

Ireland's Engagement with the OMC and Addressing Social Inclusion

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Political & Economic Context

- Ireland Has Witnessed an Economic Collapse.
- Boom to Bust – Highest Budget Deficit in the EU (Ireland will Have Borrowed Almost 50 Billion by Year End).:
- 15% of the workforce could be Unemployed By End 2009
- Social Welfare Almost 1/3 of Total National Spend (21b).
- Two Budgets in 2009 – Emergency Budget to Stabilise Economy Introduced in April 2009 – Considerable Cuts.
- Very Severe Budget Expected in December 2009.
- Special Board Recommended between 5-7 Billion in Public Spending Cuts for Next Year.
- Commission on Taxation.
- National Discourse Towards Cutting Social Protection.

Key Economic Parameters Ireland

	Aug. 2008	Aug. 2009
Live Register	5.9%	10.5%
Employment Rates	68%	
Female Employment rates	61%	
Net Immigration	38,500 (71,800 '06)	
Exchequer deficit	€8.43bill	€18.73bill.

Social Inclusion Context- Ireland

- Improvement in minimum social welfare payment to equivalent of 30% GAIE
- Issues for specific groups e.g. lone parents, older people, people with disabilities, Travellers, minority groups, homeless people, geographical disadvantage
- Employment Rate: - Lone Parents 43%, Travellers 16%, People with disabilities 37%. (2006)

What do we mean by 'poverty'?

'At-Risk-of-poverty'

Living on less than 60% of median income

Relates to capacity to participate in society

2007

17% overall

20% children

7% in-work poverty

Specific groups: Lone parents 38%, Older people 17%, ill/Disabled 37%,

What do we mean by 'poverty'?

Consistent Poverty'

(main measure used by Irish Government)

A combination of 'relative' poverty and deprivation indicators (i.e. not having enough to afford 2 of a list of 11 basics, such as new clothes, heating, second pair of strong shoes etc.

2007

5% overall

7% children

Specific groups: Lone parents 20%, Older people 2%, ill/Disabled 16%,

Policy Context

- Towards 2016 Social Partnership Agreement
 - Introduced the Lifecycle approach policies around children, people of working age, older people and people with disabilities.
- National Development Plan 2007-2013
 - €183.7 Billion Plan - €49.6 bn for Social Inclusion Priorities - in Lifecycle approach.
 - Reflects NAP Inclusion and T16 commitments
- National Women's Strategy 2007-2013
- Recovery programme of tax increases and expenditure cuts

OMC and Social Inclusion in Ireland

- Ireland Adheres to **Two** National Action Plans
- (1) Long-Term National Strategy
- (2) EU OMC Social Inclusion Strategy.

Two linked Government approaches to fighting Poverty and Social Exclusion

	National Level		Part of EU Inclusion Strategy	
Title	NAPS	NAP Incl	NAP Incl	NRSSPSI
Term	1997-2007 (Revised 2002)	2007-2016	2001-2003 2003-2005/6	2006-2008 2008-2010
Definition	Consistent Poverty		Relative Poverty	
Comes from	UN – Copenhagen Summit		EU Lisbon Strategy (Part of EU Inclusion Strategy/Integrated Guidelines on Social Protection and Social Inclusion)	
Target	Reduce consistent poverty to 2% or, if possible, eliminate it by 2007	Reduce consistent poverty to between 2 and 4% by 2012 with the aim of eliminating it by 2016	make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty by 2010	

National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016

- Overall Goal
'Reduce consistent poverty to between 2 and 4% by 2012 with the aim of eliminating it by 2016'
- 12 High Level Goals and a range of other commitments across lifecycle (children, people of working Age, older people, people with disabilities) and adds Communities

Goals Examples 2007-2016

	Goal
Consistent Poverty	Reduce consistent poverty to 2 - 4% by 2012 with the aim of eliminating it by 2016
Housing	‘.....the accommodation needs of some 60,000 new households addressed over the period 2007 to 2009’ New strategy to eradicate homelessness by 2010
Access to quality work and learning opportunities	By 2016 reduce the number of those whose total income is derived from long-term social welfare payments by 20% (incl. lone-parents, long term unemployed) -Additional 7,000 people with disabilities in employment by 2010. -Raise employment rate of people with disabilities from 37%-45% by 2016

Goals Examples contd.

	Goal
Childcare	50,000 new childcare places by 2010).100,000 by 2016
Health	500 new Primary Health Care Teams by 2011 (300 by 2008)
Integration of Migrants	550 extra language support teachers in place by 2009 - National Action Plan Against Racism

Irish NRSSPSI 2008-2010

Four Social Inclusion objectives (same as in 2006-2008):

- Child poverty (**Early Childhood Development and Care, Improving Education and Health Outcomes for Children, Income Support for Children, Children and their families**)
- Access to quality work and learning opportunities (**with a focus on lone parents and people with disabilities, lifelong learning and access to quality work and learning opportunities**)
- Integration of migrants (**Integration, National Action Plan Against Racism**)
- Access to quality services (**Mental Health, Housing and Homelessness, Access to services in disadvantaged areas**)

– **No Consultation**

EU Response to the Irish Report 2009

- No child poverty target
- No targets in relation to Migrants
- No relative poverty targets
- Uncertainty as to the extent to which stakeholders are involved in 'ongoing structured dialogue on all stages of the policy-making process'
- Effect of recession on activation and service provision objectives?

EU Response to the Irish Report 2009- Challenges Ahead

- Ability/ willingness to invest in services in tandem with welfare reform
- Investment in childcare
- Poverty and low employment among key groups
- Activation and welfare dependency in current crisis

NRSSPSI Strengths

- Involves Commission Overview including reports
- Involves EU level indicators - including Relative Poverty.
- Involves a learning process
- Linked to other policy processes
- Importance of clearly stated targets

NRSSPSI

Weaknesses

- EU level process not seen as important by Government
- Little political energy/commitment: to '*make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty by 2010*'
- Poor emphasis on rights
- Little participation or visibility
- No at-risk-of-Poverty Target
- Weak consultation Process
- Not well designed to respond to current economic, financial and social crisis

Institutional Structures in Ireland

European

- **EU Social Protection Committee**

National

- **Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion**
- **Senior Officials Group**
- **Office for Social inclusion including Combat Poverty Agency**
- **Social inclusion units in government departments**
- **Also a range of social partnership bodies**

Local

- **County Development Boards**
- **Local Government Social Inclusion Units**
- **Community and Voluntary Sector**
- **Local Partnership structures**

Other Key Elements of Social Inclusion in Ireland

- Annual Social Inclusion Report
 - Assessment of progress towards set targets and actions – under lifecycle approach
 - Identify new issues which might benefit from a more co-ordinated approach
 - Report on Stakeholders views
 - From national and local level
 - Input from Partnership Steering Committee
 - Annual Social Inclusion Forum
- Poverty Impact Assessment (Poverty Proofing)
- Technical Advisory Group
 - Poverty measurement and Data Strategy
- Annual Social Inclusion Forum

Learning Points

- Real Dialogue
- Effective Networks - EAPN
- Learning from other Countries
- Get agreement on Priorities
- Hard Targets
- Links to NRP- Active Inclusion
- 2010- Getting Attention on the Issues
- People Experiencing poverty

Thanks to EAPN Ireland and Brussels

- **A Network of groups and individuals working against poverty.**
- **EAPN Ireland is the Irish network of the European Anti-poverty Network**
- **Overall aim is to put the fight against poverty at the top of the EU, national and local agenda**