



Caritas CARES!
country report 2019

Germany

**Access to services by vulnerable groups:
barriers, obstacles and good practices**

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Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| What this report about | 4 |
| About Caritas in Germany | 5 |
| Recent publications | 5 |
| Contacts | 5 |
| Executive summary | 6 |
| 1. The evolution of the socio-economic context | 7 |
| 2. Characteristics of the welfare system | 8 |
| 3. Access to key social rights and to services by people experiencing poverty or social exclusion | 8 |
| 4. An assessment of the availability, accessibility, affordability and adequacy of key services and benefits in Germany | 9 |
| a. Two groups of people are excluded from Public Employment Services or have only delayed access: asylum seekers and migrants who recently migrated to Germany | 9 |
| b. Housing is not easily accessible for vulnerable groups (homeless people, people with addictions, refugees) | 10 |
| c. Up to 300,000 places in early childhood education and care services are lacking, and for children from disadvantaged backgrounds the services are less affordable | 11 |
| 5. Use of the minimum income as a measure of inclusion and activation | 11 |
| 6. Progress made towards achieving EU and national social targets | 12 |
| 7. The use of EU Funds 2014–2020 | 14 |
| 8. Deutscher Caritasverband – Caritas Germany promising practices | 15 |
| Conclusions | 16 |
| Recommendations | 16 |

What this report is about

Caritas Organisations are essential actors in the fight against poverty and social exclusion, and the fight for social justice. They do so by assisting and providing services to people in need, as well as by presenting alternatives to address unfair structures, policies and measures.

The Caritas CARES country reports are an important instrument in this endeavour. Caritas informs local, regional, national and European authorities and formulates recommendations, based on its daily work with people experiencing poverty.

The country reports have been compiled on the basis of a questionnaire, designed in consultation with the participating member organisations. It will ensure that the voice of the weakest members of our societies is heard and it will support the advocacy efforts of Caritas at national and at European level.

This report is focused on the analysis of availability, accessibility, affordability and adequacy of services addressing poverty and the promotion of social inclusion and activation in European countries, and it attempts to identify concrete causes of non-access to services by the most vulnerable members of our society.



About Caritas in Germany

Deutscher Caritasverband (subsequently Caritas Germany) is one of the biggest welfare institutions in Germany. It has services and institutions in nearly all social fields: healthcare, children and youth, families, elderly persons, people with disabilities and others. A special focus of Caritas' activities is directed towards the poor and socially excluded.

Caritas Germany supported 13,299,818 beneficiaries in 2016.¹ Beneficiaries are all those coming to Caritas offices or institutions in search of advice, help or services.

Caritas Germany also invests in social-political monitoring. Being in contact with operators providing Caritas services, through their feedback and through the examination of the political debate and official data, Caritas Germany observes and analyses the development of social exclusion and poverty in Germany: What are pressing issues, what political initiatives come up and what is their effect on vulnerable people? Caritas Germany also does political lobbying and is involved in other policy activities. Caritas Germany develops policy proposals based on this knowledge.

Recent publications

Publications written by Caritas Germany are available at the link below:

www.caritas.de/stellungnahmen

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¹Central statistic of Caritas Germany 2016 ("Zentralstatistik").

Executive summary

Between 2009 and 2018 the population in Germany grew slightly: it is a rapidly ageing country, and data show that while the population of working age has slightly reduced (-0.4%), there has been an increase in the elderly population, in particular of people over 85. Demographic change is also due to migration flows: in 2018, 5,462,268 third country nationals were living in the country, equal to 6.6% of the population, well above the EU average of 4.1%. In 2018 184,180 asylum applicants registered in Germany, a significant decrease compared to 2016, the peak year for Germany when 745,155 asylum seekers registered.²

The German economy continues to grow with improving labour market performance, but there are concerns about the inclusiveness of this growth and many challenges remain to be tackled. Concerning poverty, the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) in Germany has been decreasing slightly over the years and stood at 19% in 2017 versus an EU average of 22.5%.

