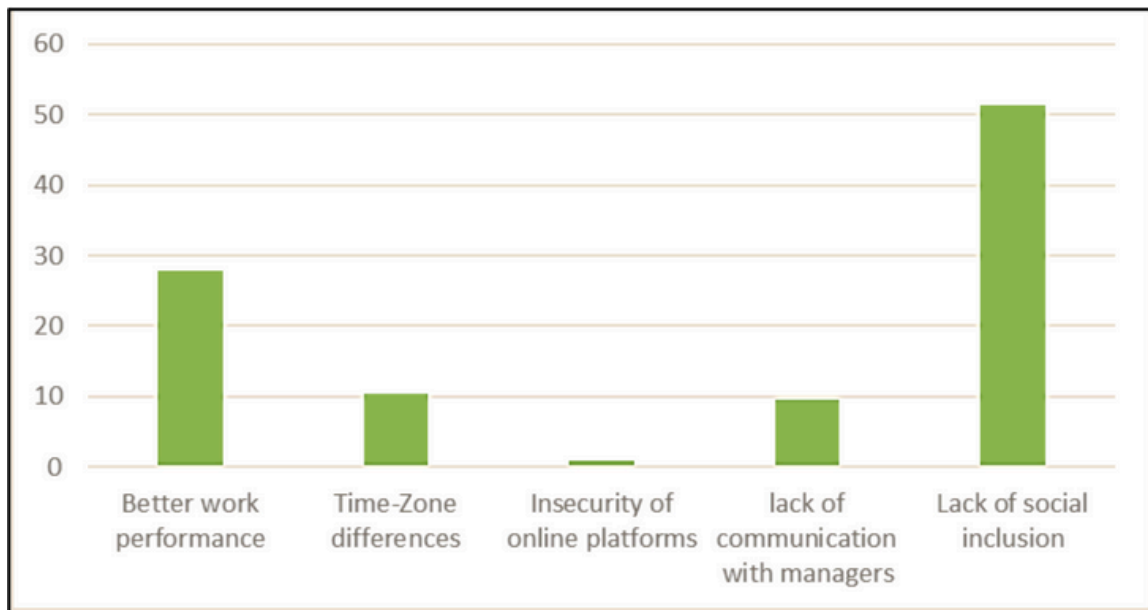
- How remote working impacts workers feeling insecure in online working platforms.

The conveyance of survey questionnaires will give essential data to this study's social affair and investigation, which shapes the premise of the research approach. Survey questionnaires were designed to evoke answers and bits of knowledge from two member classes: 1) labourers working from home through remote online platforms, and 2) project managers. Obtaining a wide range of viewpoints and experiences is crucial for producing a full grasp of the subject, especially since the research focuses on digital and remote teams. Comparatively, qualitative research will require a close inspection of the open-ended answers in order to extract complex viewpoints, insights, and useful suggestions. The questions will also be specifically designed to identify the distinct viewpoints of team members who actively participate in project execution and project managers, who take on leadership and decision-making responsibilities.

The survey questions were a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions, which provide respondents the chance to elaborate on their experiences and thoughts and are very helpful in producing measurable data. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses will then be performed on the gathered data to guarantee the validity and trustworthiness of the results. Statistical techniques are used for quantitative analysis to find trends, patterns, and correlations of data. Most respondents were male (66.1%), and females were (24.3%), and the rest did not disclose their gender. Also 40% were young (18-24 years old), 50% within 25-34, and 5% were for both groups of 35-44 and 45-54.

The replies of the respondents to the questions of the survey were analysed, and the following results were obtained. The questions targeted the work performance, time-zone differences and the difficulties that arose, the insecurity feeling of the workers in online team-working platforms, the lack of communication with project managers through remote team-working, and the lack of social inclusion in remote working mode. 50% of the all workers were unhappy with the settings designed for social inclusion in the remote-working environment, even though the work performance showed improvement.

We also asked workers and managers: to what extent has the remote-team working impacted your social inclusion in a negative way? There's a gap between the replies of women and men, as female workers are more affected by social inclusion through remote teamwork during the pandemic.



