



Programme area n°8 Children and Youth at Risk

OBJECTIVE

Promote the rights and well-being of children and young people

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Child welfare and child protection systems
- > Child-friendly justice
- > Protection of child victims of trafficking, sexual abuse and domestic violence
- > Early childhood education and care systems
- > Prevention of early school-leaving
- > Empowerment of children and young people, including participation in decision-making processes
- > De-institutionalisation/alternatives to institutional care

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Promoting the rights of children and young people and contributing to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- > Establishment of an Ombudsman for children to assist national authorities in protecting, promoting and realising children's rights
- > Developing and improving the quality of child welfare systems and child protection measures at national and local levels
- > Integrated approaches to tackle child poverty and social exclusion including prevention of early school-leaving
- > Innovative approaches targeting children and young people with behavioural problems
- > Empowerment of children and youth with a minority or alternative care background
- > Developing integrated health service and social care provisions for vulnerable children and youth
- > Improving the overall administration of juvenile justice at national and local levels
- > Developing national strategies concerning the application of restorative justice in the administration of juvenile justice
- > Improving the protection and securing the rights of children in detention and on probation
- > Multi-sectoral approaches to prevent radicalisation of young people and create resilience to violent extremism
- > Civil society engagement and/or partnerships between public, private and civil society entities including non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Today, one out of four children in the EU is at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The economic crisis has increased the number of children at risk. Children growing up in poverty or social exclusion are less likely than their better-off peers to do well in school, enjoy good health and realise their full potential later in life. Vulnerable groups of children and youth are often exposed to discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion. There is also growing concern about the radicalisation of young people, which demands a more comprehensive multi-sectorial effort to counter violent extremism.

The EEA and Norway Grants support children's rights by providing funds to improve child protection, empower children and youth and improve their social inclusion by using a variety of tools and encouraging innovative approaches.

Preventing the transmission of disadvantage across generations is a crucial investment in Europe's future, as well as a direct contribution to the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the EU's cohesion objective of promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination. The EU's 2013 Recommendation "Investing in Children - breaking the cycle of disadvantage" takes a rights-based approach that puts the best interests of the child, equal opportunities and support for the most disadvantaged at the centre of efforts to combat child poverty and promote child well-being across Europe. This agenda is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which continues to be the guiding international instrument on children's rights. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is also relevant. The support provided shall be in line with these instruments.

The report "State of democracy, human rights and rule of law in Europe" (April 2014) by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe also recommends measures to address the main challenges related to children's rights.

Building on experience and exchange of best practice to meet common challenges, both donor and beneficiaries countries benefit from extensive cooperation and partnerships. Cooperation with international children's rights actors such as the Council of Europe adds further value to the Grants and the activities supported. Improved rights and inclusion of children and young people is also supported in the following programme areas: youth inclusion in the labour market; education and scholarships; as well as under the NGO programmes.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme's concept note

BILATERAL INTEREST

Bilateral programme and project cooperation is encouraged in order to exchange knowledge and share best practices and values. The EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 builds on the good bilateral relations developed in the past to further improve bilateral cooperation in the future.