On the basis of its experience, Caritas Germany regards access to most social rights is good in general, apart from housing which is considered less accessible than the others.

- Public Employment Services perform well but not for all, as two groups of people are excluded or have only delayed access: asylum seekers and migrants who recently migrated to Germany. Others need individual support which is not always easy to organise.
- Housing is not easily accessible for vulnerable groups like homeless people, people with addictions, or refugees.
- 300,000 places in early childhood education services are lacking, and for children from disadvantaged backgrounds the service is less affordable.

At national and local levels:

Caritas Germany recommends, at the national and local level, the promotion of changes and reforms, in particular in the following areas:

Recommendation 1: Improve public employment measures for specific target groups.

Recommendation 2: Invest in the quality of early childhood care services.

Recommendation 3: Invest in housing policies.

² Eurostat, 2019, Asylum and first time asylum applicants – annual aggregated data.

1. The evolution of the socio-economic context

Between 2009 and 2018 the **population** in Germany grew by only 1% with an increase of 789,995 people. It is a country that is rapidly **ageing**, and data show that while the number of children has increased by only 0.3% and the population at working age has slightly reduced (-0.4%), there has been an increase in the elderly population: the over 65s have increased by 5.9% (+980,698) and the over 85s have increased by 25.7%.

Demographic change is also due to **migration flows**: in 2018 5,462,268 third country nationals were living in the country, equal to 6.6% of the population, well above the EU average that is at 4.1%. Germany registered 184,180 asylum applicants in 2018 (being 2.22 per 1,000 inhabitants, a higher proportion in comparison to the EU average equal to 1.25), but a significant decrease has been registered compared to 2016, the peak year for Germany when 745,155 asylum seekers registered.³

The German economy continues to grow, driven by domestic demand and it is expected to maintain a solid growth pace for the future. Labour market performance improved further with record low unemployment and high employment rates.⁴ The employment rate has progressively increased over the years and it reached 79.9% in 2018, an increase of 5.7 percentage points in comparison to 2009.⁵ The unemployment rate has continued to decline gradually after hitting a peak of 7.6% in 2009, it fell to 3.4% in 2018, a very low rate compared to the EU 28 average (6.8%).⁶

Concerning poverty, **19% of the population in Germany was at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) in 2017, versus an EU average of 22.5%.**⁷

This rate has been decreasing slightly over the years, after reaching a peak of 20.6% in 2014, but there are concerns as to whether this development is beneficial for all sections of society, and many challenges remain to be tackled. This is particularly the case for children of low-skilled parents who are particularly at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Another vulnerable group is the elderly living in large cities: they are at a much higher risk of poverty due to high housing costs that they cannot easily afford.⁸

The **expenditure for social protection benefits** in Germany has been increasing over the years: it increased from €8,316 per inhabitant (at constant prices) in 2008 to €10,033 in 2016 (the latest available data). It is at a much higher level compared to the EU average, which in 2016 was at €7,377. Social expenditure has reduced poverty by 33.2%, almost equal to the EU average of 34.1%.⁹

³ Eurostat, 2019, Asylum and first time asylum applicants - annual aggregated data.

⁴ German European Semester Country report, https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/2019-european-semester-country-report-germany_en.pdf.

⁵ Eurostat, 2019, Employment - annual data.

⁶ Eurostat, 2019, Unemployment - annual average.

⁷ People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex.

⁸ German European Semester Country report.

⁹ Eurostat, Total general government expenditure on social protection.

2. Characteristics of the welfare system

The German social protection system is reasonably efficient. The inclusion and social protection system in Germany is complex, as it consists of a mix of different features. It is provided:

- Through the provision of specialised services for people in need (counselling, shelters, homecare, stationary care, etc.).
- Through financial benefits, of various forms, including a minimum income, which helps to secure the minimum socio-cultural living standard (*Soziokulturelles Existenzminimum*).
- By policy measures offering universal and targeted overall support to families/individuals. Germany has policy measures which are designed to either support special groups (for example, working parents) or to support access to goods and services.