The survey analysed respondents' feedback regarding various aspects of remote team working. One notable result was that 50% of all workers expressed dissatisfaction with the social inclusion settings in the remote-working environment, despite improvements in work performance. Female workers reported a more significant negative impact on social inclusion compared to their male counterparts during the pandemic. Addressing these issues could contribute to more effective remote team-working experiences.

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Dr. Nima E. Gorji received his PhD in March 2014 and has research experience in materials science and additive manufacturing working in Irish research centres and industries such as Boston Scientific Company on developing 3D printing of metallic parts for biomedical applications and through powder recycling approaches to reduce the metallic waste and to protect the environment from toxic metal hazards. He has excessive knowledge in material characterisation using various metrology X-ray machines such as XRD, XPS, and the synchrotron radiation sources for semiconductor and additive manufacturing 3D printing. He has published over 90 articles and chapter books in peer-reviewed and world-class journals and conferences and is an editor and reviewer for several journals of IEEE, Springer, and Elsevier. He has attracted plenty of research funding from research funding bodies and industry, including from Intel, SFT, EU HEA, etc. He has been working with international research groups in Italy, USA, Ireland, UK, and Germany on semiconductors and advanced manufacturing.

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THE IMPACT OF COVID19 IN REGARD WITH THE QUALITY OF LIFE

ABSTRACT

According to the World Health Organisation, the term 'quality of life' (QOL) refers to an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and about their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns. However, the value of the individual's perception of the position in life may differ as a result of the irreversible impact of global challenges like COVID-19. It is well known that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruptions to the education sector, which quickly adjusted after the outbreak and implemented various remote teaching models. After the pandemic, the learning paradigm is changing, taking into account the global education norms in a) metacognition and successful learning strategies, b) digital assessment, both formative and summative, and c) 'green' ecosystems of learning and communication for lasting education. Here, the term 'global education' is used to explain the need for the establishment of a global bridge between the research in educational management, global citizenship education, cosmopolitan leadership, pedagogical encounters, and educational policy (Alejo, 2022; Hameed, 2022; Tarozzi, 2022; Xu & Stahl, 2022). According to Sohrabi et al. (2022), the term 'global education' defines a pedagogical field that has established itself internationally in the past few years. Starting from this idea, global education as a field has a specific methodology of research. It refers to transformative politics in education, which offers a valuable response to global challenges and their impact on the human mind and social behavior. Moreover, global education relies on specific modes of thought, skills, and attitudes.

The objective of the study is to compare data obtained by an online survey during the COVID-19 pandemic and two years after the official closure of the pandemic. This methodology refers to the concept of replication, described by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine in 2019. Replicability, according to the previously mentioned work, is the ability to obtain consistent results across independent data-driven studies that aim to answer the same scientific question. Given the degree of uncertainty in the system being studied, two studies may be deemed to have replicated if they produce consistent results. Replicability, to put it briefly, is the process of gathering fresh data to see if it agrees with earlier findings from a related study.

In 2022, we developed an online survey and analysed the answers of 39 respondents conducted at the beginning of the pandemic based on the Crumbaugh and Maholick test. The purpose of the survey was to analyse the specifics of the syndrome of lack of meaning.

in life during the pandemic. The following parameters were used: the preponderance of enthusiastic and goal-oriented people; the awareness of the uniqueness and beauty of life; the role of frustration in the pandemic situation; and the personalised education management of the pandemic situation.

Preliminary results were obtained in 2022. The conclusion of the study: adolescents have adapted quickly to the pandemic and do not show the syndrome of lack of meaning in life. Limitations of the study are related to the place where data were collected. More research is needed to explore the replicability of data in various economic contexts. Subsequent research will cover a larger number of respondents and a wider geographical area.

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Elena Răilean PhD in Science of Education, post-doctoral studies in psychology and behavioural sciences and educational management. Elena Railean has published 7 monographs, 3 edited books, 102 scientific papers, and 21 book chapters in internationally recognised books.

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INSIGHTS FROM FAIR TRADE EVALUATION: ADVANCING SOCIAL INCLUSION AND QUALITY OF LIFE

ABSTRACT

This study delves into the evaluation of fair trade initiatives and their impact on advancing social inclusion and enhancing the quality of life. Through an interdisciplinary lens, including Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), evaluation, and participation issues, this research seeks to analyse the effectiveness of fair trade practices in addressing socio-economic disparities, fostering community empowerment, and promoting sustainable livelihoods.

