



# CHILD POVERTY

LISTEN TO THE VOICES  
OF CHILDREN IN POVERTY!



# Introduction

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In compiling this publication Caritas Europa wanted to give voice to some of the children and young people across Europe who are living in poverty. This is therefore not a statistical analysis of child poverty. It is, however, worth remembering that according to Eurostat figures in 2012, 28.1% of children (aged 0–17) in the EU-28 were at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

This publication complements photographic evidence compiled of children living in poverty across Europe and displayed in the European Parliament by Caritas Europa. Both the children and their parents have generously contributed to this project in the hope that the children's voices will not only be heard but also listened to as Europe 2020 moves forward. For this brave generosity and action we thank and applaud them. This project builds upon an earlier publication: "The Caritas Europa Ten Pack of Recommendations to Reduce Child Poverty".

This latest publication, 'Listen to the Voices of Children in Poverty!' presents to the people of Europe, and especially to our politicians, the lived experiences voiced by children of their:

- Home life
- Social life
- School life,

and the impact of employment or lack of it on their young lives. Child poverty is a phenomenon closely linked to family poverty and no solution to child poverty will succeed unless it addresses family poverty and particularly the situation of parents in low paid employment. The precarious nature of paid employment across Europe makes it almost impossible for parents to know with certainty that they can avoid unemployment and prevent their children falling into poverty. Today, across Europe it is becoming increasingly evident that the peace and prosperity of the state requires investment in the social well-being of all, particularly our children.

This publication concludes with some case studies which reveal the complexity in which home, social and school life, together with employment, weave together to create a web of poverty in which children and of course their families, are suffering. A month in the life of a child is a very long time; ask any parent whose child is on school holiday or any child who is just bored. In 21st Century Europe, tackling child poverty should be a priority, to talk of the rights of children is not enough, we need to make rights a reality and we need to give children what we owe them: "Mankind owes to the child the best it has to give" (United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child. 20th November, 1959).

Caritas Europa hopes that the voices of children in poverty will inspire you to make a difference to their lives and in so doing to make a better future for all of us in Europe.

This publication is the result of joint work done in close and friendly cooperation by expert staff of a number of contributing member organisations and a special task force on child poverty. My greatest gratitude goes to Dr Rosemary Keenan (Westminster Catholic Children's Society, member of Caritas Social Action Network), who collected testimonies from children across Europe and put them into the context appearing in this report, as well as to Thorfinnur Omarsson from the Caritas Europa Secretariat for coordinating the complex visual composition.







# 01 | Home Life

Home is perhaps the most important place for a child and their family. It is where they should be most relaxed, safe and happy. It is where they should be able to spend time together, bonding as a family unit and learning to develop loving and stable relationships with others. From this nurturing environment they should grow in confidence and self-esteem and be able to integrate fully into the wider society in which they live.

Yet, in talking of their home lives, children across Europe revealed how their home environment often set them apart from others, not least because poor children feel ashamed of their home environment and cannot reciprocate the hospitality that richer children can afford. Food was described as inadequate and in short supply within their home. The physical homes in which the children lived were often experienced as overcrowded, cold and damp, which in turn had an impact upon their physical and mental health and their ability to do school homework.

Within their homes they often lacked even simple toys with which to play and which are so essential for their learning and development. Similarly, lack of IT at home limited their ability to communicate with others and to have access to information to assist them in their studies and so improve their longer-term employment opportunities.

The neighbourhoods in which poor children lived were described by them as having under resourced play facilities and were generally areas in which they felt unsafe and threatened. Children were aware of how dangerous the area was and described how it impinged upon their ability to feel relaxed and to sleep at nights. Movingly, some of the children described how they dreamt of making homes for all children better and how when problems arose they tried to help each other.

Below are just a few of **their observations** on home life:

“My mother and father cannot live together because they fight a lot. I am very sad because we do not live together. I do not like having to carry my belongings between two separate houses. I don’t like the feeling of not knowing who is going to pick me up from school and I am afraid. I do not like it when they yell at each other.”

Josef, age 6 years, Malta

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“We don’t have necessary food and clothes or a television because we don’t have parents and my grandmother’s pension is not enough for these purchases.”