3. Access to key social rights and to services by people experiencing poverty or social exclusion

The main goal of this Caritas CARES country report is to analyse if and how living in poverty or in conditions of social exclusion hinders access to social rights and to social services.

Several EU initiatives have been promoted in recent years to tackle inequality, poverty and social

exclusion, both in general terms and for specific target groups. The European Parliament, the European Council and the European Commission have taken several policy initiatives to strengthen the social dimension of the European Union, with the most recent initiative in this context being **The European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR)**. Another highly relevant instrument is the (revised) **European Social Charter (ESC)** of the Council of Europe. Both the Pillar and the Charter state the right to access some specific social rights related to equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions, access to social protection and inclusion.

The **European Pillar of Social Rights** sets out 20 key principles and rights to support fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems. They are fully described [here](#).¹⁰ Several of the rights cited by the European Pillar of Social Rights specifically relate to the conditions of people in poverty and social exclusion. This is particularly the case of *PRINCIPLE 4 - Active support to employment*; *PRINCIPLE 11 - Childcare and support to children*; *PRINCIPLE 14 - Minimum income*; *PRINCIPLE 16 - Health care*; *PRINCIPLE 19 - Housing and assistance for the homeless*; and *PRINCIPLE 20 - Access to essential services*.

On the basis of its experience, Caritas Germany has established through its survey that access to most of the above-mentioned rights is in general good, ranked in most of cases with 4 out of 5 (where 5 means that the right is completely accessible), apart from housing, which is considered less accessible than the others (rated 3 out of 5).

In the following section the difficulties in accessing a selected set of services that should be available for those in need are described in detail.

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en.

4. An assessment of the availability, accessibility, affordability and adequacy of key services and benefits in Germany

In this section the main strengths and weaknesses of the access to three important services are described: **public employment services, housing policies and early childhood education services.**

Services are analysed under four main criteria: adequacy, accessibility, availability and affordability.

The assessment has been based on a scale ranging from 1 (the lowest mark meaning that the service is completely inadequate or inaccessible or unavailable or unaffordable) to 5 which means that it is completely positive.

According to the Caritas survey, public employment services and early childhood education and care (ECEC) are considered adequate, accessible, available and affordable. On the contrary, housing

is regarded as somewhat inaccessible, unavailable, and unaffordable.

ADEQUACY: the service is of good quality and is satisfactory: it is able to respond to the needs of the user;

ACCESSIBILITY: the service can be reached or obtained easily, and it is easy to understand and to use;

AVAILABILITY: the service exists and it is available for those who need it;

AFFORDABILITY: the service is cheap enough for people who need it to be able to afford it.

| | Adequacy | Accessibility | Availability | Affordability | AVERAGE |
|--------------------------------|----------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------|
| Public employment services | 3 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3.7 |
| Housing | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3.25 |
| Early childhood education/ECEC | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| AVERAGE | 3.6 | 4 | 3 | 4 | - |

a. Two groups of people are excluded from Public Employment Services or have only delayed access: asylum seekers and other migrants who recently migrated to Germany

Public employment services support people to find a suitable job and help to meet (once again) the requirements of the labour market. This might be through labour market measures or through re-training.

The access per se is not a problem. However, **there are two groups of people who are excluded from these services or who have only delayed access:** These are asylum seekers and other migrants who

recently migrated to Germany in order to seek a job.

The main problems described relate to adequacy and availability of the service (ranked as 3). On the contrary, the service has been evaluated as completely affordable as it is cost-free (rated 5 out of 5).

Regarding **adequacy**, the need of support varies from person to person. Some need re-training, others language courses, and again others need help in structuring their daily routine, or have health issues affecting their ability to work. For the latter groups, it is important to receive tailor-made services. To address this, measures should be

flexibly designed to meet the needs of the individual person. This is already the case but it should be made easier.