Drawing upon both text research and empirical studies conducted in Egypt as part of my PhD and Beirut (ongoing), the study aims to elucidate the intricate dynamics of Fair Trade as an intervention within the broader context of sustainable development.

The primary objective of this study is to assess the extent to which Fair Trade initiatives contribute to advancing social inclusion and enhancing the quality of life for marginalised communities. Specifically, the study aims to:

- Evaluate the impact of fair trade practices on improving access to economic opportunities and empowering marginalised producers.
- Examine the role of fair trade in promoting community resilience and social cohesion.
- Investigate the potential synergies between Fair Trade principles and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).
- Identify key challenges and opportunities in implementing and scaling Fair Trade initiatives in diverse socio-cultural contexts, taking an ESD lens.

The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques to comprehensively evaluate Fair Trade initiatives.

Text research involves a systematic review of scholarly literature, policy documents, and reports related to fair trade and its impact on social inclusion and quality of life. Additionally, use will be made of empirical data from semi-structured interviews with various Fair Trade stakeholders, including producers, in Egypt and Beirut. These interviews will provide valuable insights into the lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by stakeholders involved in Fair Trade activities. Analysis of the preliminary results underscores the intricate interplay between resource mobilisation, capacity-building, and the quality of linkages in sustaining Fair Trade initiatives, as illustrated by the research conducted in Egypt. The findings resonate with the identified vulnerabilities inherent in local processes, including limited capacity, challenges in resource mobilisation, and dependency on project timeframes and political contexts. Despite these challenges,

Preliminary analyses highlight the transformative potential of Fair Trade in improving the quality of life for individuals and communities engaged in such initiatives. Notably, the emerging solidarity among Fair Trade consumers, solidarity groups, and supporting organisations signifies a paradigm shift beyond mere aid provision towards joint learning and collaboration, both locally and globally.

However, the analysis also reveals the imperative to transcend the focus on immediate results and consider broader, long-term sustainability goals. Furthermore, the balance between achieving immediate goals pertaining to social inclusion and quality of life and advocacy goals to foster inclusive and accountable institutions needs further consideration and research. While initial results are positive, a longitudinal study will be able to better establish the enduring impact of positive transformations linked to entering the fair-trade network. Moreover, there is a pressing need for further research to discern contextual variations in the expression of success.

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Vincent Caruana's mission in life is to inspire people to take action for a better self and a better world. In 1991, he obtained an honors degree in education from the University of Malta, specializing in physics and mathematics. Three years later, he obtained a diploma in political studies from the same university. Subsequently, between 1995 and 1998, he studied environmental and development education, obtaining a M.Sc. through London South Bank University. In 2014, he obtained his PhD, focusing on education for sustainability and the social economy. Vince is currently a full-time lecturer and researcher at CEER, Malta's University Centre for Environmental Education and Research. He is an established mentor and trainer of various Civil Society Organisations and is also experienced in project management and participatory monitoring and evaluation. Other research interests include social enterprises, agroecology, permaculture, and peer mentoring.

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SOCIAL INNOVATION AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM IN TÜRKİYE: BEST PRACTICES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR QUALITY OF LIFE

ABSTRACT

Social entrepreneurship and social innovations are emerging concepts that offer an alternative way to address increasing and complex societal challenges. Both social entrepreneurship and social innovation are significant concepts that are embraced not only by non-profit organisations but also by the business world and entrepreneurship as effective means of improving social welfare. Traditional business models often fall short in addressing societal issues due to their profit-orientated nature, whereas social entrepreneurship and social innovations aim to provide sustainable solutions by both creating economic value and delivering social benefits. Therefore, it seems essential to examine the role of social entrepreneurship and innovative practices in responding to existing problems and improving welfare. This requires an understanding of the social innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem and its actors.