Khoren, age 13 years, Armenia

“I don’t want to go to my mum’s because she always gives me chores to do and yells at me.”

Elias, age 9 years, Greece





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“We do not have adequate living conditions, the roof is leaking, we can’t close the windows, we feel fear while we sleep. In one word we do not feel safe.”

Goran, age 10 years, Montenegro



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“Our neighbourhood is funny, in the club they are disguised and playing good music but sometimes I wish I could sleep at night. They make so much noise and I don’t feel secure if their door is open next to my window.”

Eva, age 11 years, Luxemburg

“I wish I had some of the toys at home that we have here in the Atelier (Caritas day care center), then I wouldn’t be bored at weekends.”

Cindy, age 10 years, Luxemburg

“At the end of the month we do not have much money and the money we have is needed to buy food.”

Jessica, age 12 years, Germany

“The water and electricity have been cut off from my home because my parents cannot afford to pay the bills. I am very worried.”

Mary, age 9 years, Malta



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“I wish our house didn’t leak during the winter. I wish it was warm and dry, then we would be healthy, but we are always ill.”

Avdil, age 6 years, Montenegro

“I haven’t travelled abroad as my parents cannot afford it.”

Dan, age 12 years, Cyprus

“We live in a home which is of one room. In the front my uncle made a bulkhead from plywood and nylon. There is no water inside our home but outside there is a fountain which we share with our neighbour.”

Gegana, age 12 years, Bulgaria

“We live in a small cargo-container where we have only one table. After meals my mother cleans the table, covers it with a cloth, only then can I do my homework.”

Artashes, age 14 years, Armenia

“Our house is small, we don’t have separate rooms to spend our time in, our family has six members and our accommodation is not adequate.”

Bogdan, age 12 years, Montenegro

“I would like to go on holidays with my family, with everyone... to the sea! I would also like to change my room a little; have flowers on the walls.”

Maxime, age 8 years, France

“I would love to have my own bedroom because I share with my brother and we are squashed. I can’t have my friends for sleepovers as there is no room in our flat.”

Mark, age 7 years, London, England



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“I have six brothers and sisters, some of them are already working. We all sleep together in one room on mattresses. In our room we also have a writing desk.”

Manca, age 10 years, Slovenia

“I live at home just with my mum. We have moved many times, because we do not have money to pay for high rents. I have a father who has a great apartment, but he doesn’t want my mum and me to live with him. Once a month I live with him for a whole week. At that time, he pampers me and buys me everything I want. My mum gets mad at him when she comes to get me. She says to him that he pampers me too much and that she cannot afford to do this for me. My mum is always angry at him, as he is not paying maintenance for me and he doesn’t help us with money to pay the bills.”

Jani, age 10 years, Slovenia

“I would like to live in a house because in my apartment, there are a lot of us. We are tightly packed and it’s quite annoying.”

Lorenzie, age 10 years, France

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# 02 | Social Life

Playing and taking part with others in activities and sports helps children to develop their sense of belonging; it enables them to learn what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior within a society. The voices of children in poverty speak of their limited access to such opportunities, either through lack of money to join in teams and outings or through the bullying they experience from peers because they are perceived as different or inferior because they do not have the right kit and equipment for such activities.

Children living in poverty are acutely aware that they are different. Not only do they compare themselves to their peers and have that comparison thrust upon them in their day-to-day interaction with others, they see it in the media and particularly through advertising. Second hand, ill-fitting, unfashionable and inadequate clothing for the weather, which may be in need of repair or dirty because the home has no washing machine or easy access to hot water or the family cannot afford detergent – all add up to make children living in poverty different. They stand out as 'other' and as such are often ostracized and bullied.

Poor children cannot share their stories of holidays, whether at home or abroad, nor can they talk of trips to theme parks or other places of interest. This reduces their life experiences and reinforces their sense of place in this world, in a non-verbal communication they learn that there are places that poor children and people do not go and people with whom they do not mix.

Below **the children speak for themselves:**

“Everybody’s laughing at me and I don’t understand why. They say that I stink and that my clothes are horrible. It makes me sad, I don’t have many friends!”

Funny, age 13 years, Luxemburg

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“I dream of being a white, clean and pretty girl.”