Regarding **availability**, labour market measures should be available for a larger group of people.

In the last few years the service has improved:

new legislation providing for general and long-term support has been introduced to target those people with specific, individual and long-term needs.

A testimony can help to illustrate access to these services:

I am Albert. I worked as a construction worker for a long time. Then my knee and my hand were severely injured and I became useless to my employer. I lost my job and had to struggle to maintain my livelihood. Then my son died. I felt weak and alone. I began to drink to alleviate the pain. But this made everything worse. Eventually I managed to pull myself together and began to write applications. But I only received rejections; everywhere dismissive faces. When I was offered a one-euro-job (i.e. one of the labour market measures), I accepted it immediately. Now I work as a gardener for the church in my town. Here everybody has trust in me. That is very important for me. At 57 years, I finally found a job which keeps my life balanced and gives me the sense of being needed.

b. Housing is not easily accessible for vulnerable groups (homeless people, people with addictions, refugees)

There are regions where rents are very high. This also causes problems for people of middle income. For people with low income, across Germany, 1.4 million flats are lacking.¹¹ Moreover, there is not enough social housing. This has led to a situation

where the cost of housing is very high compared to the income of families and where especially vulnerable people have very limited access to housing.

From the perspective of the conditions of some groups considered to be vulnerable, for example, homeless people, people with addictions, refugees, etc., and compared to German standards, housing is regarded as very problematic. Regarding adequacy, there are some flats which are in bad condition, where there is mildew and poor insulation (such that the heating costs are high, while it is impossible to keep rooms warm enough). Accessibility, availability and affordability are part of the problem too. The vulnerable groups most affected by these barriers/obstacles are those who are "at the margins of society" and have limited access to housing. It is difficult for them to find adequate and affordable housing, if any.

In the last few years the service has worsened due to the trend of rising housing costs.

A testimony can help to illustrate access to this service:

We are a family of six people, my father and we five children. My mother left us overnight. [...] The six of us share a hotel room in an emergency shelter. [...] We have lived there for two years already. [...] We don't get a flat. Whenever we find a place that suits us, the landlords don't want us. Some say the reason for this is because we are six people, others say because we are five children. Others again don't want the rent to be paid by the Job Centre, and also don't like the fact that we are originally from the south of Europe. For them my father's credit rating is too low. But these only come from a couple of unpaid mobile phone invoices. [...] Caritas is helping us looking for a flat, but they too have not been successful yet.

¹¹This calculation includes people on low income that need access to a flat which does not cost more than 30% of their income.

c. Up to 300,000 places in early childhood education and care services are lacking, and for children from disadvantaged backgrounds the services are less affordable

Access to early childhood education and care services is not easy because available places are lacking. There are estimates that up to **300,000 places for children younger than 3 years are not available**.¹² People in conditions of poverty and social exclusion have more problems accessing these services because early childhood education and care is not free of charge. Generally, the service is not overly expensive and there are reductions for poor people. However, there are poor people who do not use the service because they want to save the money.

Caritas Germany's survey shows that the service is regarded as completely accessible (ranked 5 out of 5) and both adequate and affordable (rated 4). The problem relates to availability (ranked only 3).

The service is generally of good quality but it is desirable that more is invested in order to increase quality. This could be achieved by investing in the children-staff ratio and in the training of the educators.

In the last few years the service has improved thanks to new legislation which has come with public investment in early childhood education. While this is welcomed, Caritas believes that more constant investment, which is linked to quality improvement, is needed.

5. Use of the minimum income as a measure of inclusion and activation

Principle 14 of the **European Pillar of Social Rights** states that:

"Everyone lacking sufficient resources has the right to adequate minimum income benefits ensuring a life in dignity at all stages of life, and effective access to enabling goods and services. For those who can work, minimum income benefits should be combined with incentives to (re)integrate into the labour market."