This study, which analyses the social innovation and social entrepreneurship ecosystem in Turkey, has the potential to offer effective solutions for enhancing both economic and social development. In this context, the current situation of social innovation and entrepreneurship in Türkiye will be discussed within the theoretical framework of Borzaga et al.'s (2020, p. 48) Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem. The research design consists of several stages. Firstly, a literature review was conducted to establish a theoretical framework. After briefly discussing what social innovation and entrepreneurship entail, the awareness of social innovation and entrepreneurship in Türkiye will be examined. Within this scope, the social innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in Turkey will be evaluated with examples of good practices. Additionally, the stakeholders of the ecosystem will be mapped, and their development will be determined. In the final section, some recommendations regarding social innovation practices and initiatives, which could serve as alternative employment opportunities, will be presented.

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Muradiye Ates (PHD) is currently an assistant professor at the Department of Labour Economics and Industrial Relations at Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University. She holds graduate and undergraduate degrees in Business Administration from the Vienna University of Economics and obtained her Ph.D. in Social Policy from Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University in 2017, with her research focusing on "The Role of State in Supporting Socially Innovative Activities in Türkiye". From July 2016 to June 2017, she worked as a research fellow at the Ash Center, Harvard Kennedy School. Ates has also worked as a head advisor of a parliament member in Türkiye and was involved in EU projects as a country expert concerning social innovation in 2020. Her research interests include social development and welfare, social innovation, social enterprise, and social and public policy, social risk groups, and digitalization aspects of labour.

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DEMOCRACY, CAPITALISM AND INEQUALITIES: PUBLIC HOUSING FINANCE POLICIES IN BRAZIL AND CHILE

ABSTRACT

The United Nations Habitat III conference in 2016 pointed out that one of the challenges for access to housing is the fair distribution of resources in the face of the process of gentrification and real estate speculation in urban spaces. This process of inequality can be overcome through coordinated government action (Atkinson, 2015). The ideology of liberal democratic capitalism is based on ordering social dynamics to guarantee the protection of human rights (Hobsbawm, 2011). In this scenario, the discussion of the commodification of rights is framed from the perspective of the democratic state, which, at first glance, is a contradiction (Streeck, 2016). In this way, this essay aims to analyse the housing finance programmes in Latin America, especially in Brazil and Chile, which have stood out for their scope in terms of providing access to housing, as well as for the removal of their main social purpose to privilege the dynamics of the real estate market.

For Lefebvre (1991), production relations are based on three pillars: production, product, and labour. According to the French philosopher, political economy emerges from these three concepts and their interaction in space. Based on this logic, the author uses the nations of urban space as an essential part of industry development, the interference of capital, and the repercussions of urbanisation on the production of inequalities.

The growth of urban centres accompanied the expansion of urbanisation. This movement displaced the population from the countryside to the city in a disorderly fashion due to the urgent need for labour. Consequently, cities swelled. This resulted in the first spatial distortions, characterised as suburbanisation (Sposito, 2004). Overcrowding, an unhealthy environment, and the marginalisation of this section of the population were the first signs of urban breakdown (Benevolo, 1983). From then on, the urban fabric underwent a socio-economic fissure. In addition to the very structure demanded by industrial activity, the population began to organise itself between the centre and the periphery.

The city's contradictions between centre and periphery and spatial subordination (Lefebvre, 1991) prove that spatial inequality is a universal process that has, to a certain extent, found favourable conditions for its permanence. In order to correct the structural, social, and economic divide left by disordered urbanisation, government urban development policies are the most effective instrument for changing this reality. For this reason, Aalbers & Christophers (2014) are emphatic in stating that the analysis of the housing issue must be investigated within the field of "housing-as-policy with housing-as-market," since these are points that cannot be investigated in isolation or even undertaken a compartmentalised analysis since the scenario in which housing policies were

developed, and also failed, were sculpted by political moments, economic interests and social demands.

Allied with capital-structured thinking, the desire to own a home became part of socially cultivated desires (Aalbers & Christophers, 2014). The financialisation of housing has distorted the main logic for which public housing policies were formulated and implemented, which were based on guaranteeing the right to housing and have now become part of the machinery to satisfy the urgencies of capital. In order to elucidate how housing policies have prospered in the realisation of the right to housing, as well as how they have failed in their long-term projections and destined their social objectives for the financial and real estate markets, this paper will use the perspective of the housing policy agendas implemented in Brazil and Chile.

