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Growing up poor in a rich country – The Norwegian policy to fight poverty and social exclusion among children and youth

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Abstract

Growing up poor in a rich country – the Norwegian policy to fight poverty and social exclusion among children and youth

The Nordic welfare model is characterised by a relatively large redistribution of wealth through its income tax system, its universal welfare system, and a comprehensive, publicly financed education system. Nevertheless, awareness of the issue of poverty has grown in the last ten years in Norway. Until a decade ago the term poverty had been noticeably absent from public debates and it was believed that a strong focus on equalizing measures and improving living conditions had helped abolish the problem it once was. However, poverty crept back at the centre of the political agenda and, by 2002, the government presented a specific plan of action to fight it. Since 2003 the yearly national budgets have consequently included a “poverty package”, with dedicated resources allocated to fight poverty.

One of three overarching goals of the action plan is to ensure opportunities for wider social participation and development for all children and young people. In line with this, the government has invited selected municipalities to join a strengthened partnership to improve welfare and protection of children through different grant schemes. This will initiate programmes in relation to social welfare, pre-emptive work towards families considered at risk, and develop new patterns and structures of cooperation to improve the availability of local programmes for families with children. This paper will look at two of these grant schemes and investigate how they generate “new” ways of working to fight child poverty, and whether the programmes are successful in reaching those most in need.

The data for this paper are based on two projects carried out by Fafo and NOVA evaluating two of the grant schemes, both commissioned by the Norwegian government. The data includes two questionnaire surveys conducted among participating municipalities, and interviews with programme coordinators, local politicians and local administration in 19 case studies.

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Growing up poor in a rich country – the Norwegian policy to fight poverty and social exclusion among children and youth¹

Introduction

Norway has enjoyed both low levels of unemployment and low levels of poverty during the course of the last few decades compared to many European countries. The Nordic welfare model is characterised by a relatively large redistribution of wealth through its income tax system, its universal welfare system, a comprehensive, publicly financed education system and an active labour market policy. Nevertheless, the last ten years have seen a growing awareness of poverty as an issue in Norway. Until a decade ago the term poverty had been noticeably absent from public debates and the generally consensus was that strong focus on equalizing measures and improving living conditions had helped abolish the problem it may have once represented. However, poverty found itself back at the centre of the political agenda and as a result of this, the government presented in 2002 a plan of action with the purpose of combating poverty (St. Meld. No 6 (2002-2003)). Since 2003 the yearly national budgets have consequently included a “poverty package”, where resources have been specifically allocated to fight poverty. Additionally, in its Government declaration, the coalition government elected in 2005 promised to eradicate poverty (The Soria Moria declaration 2005), and in 2006 an action plan to combat poverty was launched (St.prp. no. 1 (2006-2007) appendix). In 2008 the action plan was reviewed and new priority areas and measures were proposed (Action Plan against Poverty. Status 2008 and intensified efforts 2009) and in 2009, these are based on three objectives:

- Opportunities for all to participate in the labour market;
- Opportunities for participation and development for all children and young people;
- Improved living conditions for the most disadvantaged groups.

The aim of this paper is to contribute to understand how child poverty is understood in a “rich” country like Norway, and how this understanding gives implications for the Norwegian policy to combat poverty and social exclusion among children and youth. The fight against child poverty covers two aspects: On the one hand, the income situation of the families must improve and this requires measures directed towards the par-

¹ The work for this paper has been funded by the Norwegian Centre for Research on Poverty and Social Assistance (Fami). Fami was research collaboration between between Fafo (Institute for Applied Social Science) and NOVA (Norwegian Social Research). Fami received funding from the Norwegian Research Council over a period of seven years from 2003 to 2009.

ents. This also includes a focus on employment and secure income. On the other hand, the fight against child poverty also involves alleviating the possible negative consequences of living in families with low income. One needs to assure that children from poor families have the same opportunities as any other children to participate and to be included in ordinary peer group activities.