Semra, age 7 years, Bulgaria



“If we just had somewhere to play, and just one ball, that would make me happier than anything else. We’ve never had toys, my little sister always speaks about dolls. I would like to buy her one.”

Goran, age 10 years, Montenegro

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“I train in athletics. It is very difficult for my parents to pay the money for training. We are often without money, and then my mother asks the coach to defer the payment. I don’t go to preparations as we don’t have the money. The coach does not understand that we have money problems and that my mother has nowhere to get more money.”

Boris, age 12 years, Slovenia

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“I would like to go to the movies but my parents cannot afford the ticket.”

Maria, age 11 years, Cyprus

“I got 2 rubles on my birthday, and they were very precious for me. I take them every day with me and keep them in my pocket. I want to live in happiness without any troubles.”

Lena, age 13 years old, Moldova

“Aloneness is something that you feel; that you are not important. Nobody asks how you are doing. It’s hurts.”

Helmi, age 15 years, Finland



“I would like to go on a road trip with my parents, brother and sister. We never go anywhere, we are always struggling to survive... I wish to go somewhere else and forget all our troubles just for one day”.

Voarem, age 15 years, Montenegro

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“I am suffering a lot because my mother cannot buy toys that I like. She is always sick and she is following a programme of rehabilitation. She is not working at the moment. I am sad because I am not like the other children.”

Maria, age 13 years, Malta



“One of my peers is on medication (tranquilizers) for emotional stability because he has problems at home – he is conscious about it as he shares this with his mates.”

Jacob, age 10 years, Malta

“I wear sports shoes in winter, because I don’t have anything else. For this reason I often become very sick.”

Sarikyan, age 11 years, Armenia

“Houses next to ours have been left to be ruined and smashed up because people do not have the money to do them up or buy them.”

Alan, age 16 years, Liverpool, England

“I can’t have any friends around to play as there is no room in our house.”

Shahara, age 8, London, England

“Why must I go to my mother’s home when there is no electricity and water there?”

Asen, age 11 years, street child from Bulgaria





# 03 | School Life

Education is an essential element for 'getting on in life'. School is an environment in which children living in poverty should be able to learn the skills necessary to go on and obtain the qualifications needed to find paid employment and so move onto the path that may lead them out of poverty. Despite this, the mere fact of their poverty can hold them back. Not having the right clothes, the fare for transport to get them to school or even the most basic of essentials, such as a pencil, can impede their progress.

Children in poverty speak of being bullied by peers; over-crowding at home and not having a quiet space in which to do their homework; not having the money to join in extra-curricula school clubs, activities and trips. The school itself may suffer from being in a poor area with the most capable teachers being less willing to teach there. Added to this the school building being in a poor state of repair and maintenance can also contribute to set the children apart from their peers and lower their sense of self-esteem and confidence.

Such factors can act as barriers to children already living in poverty ever having a sense of being able to get out of it or of overcoming the hurdles before them. Parents and the home environment may not be able to support the child fully, not necessarily out of neglect, but through such things as parents being unable to afford resources like books and a computer.



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“I know, what it means to be alone. I stand in the school hall, everybody looks at you, but nobody says, ‘hello’.”

Eerik, age 14 years, Finland

“I do not go to school, I never went, because I didn’t have the right clothing or footwear. I never had money for transportation, textbooks or notebooks. I have to work to help with money. I’ve lost hope of ever getting an education.”

Ferdi, age 17 years, Montenegro



“I asked my father to buy some stationery for a school mate because he doesn’t have money to buy it.”

Isaac, age 11 Years, Malta

“We have no books at home.”

Petar, age 8 years, Bulgaria

Our school is really good for support. If I was in a mainstream school I would be hiding in the toilets everyday.”

Laura, age 15 years, Liverpool, England

“I take care of my sisters myself, that’s why I don’t have time to do lessons. We cannot afford kindergarden for them.”

Garik, age 12 years, Armenia

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“My parents cannot afford my school snack so the school has to provide for me.”

Constantine, age 11 years, Cyprus



“Our school has no money that’s why our schoolyard is so dangerous and boring, when we are visiting other schools they have a beautiful schoolyard and the building is not so old. The heating is so old it is too hot or too cold and when another school is visiting us they are laughing at us. So we don’t want visitors anymore!”