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Ferlanda Luna is a lawyer and PhD candidate in Political Economy at the Centre for Social Studies (CES) at the University of Coimbra. She specializes in "Public Policies, Social, and Collective Rights" and has an MA in Regional Economics and Public Policy (UESC), Brazil. She has been a Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology PhD fellow (2023-2027). Her research interests relate to studies about the right to the city and public policies for urban development focused on formal settlements by encompassing social and economic indicators to improve local public policies. Currently, her PhD research involves urban informality and the climate crisis from the perspective of mitigation of the consequences of climate change through the lens of social justice in two medium-sized Brazilian cities. The research aims to use multi-level governance concepts and law regulation to discuss policymakers' responsibilities to manage and evaluate measures to face the vulnerabilities of risk areas within the context of climate change.

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CLIMATE JUSTICE AND URBAN RESILIENCE: A LOOK AT VENEZUELA'S FAVELAS

ABSTRACT

This study investigates how climate change exacerbates urban inequality in the favelas of Venezuela, focusing on the manifestation of climate racism and evaluating alternatives for climate justice and sustainable development as mechanisms to overcome inequalities and poverty. It highlights the intersection between socio-economic inequalities, urban vulnerability, and the need for inclusive climate adaptation strategies that recognise and address the unique challenges faced by residents of these marginalised communities.

- Analyse the impact of environmental and climate risks on the favelas and the socio-economic dimensions of vulnerability and resilience.
- Assess the role of environmental justice and urban planning in improving the adaptive capacities of favelas to climate change.
- Explore policy frameworks and governance that support equitable and effective adaptation strategies in urban areas, especially in informal settlements.

The study adopts an interdisciplinary approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative analyses of specific case studies, literature reviews, policy analysis (e.g., UN reports on urbanisation and climate change), and theoretical frameworks (e.g., environmental justice and urban resilience). The methodology includes a literature review, content analysis of policy documents, and secondary data analysis on urban demography, climate change impacts, and socio-economic indicators.

The preliminary findings indicate that favelas are disproportionately affected by climate change due to inadequate infrastructure, limited access to resources, and exclusion from formal governance mechanisms. However, social capital in these communities plays a crucial role in resilience, indicating the potential for community-led adaptation strategies. Policy analysis reveals a gap between global climate and urban development agendas and the realities of the favelas, underscoring the need for more inclusive and integrated policy frameworks.

This study is limited by the availability and quality of data on favelas, which may affect the comprehensiveness of the analysis. Additionally, the heterogeneity of favelas in different urban contexts presents challenges for generalising findings.

Addressing climate change in favelas requires a shift towards more inclusive and justice-orientated approaches to urban resilience and climate adaptation. This involves recognising the rights and capacities of favela residents, integrating local knowledge into adaptation planning, and ensuring that global and national policies respond to the needs of the urban poor. By bridging the gap between environmental justice, urban planning, and climate policy, it is possible to foster urban resilience that is not only robust but also equitable.

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Rosmel Rodríguez Barroso is a political scientist. His educational credentials also include an MBA from the EUDE Business School, in collaboration with the Universidad Camilo José Cela in Madrid. He completed postgraduate studies in sustainable development management at the University of Cambridge and in public policy analysis at the London School of Economics. He is currently pursuing his Ph.D. in democracy at the University of Coimbra in Portugal. He is currently a European Climate Pact Ambassador and also a lecturer at the Central University of Venezuela in the field of political ecology.

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PROPOSING A GOVERNANCE-RELATED COMPONENT AND INDICATORS EVALUATION MATRIX TO ASSESSING THE SOCIAL INCLUSIVENESS DIMENSION OF THE NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS PROJECTS

ABSTRACT

Governance is the political facet of 'inclusiveness', one of the three main pillars of the New European Bauhaus (NEB), alongside 'aesthetics' and 'sustainability'. Governance is embodied by rules and norms and implemented through hard tools (laws, planning designs and strategies, funding schemes,...) and soft tools (ways of decision-making, targeting, capacity building,...) to implement sustainable goals effectively and democratically.