Although the national action plans are essential to keep the fight against poverty high on the agenda, the local government plays a crucial role in the efforts made to achieve a unified effort in combating poverty (Hansen et al 2008). In order to achieve the overall national goal in the fight against poverty, to develop programmes and knowledge to increase the focus on poverty, and to contribute to better coordination of measures for poor children, adolescents and families (Action Plan against Poverty 2008), one is entirely dependent of civic awareness and ownership of the work. In line with the objective to ensure opportunities for wider social participation and development for all children and young people, the Norwegian government has invited selected municipalities to join a strengthened partnership to improve welfare and protection of children through different grant schemes. This will initiate programmes in relation to social welfare, pre-emptive work towards families considered at risk, and develop new patterns and structures of cooperation to improve the availability of local programmes for families with children. This paper will look at two of these grant schemes and investigate how the national plan to combat poverty is implemented at the local level, whether the grant schemes generate "new" ways of working to fight child poverty, and whether the programmes are successful in reaching those most in need.

The data for this paper are based on two projects carried out by Fafo and NOVA evaluating two of the grant schemes, both commissioned by the Norwegian government (Nuland et al 2009a, Nuland et al 2010). The data includes two questionnaire surveys conducted among participating municipalities, and interviews with programme coordinators, local politicians and local administration in altogether 19 case studies. In addition, Fafo and NOVA has summarized the annual reports from the participating municipalities for the years 2007-2009 (Christensen et al 2008, Hyggen 2009, Nuland 2009, Hyggen 2010).

Poverty among children

Poverty as a concept is used in many contexts, and what the concept entails varies. Furthermore, poverty as a concept is controversial among scientists and politicians. There is disagreement about what should be the core of the concept, how it should be defined more precisely, and what are good practical indicators that can be used to map the spread of the phenomenon in different parts of the population and how to describe changes over time (Hansen et al 2008). In developed countries it is common to use a relative definition of poverty (Townsend 1979). Using this definition, people who have significantly lower income or poorer living conditions relative to others in society, are defined as poor. When applying a relative poverty definition, multiple indicators are used (Fløtten 1999), but most common is to start with people's income. The poverty threshold is normally at a given percentage of median income. In Norway as in the rest

of Europe it is common to use the OECD or the European Union's targets for poverty (Nadim and Nielsen, 2009). OECD defines the poverty line at 50 percent of median income, while the EU has a less stringent goal and set the limit at 60 per cent of median income for what they call "risk of poverty" (EU 2008, Nadim and Nielsen 2009). In spite of the policies targeting poverty, and the public attention to poverty among children, child poverty in Norway has increased in recent years. In 2008, 9.6 percent of all children under 18 lived in households defined as poor by the EU's target (source: SSB 2010). This is an increase from 5.1 percent in 2000 (Nadim and Nielsen 2009).

Poverty doesn't affect people at random. Among families with children living in poverty, most are single parent households. In addition to this, it appears that more children of non-western origins than ethnically Norwegian children live in poor households (Tvetene 2006). The most common cause of poverty is unemployment, and it is poor educational background that is the most common cause of unemployment (Ibid.). The possession of basic skills contributes to inclusion in working life, a secure income and social participation in a wider array of areas. The education system is therefore an important instrument for reducing poverty and marginalisation and for social cohesion. Over one quarter of young people in Norwegian upper secondary education leave school without occupational qualification or for pursuing higher education. These young people are consequently more vulnerable to poverty and marginalisation. There is also a strong association between parents' educational attainment and children's completion of upper secondary education (Markussen et al 2008). In autumn 2006, the Government presented the white paper "Early intervention for lifelong learning" (St. meld No.16 (2006-2007)) in which it is stated that when social disparities increase, efforts to counter these disparities in the education system must be intensified. The white paper presents the Government's policy directing the ways in which the education system can promote social cohesion. The measures proposed in the white paper are intended to ensure that the individual's needs are met at every level in the education system.

When looking at child poverty, the spatial dimension is also of relevance. In spite of being a country with small cities compared to other European countries, there are clear divisions within Norway's major cities when it comes to living conditions, unemployment and poverty. The recent living condition survey of Oslo found that there were clear divides, both between and within city districts, when it came to levels of unemployment and poverty among children indicating the potential presence of cycles of deprivation and other barriers trapping people in joblessness and poverty (Bråthen et al 2007, Nadim 2008). In Oslo in 2006, the city district with the lowest rate of poverty among children was Ullern with 5 percent, while the city district of Gamle Oslo had 33 percent (Nadim and Nielsen 2009).