According to the approach put forward by the EU initiatives (in particular the Recommendation on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market, promoted in 2008 by the European Commission¹³), minimum income schemes have to be viewed through the perspective of the **active inclusion approach**: they are expected to be universal and to provide integrated support in the form of adequate cash benefits, effective access

to enabling goods and services, and to include an activation component for beneficiaries. We at Caritas would like to emphasise that – while the activation component is important – it is also important that some services based on minimum income schemes are provided without any obligations on the beneficiaries.

Minimum income in Germany is provided through different measures. The main unemployment benefit measure is called *Arbeitslosengeld II*. It is aimed at all people of working age who are in need of help and who are able to work more than three hours a day. Also taken into account are their children and relatives. *Arbeitslosengeld II* is considered an active inclusion measure and it seems able to make a significant contribution to supporting vulnerable people. Another measure is called "*Grundsicherung im Alter und bei Erwerbsminderung*" (basic insurance in old age and

¹² <https://www.iwkoeln.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/beitrag/wido-geis-thoene-wo-die-luecke-besonders-gross-ist.html>.

¹³ Commission Recommendation of 3 October 2008 on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32008H0867>.

of reduced earning capacity) and aims to provide basic benefits and services for people at retirement age or people who are not able to work anymore and are in need of help.

Within the minimum income scheme there are multiple public employment measures (see also chapter 4.a.). Some focus mainly on the basic skills which are needed to participate specifically in the labour market, but also in society as a whole.

For example, they focus on structuring one's day, being punctual, coping with emotions, etc. These are measures for people who are not able to immediately work in the main labour market.

The main positive aspect of the active inclusion approach in Germany is that it promotes a personalised approach and not just money. On the contrary, it risks incentivising wage reductions and in-work poverty.

6. Progress made towards achieving EU and national social targets

The **Europe 2020** strategy sets the EU's agenda for growth and jobs for the current decade. It has, as its main objective, the promotion of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as a way of overcoming the structural weaknesses in Europe's economy and of tackling key European inequalities. The strategy sets out **EU TARGETS** to give an overall view of where the EU should be by 2020, based on key socio-economic parameters. The EU targets are then translated into national targets so that each EU Member State can check its own progress towards each goal. The ones particularly relevant for this study are those referring to employment and poverty and social exclusion.

In relation to **EMPLOYMENT, the target set at EU level is that, by 2020, 75% of people aged 20–64 are expected to be working.** For Germany, this indicator has been set at 77%. In 2009, it was at about 74.2% and in 2018 79.9%. Thus the target has been successfully reached and even exceeded.

Concerning **POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION**, the EU target foresees a reduction by 2020 of at least 20 million people in or at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This indicator corresponds to the number of people who are: at risk of poverty after social transfers, severely materially deprived, or living in

households with very low work intensity.

In 2017, about 15,516,000 people (19% of the population¹⁴) in Germany were at risk of poverty and social exclusion, despite the fact that between 2008 and 2017 the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion had decreased by 828,000 people. The expected target to be met by 2020, by Germany, focuses on the number of long-term unemployed, that in 2020, compared to 2008, should fall by 320,000 (a reduction equal to 20%). From 2008 to 2017 the number of long-term unemployed decreased by 50% to around 900,000. However, despite the overall good labour market situation, those in long-term unemployment currently account for 41.9% of all unemployed people in the country.¹⁵

In general the official data from Germany is good. What does not emerge from the data, but is relevant in Germany, is the number of working poor and the number of people with temporary jobs.

With Germany having already reached the social Europe 2020 targets, Caritas and other organisations have proposed the setting of new and more ambitious social targets, such as a lower number of people at risk of poverty.

¹⁴ Eurostat, 2019, AROPE.

¹⁵ European Semester Country Report, 2019, https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2019-european-semester-country-reports_en.