Hard and soft governance processes embrace crucial aspects that directly or indirectly affect the design and implementation of NEB projects, which are to be self-evaluated via the NEB Knowledge Management Platform (NEB KMP). The three core dimensions of the NEB (sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusion) are all regulated by legislation and influenced/affected by democratic participation and the public services' effectiveness. Hard governance processes relate to how existing legislation, regulations, and strategic plans can enforce or encourage the design and implementation of NEB projects. Soft governance processes influence the level of democratic governance (clarity, consensus, participation, multilevel management, and co-creation) and effectiveness (administrative capacity and responsiveness) in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation phases of the NEB projects.

The selection of the 'Hard' and 'Soft' governance tools is appropriate for analysing the implementation of NEB projects in its social dimension of inclusiveness. Both hard and soft governance tools are related to binding legislative/regulation aspects involved with the identification and classification of available requirements, standards, and codes of practice related to the inclusiveness dimension of the NEB KMP.

In essence, the study presents the current work being developed by the European Commission Joint Research Centre to create a NEB Knowledge Management Platform, aiming at assessing the NEB core dimensions. In this case, the evaluation analysis is focused on the assessment of governance-related components and respective indicators of the NEB inclusiveness (social) dimension.

Evaluation, methodological approach, and types of data that were used or will be used in the analysis, preliminary results, limitations, and concluding remarks.

The methodological approach is supported by a matrix of four indicators and respective guiding and sub-questions (table 1) to be assessed under an impact score of 1 (very low

impact) to 5 (very high impact).

Table 1. Guiding questions and sub-questions to assessing governance-related indicators of the NEB inclusiveness (social) dimension.

- **Target: Maximizing the use of Legislation/Regulation and Strategic Plans in the Built Environment Projects**
- **Indicator: Degree of compliance with Legislation/Regulations/Spatial plans**

Guiding question:

A – How would you evaluate the influence of legislation / regulations/ spatial plans used by your project in promoting the NEB principles of sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusiveness?

Sub-questions:

A1: Identify the degree of in which your project is using legislative, regulatory, and spatial planning frameworks at different administrative levels (international, national, regional, and local)

A2 - Which were the main topics of NEB principles promoted by the pieces of legislation / regulations / spatial plans and voluntary frameworks and best practices that mainly influenced your project? Put the three following topics in order of relevance in the pieces of legislation used:

A3 - Did the pieces of legislation / regulations/ spatial plans etc. used by the project...

- **Target: Maximizing Participation in the Built Environment Projects**
- **Indicator: Degree of administrative structure effectiveness**

Guiding question:

B – How would you evaluate the involvement of stakeholders in the design of the project?

Sub-questions:

B1 - What was the percentage of the project budget allocated to engagement events during the design stage) (approximate % allocated by the project to these activities)?

B2 - What type of stakeholders plus citizens were involved in the project participatory meetings?

- **Target: Maximizing Multi-Level and co-creation Engagement in the Built Environment Projects**
- **Indicator: Degree of multi-level engagement intensity from agents and entities**

Guiding question:

C – How would you evaluate the participation of different stakeholders from several administrative tiers in the design of the project?

Sub-question:

C1 – Which of the following types of entities provided more relevant contribution to the design of the project?

- **Target: Maximizing Administrative Capacity Engagement in the Built Environment Projects**
- **Indicator: Degree of administrative structure effectiveness**

Guiding question:

D – How would you evaluate the level of bureaucracy and complexity for managing your NEB project?

Sub-question:

D1. In which measure does the administrative system which manages the NEB project promotes evaluation, monitoring and audit of the NEB project?

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Oto Potluka (Ph.D.) is a senior researcher at the Center for Philanthropy Studies, University of Basel (Switzerland). His research relates to the field of regional and economic development and civil society. He has participated in dozens of evaluations, research, and training projects in the field of economic development and the impact of public regulation and public expenditure programmes. His research effort concerns public expenditure

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programmes in regional development, especially those co-financed by EU cohesion policy. He has experience from several professional associations. He had actively working in the board of directors of the Czech Evaluation Society for two terms between the years 2012-2015. Among the other associations belong the European Evaluation Society (currently a member of the board), and the American Evaluation Association. As a member of these organizations, he has always actively participated in the building of evaluation culture and evaluation capacities.