Even though the poverty rate is relatively low, the Norwegian government has sustained the focus on the problem. The action plans against poverty, the authorities have introduced a range of measures for the reduction of poverty, along with a definition of how poverty is to be understood, defined and measured within the Norwegian context (Fløtten & Nuland 2007). Although research often uses income as a poverty measure, the social aspect is important in the general understanding of poverty as a phenomenon. Lack of money does not only increase the risk of poor material living conditions, it also

affects the social living conditions. In today's affluent society, children and youth require more resources than before in order to participate in activities and social contexts. A good childhood is partly to have access to the same benefits and having the opportunity to participate in activities that most of the same age (St.prp. no. 1 (2006-2007) appendix).

Research shows that most children living in income poverty households, have relatively normal material and social living conditions, but that a higher proportion of children in families with a weak economy, however, are struggling socially, and participate less in activities in their spare time and in school than other children (Sletten et al 2004, Sandbæk 2004, 2008). The research also shows that it is difficult to establish clear causal links between low income and social problems. Fløtten and Kavli (2009) found for example in their research that the family economy appears to play a role in increasing children's risk of being less socially active, but that the country of origin might be even more important when identifying which children are at greater risk of not seeing their friends or not participating in organised recreational activities.

The distinction between children and young people who participate and those who are unable to, will also be reinforced by the fact that there are many who are well off in Norway. How much other children "have", will in turn determine what the expectations children encounter in everyday life and thus, the negative consequences of growing up in poverty can be real, even in a rich country like Norway (Sandbæk 2008). In qualitative studies where researchers have interviewed young people about how they experience a life of poverty, it turns out that one of the most important consequences for them seems to be the feeling of being socially excluded (Thorød 2008, Redmond, 2008, Ridge 2002). This understanding of poverty is clearly part of the Norwegian action plan, in that one of the three objectives is that all children and young people should have the opportunities to participate and develop (St.prp. no. 1 (2006-2007) appendix, Action Plan against Poverty 2008). In the political platform of the government, it is further stated that "[...] all children and young people are given the opportunity to participate and develop in society independent of their parents' financial and social situations "and that the government will" [...] provide support to arrangements with holiday and leisure activities for children of parents with a poor economy"(Soria Moria II 2009). Thus, the social understanding of poverty makes up an important part of the Norwegian effort to combat poverty among children.

The Norwegian policy to combat poverty among children – Two grant schemes

The Norwegian government has for many years supported initiatives aimed at children, youth and families affected by problems associated with poverty. The municipalities/city districts can, among other things, apply for funding for programmes that will increase/improve the possibility of social inclusion among children and youth from poor families, and for programmes that improve the possibilities to find work for youth with poor or no relevant educational background. In order to devise good policy and enhance efforts in this fight, the Ministry of Children and Equality, the Norwegian Di-

rectorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs and the Norwegian Directorate for Labour and Welfare have also invited the child welfare services and municipal social welfare offices to join a strengthened partnership/cooperation for improving the welfare and protection of children and families. These two specific initiatives important in the current Norwegian efforts to combat poverty among children, and the basis for this paper are:

- *Measures for children and youth in urban areas*
- *Competence-building and development measures for the child welfare and the social welfare services to prevent and reduce poverty among children and youth*

The targeted grants are allocated to cities and areas with the most living condition problems. One of the main purposes of the grant schemes are to increase awareness of those targeted measures to prevent and mitigate the consequences of poverty for children and young people. The municipalities/city districts can apply for funding for programmes that will increase/improve the possibility of social inclusion among children and youth from poor families. Special focus is given to establishing programmes enabling all children and youth to take part in extra-curricular activities, and for them to experience vacation and holiday trips regardless of their parents' financial situation, education, ethnic origin or geographical location. Additionally, there is a focus on programmes improving the possibilities to find work or alternatives to work/school for youth with poor or incomplete educational background.