Within this framework, the evolution of the socio-economic context in Member States is described each year within the Commission Staff Working Document *European Semester COUNTRY REPORT*.¹⁶

In 2019 in the area of poverty and social exclusion, the report identified a positive trend in terms of the reduction of poverty and social exclusion, but also challenges that remain to be tackled:

The number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion fell during the period under consideration, reflecting improvements in the labour market and social situation.

Poor outcomes for the children of low-skilled people reveal challenges with regards to equality of opportunity.

The retirement income of low-income workers remains inadequate.

Housing costs in large cities put older and poorer people at greater risk of poverty.

- In May each year the European Commission assesses the progress made and issues **COUNTRY SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS**¹⁷ to propose new actions. The recommendations provide policy guidance tailored for each EU country on how to boost their labour market and economic growth, while maintaining sound public finances. The recommendations focus on what can realistically be achieved over the next 12-18 months. In 2018 the recommendations issued for Germany referring to social inclusion were the following:

1. While respecting the medium-term objective, use fiscal and structural policies to **achieve a sustained upward trend in public and private investment**, and in particular on education, research and innovation at all levels of government, notably at regional and municipal levels. (...)

2. **Reduce disincentives to work more hours, including the high tax wedge, in particular for low-wage and second earners. Take measures to promote longer working lives. Create conditions to promote higher wage growth, while respecting the role of the social partners. Improve educational outcomes and skills levels of disadvantaged groups.**

The 2019 Country Specific Recommendations¹⁸ for Germany also add investment in affordable housing to the first recommendation, and repeat the second recommendation.

- Within the **NATIONAL REFORM PROGRAMME**¹⁹ each country describes the reforms needed to reach the targets set at EU level. The reforms expected in 2019 to tackle social inclusion, social protection and health challenges are the following:
 - The challenges of demographic change will start affecting German society very soon with the “baby boomer” generation reaching retirement age. The consequences of this trend will put fiscal policy to the test: policy-makers face the challenge

¹⁶ European Semester Country Report, 2019.

¹⁷ Here you can download the most recent available recommendations: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2018-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations_en.

¹⁸ Country specific recommendations 2019, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1560258115481&uri=CELEX%3A52019DC0505>.

¹⁹ Here you can download the most recent available https://ec.europa.eu/info/2018-european-semester-national-reform-programmes-and-stability-convergence-programmes_en.

of ensuring that social security systems remain acceptable and reliable for benefit recipients and contributors alike. In the area of statutory pension insurance, legislators have committed to taking steps, by 2025, to stabilise benefit levels and to limit contribution rates, with the help of federal subsidies if necessary.

- The pension entitlements of people with reduced earning capacity are to be improved.
- Periods of child-rearing are to be taken into account to a greater extent.
- Federal transfers to the statutory health insurance system will improve.
- German government is making it easier for older people to integrate into the labour market, further expanding the provision of all-day childcare in order to improve work-life balance, and taking steps to ensure that the immigration of skilled labour can be managed in a targeted way.

– It is also making efforts to enhance productivity, for example, by encouraging skills development among the working population in combination with life-long learning.

– In response to demographic challenges, the federal government has appointed a commission on intergenerational fairness that will look at ways to secure and develop the pension system.

According to Caritas Germany, the situation and problems described in the COUNTRY REPORTS and the reforms foreseen in NATIONAL REFORM PROGRAMMES do not adequately reflect the reality of poverty and social exclusion (ranked as 3 out of 5). The national reform programme is short and thus it is impossible to fully reflect the reality of problems experienced. However, Caritas Germany acknowledges that this time the national reform programme has a much larger focus on poverty and social exclusion in comparison to previous years. Caritas Germany disagrees in some parts with the analysis, but it gives the overall picture of the topics mentioned in the national reform programme.

7. The use of EU Funds 2014–2020

In the multiannual financial framework 2014–2020 within the Europe 2020 strategy, the fight against poverty and social exclusion has been considered to be on an equal footing with other EU targets and objectives. In the regulations adopted for this new period, more measures have been put in place to ensure that the challenges around social inclusion are addressed: 20% of the European Social Fund (ESF) should be dedicated to policies and measures aimed at promoting social inclusion, and a specific fund has been implemented to support Member States in the fight against poverty and social exclusion: the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD).