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EVALUATION OF QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH THE LENSES OF THE SDGS

ABSTRACT

The concepts of quality of life, well-being, and happiness are frequently used interchangeably and have garnered interest from researchers across various fields. Despite their relevance, these themes are seldom emphasised in evaluation studies.

The majority of research on quality of life (QoL) evaluations originates from the health sciences. This predominance is attributed to the critical role that health status plays in influencing individuals' perceptions of their quality of life. However, the concept is also explored across numerous other disciplines, each assigning different meanings. It is widely acknowledged in the research community, as exemplified by Kupiecz and Wojtowicz (2022), that quality of life is inherently subjective and encompasses multiple dimensions.

Moreover, Delahais et al. (2023) underline the importance of developing evaluation criteria in close partnership with stakeholders, considering their unique perspectives on quality of life. While it is generally presumed that policies are enacted to address specific issues or enhance the quality of life, it's important to recognise that interpretations of what constitutes an improved quality of life can vary significantly among stakeholders.

Previous comprehensive studies on quality of life, such as those by Sessa et al. (2020), either omitted evaluations altogether or focused solely on international rankings, as seen in Potluka (2023). Additionally, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a parallel framework, sanctioned at the UN level in Paris in 2015. Therefore, the objective of our study is to provide a thorough comparison of the use of various criteria in quality of life evaluations and their alignment with the SDGs.

Our plan to analyse the relationships between QoL evaluations and SDGs is as follows: We utilise the multidimensionality of both approaches—the quality of life and SDGs. We analysed 23 ratings of quality of life at various levels—local, regional, national, and international. In the first step, by analysing them, we identified all available evaluation criteria in the quality of life ratings. Moreover, we identified the weights among them when used to evaluate quality of life. Third, based on the list of identified criteria, we clustered them into groups relating to SDGs and its sub-indicators used in each country. It enabled

us to see what SDGs are covered and what are not.

Our study yields two significant findings. Firstly, we observe considerable variation in the methodologies employed by different rating systems to analyse the quality of life. This diversity is evident not only in the specific criteria each system uses but also in the emphasis placed on each of these criteria. This diversity underscores the challenge of establishing a universally applicable set of criteria for quality assessments. Considering the unique aspects of individual policies and interventions, we advocate for avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach to quality of life evaluations. Such evaluations must consider the particular needs and circumstances of the stakeholders and interventions involved, a viewpoint supported by Delahais et al. (2023).

Secondly, our analysis reveals that the coverage of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in quality of life rating systems is uneven. This indicates that while some SDGs are well-represented in these evaluations, others may be underemphasised, highlighting areas for potentially aligning quality of life assessments with broader sustainable development objectives.

We analysed only the rating systems that were publicly available. We are also aware that ratings focused on the local or regional level, on the one hand, meet the requirement to include local specificities and stakeholders in the rating. However, on the other hand, they are problematic when applied to ratings in other regions.

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ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN PORTUGAL

ABSTRACT

Green public procurement refers to practices and policies for the acquisition of goods and services by government entities with a focus on sustainability and reducing environmental impact. This approach aims to integrate environmental and social criteria into public procurement processes, promoting more sustainable and responsible practices. Considering the importance of the topic described, this paper examines the evolution and implementation of green public procurement in Portugal in the legal context, analysing how government entities in Portugal are integrating environmental criteria into the processes of acquiring goods and services and highlighting the implications, challenges, and associated opportunities. The main elements associated with green public procurement include the integration of environmental criteria in the supplier selection and evaluation processes, considering the life cycle of products or services. Furthermore, it encourages preference for environmentally certified products and services, demonstrating the commitment to sustainable practices. Prioritising energy efficiency when choosing products and services aims to reduce the consumption of natural resources. Green public procurement also stimulates sustainable innovation, favouring products and services with a lower environmental impact. Additionally, social responsibility is incorporated, including responsible social practices in the selection of suppliers, with special attention to working conditions and respect for human rights. We intend to analyse the current legislation and policies that guide green public procurement in Portugal, evaluating their impact on promoting sustainability and mitigating environmental impact. This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of green public procurement in Portugal and its implications for long-term sustainability. Finally, recommendations are presented to improve the effectiveness of green public procurement policies and practices in Portugal as a means of resolving complex political challenges.

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