Altogether more than 80 (out of 430) municipalities/city districts are involved in one of the measures to combat poverty among children. The efforts have been targeted at local authorities that face major problems associated with living standards and high levels of child poverty. The local authorities have focused their work on two main areas in particular: holiday and leisure activities for children, young people and adults, and initiatives that can engender the involvement in the labour market of young people with little or no qualifications. Both initiatives are presented in more detail below²:

- *Measures for children and youth in urban areas:* This grant scheme has been in effect since 2003. The scheme covers 23 municipalities and seven city districts of Oslo. Youth groups, city districts, voluntary organisations and public and private sector agencies and institutions are eligible for grants. In 2009 31.5 million NOK were targeted at concrete measures towards children, youth and families experiencing poverty. The targeted grants are allocated to cities and areas with more and accumulated living condition problems. The greatest proportions of programmes that have received grants have been holiday and extra-curricular activities. There was a slight increase of the proportion of qualifying measures for young people in the last couple of years. Long-term and concerted efforts to combat marginalisation of children and young people experiencing poverty were a new measure cate-

² In the appendix, a complete list of municipalities and city districts participating in the grant schemes are given, including level of child poverty.

gory in 2008. These measures were often combined with qualifying action for youth with little or incomplete education.

- *Competence-building and development measures for the child welfare and the social welfare services to prevent and reduce poverty among children and youth:* Since 2006, grants have been given for competence-building and development measures in an effort to prevent and reduce poverty among children and young people. This grant scheme is in fact two separate schemes, one commissioned by the ministry of Children and equality and one by the Norwegian Directorate for Labour and Welfare. This measure was initially targeted at the children welfare services since they identified poverty as an important aspect on which increased focus was necessary for the welfare of children. The ministry of Children and Equality have had close cooperation with the Norwegian Directorate for Labour and Welfare in the fight against poverty among children since 2005. The directorate itself, has a similar project targeting the social welfare offices where the municipalities in the Ministry of Children and Equality initiative also take part. And for the purpose of this effort, the directorate is in close cooperation with the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs. During the period 2006-2008, 85 children welfare offices or social welfare offices received grants from the scheme. Through this initiative, the social welfare service offices are committed to working closely with the child welfare services and other parts of the local public services in order to initiate successful and inclusive projects. The intention is to initiate programmes in relations to social welfare and the pre-emptive work towards families that are considered at risk, and to develop new patterns and structures of cooperation to improve the availability of programmes for families with children in the local public services. In other words, these programmes aim to bring together various actors in local communities and society at large to initiate results that will compensate for the social consequences faced by children and youth due to their families' precarious financial situations or due to living below the poverty threshold.

In terms of policy design, combating child poverty is an example of a national political plan devised by the ministry to be implemented locally through the cooperation of several disciplines of the local apparatus. This plan has also been a multi-disciplinary effort at central government level; a close cooperation between The Norwegian Directorate for Labour and Welfare and The Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality/Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs. The effort to combat poverty among children is also a good example of social policy where the central government allows for subsidiarity in refining the details of programmes locally. It has been important to make this effort multi-disciplinary both locally and centrally, and to give incentives for developing improved collaboration structures not only between local authorities (for instance between the child welfare services and the social welfare offices) but also between the local authorities and local NGOs. The challenge is, however, precisely to achieve such a foundation so that the work of the measures are an integral part of

local efforts to improve children and young people's welfare and living conditions (Nuland et al 2009b).

Have the grant schemes generated “new” ways of working to combat child poverty?

The municipalities have to a large extent freedom to design programmes and projects in line with the challenges they experience to have locally. By giving this local freedom, the central government has wanted to promote good examples of what promotes and what inhibits the work to combat child poverty in the municipalities. Norwegian municipalities are very different in terms of the composition of the population, settlement patterns and size. The extent of child poverty varies greatly between municipalities, as does the composition of the group of children living in poverty (Epland and Kirkeberg 2009, Nadim and Nielsen 2009). These differences are reflected in the variation in the measures that has been implemented within the framework of the grant schemes. The measures range from direct financial transfers to individuals or families to the competence of the municipal agencies (Christensen et al, 2008, Hyggen 2009, Nuland 2009, Hyggen 2010, Nuland et al 2009a, Nuland et al 2010).

The municipalities/city districts have developed a wide variety of different measures covering all three measure types. Among the programmes started with funds from the schemes, there are several examples of great creativity and great commitment in the development of measures. The local authorities state that grant funds have led to increased awareness and knowledge of child poverty, and that this has in turn led to the development of new methods to remedy poverty among children and youth. However, few municipalities have initiated overarching municipal processes for developing new measures. Rather, it seems to be more or less how the professionals who work with children and youth in the target groups identify the problems that define what will govern the local priorities.