The ESF is used to fight poverty and social inclusion through different approaches at the federal and regional level. Although the ESF is still mainly seen as a labour market activation tool there are many programmes to combat poverty and social exclusion. At the federal level, there are, for example, programmes which aim to re-integrate the long-term unemployed into the labour market, help mothers with a migrant background, and support young people in neighbourhoods where many poor and excluded families live. About 38% of the federal ESF is used for social inclusion and to combat poverty. Around 70,000 long term unemployed, 150,000 migrants and 100,000 marginalised young

people are supposed to benefit from ESF funded projects.

Caritas Germany has been indirectly involved in the implementation of both the ESF and of FEAD.

Caritas Germany considers that ESF resources have been used quite adequately to fight poverty and social exclusion (ranked as 3 out of 5) and FEAD resources in a completely adequate way (rated 5).

8. Deutscher Caritasverband – Caritas Germany promising practices

One positive and innovative practice, that is proving to be particularly successful, has been recently implemented by Caritas Germany and it relates to access to health care services.

The programme is called **Bella – Support Women in Poverty Prostitution**. In Stuttgart, about 1,400 women are involved in prostitution, 89% of whom are female migrants, mainly from Eastern Europe. The women mainly want to secure the existence of their own families in their country of origin. However, poverty prostitution usually entails very difficult living and housing conditions and is often associated with psychological and physical problems. The female immigrants often do not understand German, are often not registered, usually have no health insurance and live in anonymity. “Bella” supports women who work in the sector of poverty prostitution in Stuttgart by talking to them, and explaining and leading them to the mainstream support system. Streetwork, (visiting) counselling, face to face contact, offers of mediation and (long-

term) accompaniment are the essential measures provided. Safeguarding housing, the psychological stabilisation of women and improving their health situation are key. The long-term goal for many of the women is the establishment of an independent life outside of prostitution. The project is aimed at homeless prostitutes or those at risk of losing their homes, as well as newly arrived prostitutes from the EU. “Bella” is funded by FEAD. Regarding the results, 80% of the women reached have accepted further support/counselling services. Many of the women could be transferred to emergency housing assistance, among others in assisted living, as well as to a network partner who supports their professional (new) (re)orientation process. This gives women a realistic chance of escaping from poverty prostitution. The success factors of the project show that holistic and long-term support for the women is often necessary as financial security, housing, living and working must all go hand in hand.

Conclusions

On the basis of its experience, Caritas Germany regards access to most social rights as generally good, apart from housing which is considered less accessible than the other services.

- Public Employment Services perform well but not for all, as two groups of people are excluded or have delayed access: asylum seekers and migrants who recently migrated to Germany.
- Housing is not easily accessible for vulnerable groups such as homeless people, people with addictions or refugees.
- 300,000 places in early childhood education and care services are lacking, and for children from disadvantaged backgrounds the services are less affordable.

Recommendations

Caritas Germany recommends, at national and local level, the promotion of changes and reforms, in particular in the following areas:

At national level

- Recommendation 1: Improve public employment measures for specific target groups**
Enhance the availability of tailor-made labour market measures, in particular for people furthest way from the labour market; improve the access for asylum seekers and migrants; ensure the actual flexibility of labour market measures through suitable settings.

At national and regional level

- Recommendation 2: Invest in the quality of early childhood care services**
Invest in the children-staff ratio and the training of the educators; make funding more constant and link it to issues of quality.

At national level and local level

- Recommendation 3: Invest in housing policies**
Increase the availability of affordable housing by investing in the construction of additional social housing; use instruments at local level to stop ever-increasing housing prices; adjust the measures of benefit payments for individuals who are struggling to meet their housing costs.



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