In the evaluation of the grant scheme, we have talked to several project staff expressed that it is desirable to have a mix of targeted and open measures. The action against child poverty is naturally meant to do something about the situation of a particular group of children and youth. In order to be able to initiate resource-intensive measures such as including a degree of individual support, it is natural to target those who most need it. At the same time, the municipalities have stressed the importance of developing programmes that contribute to social inclusion through active and "normal" experiences, and as a result has favoured universal programmes. The latter would also seem less stigmatizing for the children who participate. The perceptions among the municipal employees are thus in line with the perception in the research field, that the complex problem area child poverty requires a holistic approach and a combination of selective/targeted and universal measures (Backe-Hansen 2004). In the grant schemes, the impression is however that measures are mainly intended as inclusive measures, and most of the measures aim to reach target groups through broad measures that do not produce stigma.

The municipalities have chosen different methods and ways to structure their efforts. The organisation chosen is largely adapted to local conditions, key people, local culture and experience of previous project work. More so than being completely “new” programmes, the impression is that existing programmes have been amended and expanded to include a poverty aspect or mechanisms to make sure children and youth experiencing poverty are included. Furthermore, many local government agencies participate in operating the measures, and as such, several measures have led to cooperation and co-ordination between different departments within the municipality, and between the municipal departments and non-governmental organisations.

Reaching the most at need?

From the research on child poverty, we know that some groups are overrepresented among poor children, but at the same time the composition of poor children makes up a diverse group (Epland and Kirkeberg 2009, Nadim and Nielsen 2009). Poverty stakes are particularly high for children in following households:

- Families where there are no employed individuals
- Families where the individuals have low or unknown education
- Families who receive social assistance
- Families who are welfare-dependent
- Families with non-western immigrant background
- Families with many children
- Single parent households

With such a diverse group it can be challenging for municipal assistance agencies to always have updated knowledge about the poor children and youth in the municipality. It is also likely that the composition of the poverty group will vary over time. However, only one quarter of the municipalities that have conducted systematic surveys of child poverty as a basis for their work (Nuland et al 2009a) and thus it is probably most obvious for a social or child welfare office to work towards their own clients, or children and youth who are been in contact with them previously. The challenge with this approach is that not all income-poor children live in households who receive social assistance, and that not all children in social assistance households are income-poor (Nadim and Nielsen 2009). So that they reach the entire “poor children” group, municipalities and city districts should therefore not simply map out children of families receiving social assistance, and limit themselves to these children, but apply a wider, less restrictive set of criteria.

In the evaluation of the grant schemes, municipalities were surveyed whether they considered some groups particularly susceptible to poverty. Children and young people with immigrant backgrounds were highlighted as an important risk group of people. This may be related to the knowledge that the poverty risk is high among children with non-Western background, while this is a group that can be easily identified. However,

children from ethnic minority backgrounds, particularly girls, are mentioned as a difficult group to reach (Nuland et al 2010).

Many also pointed out children in single parent families, especially children of young single mothers. The third group that was frequently mentioned were drop-outs of high school, and finally poverty often associated with the risk that children and/or their parents had psychiatric problems (Nuland et al 2009a). Thus many groups were mentioned, but it was perceived that it was not as easy to reach all the groups. Groups more difficult to reach were children who have parents who do not perceive themselves as poor, children of drug abusers and children who have parents with mental health problems (ibid). One explanation for this may be that these groups are not necessarily in contact with the public assistance agencies, and / or that attention is primarily directed at the parents if the support system is in the picture.

Despite the problems of reaching some groups, half of the municipalities report that all measures that were implemented reached their target groups (ibid). Another 47 percent reported that they mostly reached their target group. Furthermore, the majority of municipalities (75 percent) report they reach as many or even more, children and young people than they had expected. This could either mean that local authorities actually manage to find those they find it difficult to reach, or that they define the target groups in such a way that they are likely to experience success in reaching them. Both explanations might be adequate to explain these findings.

Furthermore, the evaluations show that there are some mechanisms for recruitment that seems to have proved particularly successful. Programmes who have involved schools and health services seem to have been well suited for reaching potential participants. School and health services are not services associated with stigma, yet they are arenas where most children and youth can be reached. Teachers see their pupils every day, and as such, are likely to know about problems related to family income before a family necessarily show up at the social security office or the child welfare service.

In the evaluation of the grant schemes, we see that even though it may be difficult to map the situation in the municipality, the programmes have worked hard to involve several agencies in the community to get in contact with the children, youth and families who can benefit from the programmes. It is however unclear whether some programmes managed to reach the most vulnerable children and young people.

Concluding remarks

This paper has looked at the Norwegian policy to combat child poverty by presenting findings from evaluations of two grant schemes that are part of the government's action plan against poverty. Despite the fact that fighting child poverty has become an important issue in current Norwegian politics, it is important to keep in mind that the extent of child poverty is less in Norway than in most other countries. In Norway there are many schemes aimed at securing the income of families with children. Emphasis on the work line, full employment, high female employment, social rights based on citizenship, regardless of family status and employment, a willingness to maintain high taxes and significant public support for families is one of the factors used to explain the relatively

low prevalence of child poverty in Norway (Innocenti 2005). But a large part of children's lives are played out in arenas outside of the family - in school and in leisure activities - and an important part of the effort against the effects of poverty can be put into action in these arenas (Nuland et al 2009a). This will not reduce poverty as it is reflected in the statistics, but can be very important to make the lives of children from poor families easier in the present situation. In addition, one can imagine that such efforts could potentially contribute to that children are less likely to become poor adults (ibid.). In other words, we need to focus attention on children and young people's everyday lives and opportunities here and now ("being") and to see the childhood and adolescence in a life cycle perspective where we assess what is important prerequisites for a satisfying adult life ("becoming") (Nuland et al 2009b). A clear finding in poverty research has been that the remedial measures for adults are bad (and expensive) alternatives to intervention in childhood (Esping-Andersen 2002, Heckman and Lochner 2000).

Following the evaluation of the two grant schemes, many municipalities come across as successful in their efforts, in the sense that they have developed measures local programme agents consider to be successful for the target groups, and the operation of the measures are organised in a way that programme agents are satisfied with. However, there is no clear answer as to exactly what measures provide a basis for positive evaluation, or exactly what kind of organisation is good or satisfactory. The diversity of programme development and organisational forms is an illustration that measures are adjusted to local challenges, and since the local challenges and conditions vary, there is thus no reason to point out one or two municipalities or measures as particularly successful.

It is important to engage local authorities and fostering local partnerships is most important in order to find integrated answers through social activities, training and employment schemes tailored to local needs. The experience in Norway regarding combating poverty among children has shown that one of the most important achievements of government measures has been to enhance municipalities' poverty awareness. Reaching the goals of eradicating poverty is conditioned by local attention, knowledge and commitment in the municipalities, and establishing local partnerships that will help instigating this conditional framework. In Norway the central government, central agencies and municipalities are the main actors of the fight against unemployment and poverty. However, there is an increasing cooperation at local level with voluntary organisations in the delivery of low threshold schemes. That the programmes in the grant schemes were established with the involvement of a vast array of actors in the local community might enable local ownership to the programmes. It has been important to make this effort multi-disciplinary, and to give incentives for developing improved collaboration structures not only between local authorities but also between the local authorities and local NGOs. But perhaps most importantly is how the measures help to raise awareness of problems and local competence concerning poverty among children and youth. The findings show that many local and non-governmental actors are involved in measures in the grant scheme, and three out of four municipalities find that the grant scheme has contributed to a more or less great extent to increase the municipality's awareness and expertise.

This paper has also tried to look at whether the grant schemes have generated “new” ways of working to combat poverty among children and youth. The findings show that there has been many programmes started, and the general impression is that focus on poverty within the services and increased knowledge has led to new programmes more targeted in order to reach children and youth experiencing poverty. More so than being completely “new” programmes, the impression is that existing programmes have been amended and expanded to include a poverty aspect or mechanisms to make sure children and youth experiencing poverty are included. The most common approach seems to have been universal programmes with the aim to achieve inclusion by integrating children and youth experiencing poverty into activities for all children. The grant schemes also seem to have led to more participation among different municipal agencies, and between public agencies and NGOs.

Poverty among children is a sensitive issue, often associated with stigma. This paper has shown that the programmes in the grant schemes often have been afraid of targeting programmes. Programmes are mainly intended as inclusive measures, and most of the measures aim to reach target groups through broad measures that do not produce stigma. The interviews showed that it is unclear whether some measures managed to reach the most vulnerable children and young people. This notwithstanding, most of the measures analysed are believed to have made a positive difference for those who took part.

Whether the programmes and measures implemented will have an effect on the children/youths on a long-term basis is difficult to assess. Likewise it is difficult, if at all possible, to assess whether such efforts have the desired effect on breaking the pattern of poverty for children. What can be said at this point is that the effort seems to have the effect that the municipalities involved strengthen their effort to combat child poverty and that there is increased focus on the problem across different sectors of local governments.

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Appendix: Poverty figures for municipalities receiving grants to combat poverty among children

The following table shows which municipalities who have received grants from what grant scheme, and the figures for child poverty for the years 2000 and 2007 based on a poverty measure of 60 % of median income.

	Measures for children and youth in urban areas	Competence-building and development measures for the child welfare and the social welfare services to prevent and reduce poverty among children and youth	Share of children in poverty, 60 % of median income 2000	Share of children in poverty, 60 % of median income 2007
Norway (total figure)			5,1	8,1
Oslo	x		8,3	15
City district Gamle Oslo	x	x	21,3	31,5
City district Grünerløkka	x	x	16,6	24,2
City district Sagene	x	x	14,8	21,4
City district Søndre Nordstrand	x	x	11	21
City district Alna	x	x	11,2	19,4
City district Grorud	x		8	18,7
City district Stovner	x	x	10,3	19,8
City district Bjerke		x	8,8	19,4
Drammen	x	x	7,6	13,6
Sarpsborg	x	x	5,2	11,4
Fredrikstad	x	x	6,6	12,6
Skien	x		6,8	11,9
Halden	x	x	8,2	13,2
Larvik	x	x	5,8	9,8
Gjøvik	x	x	6,6	8,5
Sandefjord	x	x	6,4	9,8
Moss	x		6,3	10,2
Kristiansand	x	x	6,4	8,1
Porsgrunn	x		6,2	8,2
Bergen	x	x	4,9	8
Arendal	x	x	6,1	8,4
Stavanger	x	x	5,4	7
Haugesund	x		6,2	7,6
Hamar	x	x	3,5	8,1
Trondheim	x	x	5	7,7
Tønsberg	x		4,5	8,1

Sandnes	x	x	4,8	5,4
Ålesund	x		4,1	6
Bodø	x		2,9	5,9
Tromsø	x	x	4	5,4
Gran		x	6	6,8
Ringsaker		x	5	7,2
Kongsvinger		x	7,4	11,3
Vestby		x	4,2	6,8
Grue		x	9,9	12,0
Eidskog		x	8,7	11,9
Eidsberg		x	7,9	11,8
Askim		x	6,7	13,5
Bærum		x	2,5	4,2
Halden		x	8,2	13,2
Nordre Land		x	6,0	10,5
Trysil		x	5,1	8,5
Re		x	5,3	8,4
Nome		x	5,3	11,1
Nedre Eiker		x	6,0	7,4
Birkenes		x	8,2	9,0
Bamble		x	5,8	11
Drangedal		x	6,7	8,8
Notodden		x	4,8	7,1
Gjerstad		x	8,2	11,9
Horten		x	6,9	9
Sauherad		x	4,6	13,3
Strand		x	3,6	5,6
Gloppen		x	2,3	4,8
Sund		x	6,2	9,1
Fjell		x	4,3	5,8
Surnadal		x	6,1	5,7
Bjugn		x	9	9,5
Inderøy		x	4,1	7,5
Namsos		x	4	6,8
Kristiansund		x	4,9	7,7
Molde		x	3	4,2
Narvik		x	4	5,8
Sortland		x	6,6	7,4
Vågan		x	5,6	7,7
Hammerfest		x	3,1	4,3
Hadsel		x	4,1	9
Andøy		x	5,3	8,3

Alta		x	3,5	5,5
Lenvik		x	6,9	8,7
Balsfjord		x	6,5	10,8
Vestvågøy		x	7,1	7,7
Fauske		x	7,6	7,8
Kvæfjord		x	4,4	7,5
Rana		x	4,3	6,6
Saltdal		x	5,3	6,6

Source: Nuland et al 2009a, Nuland et al 2010