Killian, age 8 years, Luxemburg

“Every day I’m telling my mum that I need a rubber and a new pencil, she’s telling me that she will buy it but she is always forgetting it and then I get punished but it’s not my fault!”

Beatriz, age 9 years, Luxemburg

“If people at school know you’re poor they make you feel like rubbish... and they show off.”

John, age 9 years, Salford, England

“I am a fostered child and I don’t have friends. At school, I have problems concentrating and none of my school mates help me. Some students bully me.”

Adrian, age 14 years, Malta

“We live with my grandparents in a two-bedroom apartment. I have two brothers and two sisters. I do not have my own room. We are sleeping with my parents, brothers and sister in one room, Grandma and Grandpa are sleeping in the kitchen. We have no peace, they often quarrel. It is difficult for me to learn in such a situation. Several times my smaller brothers have dirtied my books or pulled out pages.”

Maja, age 9 years, Slovenia

“I do not get on well with my class mates because they do not want to play with me and I am alone.”

Daniela, age 12 years, Germany

“I live with my aunt, and I would like to have my mother come back home, and to have many toys, a new bed and for our home to be renovated. The school is very cool and my class teacher is cool too. I also love to dance and sing.”

Nastya, age 9 years, Moldova







# 04 | Employment

Children and young people in poverty are aware of the world of work and the impact that it has upon their young lives. Whether it is helping the family to make money and not having time for their own leisure activities; lack of money in the home because of unemployment; the illness of parents or the ends to which people have to go to make money – employment looms over them as a causal factor in their poverty.

The voices we heard did not speak of employment with pride. The children spoke of parents in employment being too tired to spend time with them at the weekend; parents being depressed and crying because of redundancy and unemployment; being separated from their parents who were living abroad in order to earn money and even the humiliation of having to beg or ask others for money. The relationship of their parents and even their own relationship to the employment market is clearly a cause of concern and worry for children as they explain below:

“When my dad gets a job again we can buy new furniture and he will repair the shower, then I will get a mobile phone and the bullying will be a thing of the past!”

Julien, age 11 years, Luxemburg

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“I know what it is to be unemployed: it’s not having a job and having no income. My mother has no job but my grandparents help and offer me things.”

João, age 6 years, Portugal

“My family lives modestly. My father had a job, but now he is out of a work. He is disabled. He has a credit (loan) for our apartment. Each month when he pays it, we have only 300 euros for everything else. My mother begs at humanitarian organisations to help us survive. It hurts when she doesn’t have any euros which she can give me when I go to school so that I can have a treat. My friends have treats, but I never will. I know that we do not have enough money, but I would at least like to be equal to my classmates sometimes.”

Amir, age 13 years, Slovenia

“I want my mum to go out with us more often, but at the weekend she has to rest, because she is tired, that’s why I wish she didn’t have to work so much – then everything would be all right!”

Cindy, age 10 years, Luxemburg

“I am absent from lessons very often as I have to do seasonal work with my parents.”

Ani, age 15 years, Armenia

“When I will grow up I will go abroad for work.”

Victor, age 11 years, Moldova

“I wish dad or mum had work or received social assistance, because it is difficult and humiliating that we always have to beg for money so that we can buy food.”

Voarem, age 15 years, Montenegro

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“I do not want to have a lot of money because if I spent it there would be no other opportunity for me to get more money than by becoming a prostitute.”

Stela, age 12 years, Bulgaria



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“I like to help my parents at the fair or on festivals but sometimes I just want to play like the other children and often I’m tired because it is getting late but I don’t want to sleep in the car because it scares me.”

Lee, age 11 years, Luxemburg

“I live with my grandparents because my mum and dad went to work abroad. I help my grandparents. In my free time I look after my younger brothers and sisters, because I am the eldest child. My brothers and sisters are still very small and all the time we have to look after them. They are my dolls, I play with them and without this we have no toys at home.”

Anka, age 10 years, Banya, Bulgaria

“People who haven’t got a job have to stay in and sit around so they get depressed and drink.”

Georgia, age 15 years, Liverpool, England



© NIKOS PILOS, CARITAS GREECE

“I wouldn’t like my mummy to have a job as she has to stay at home and look after us.”

Shahara, aged 8 years, London, England

“My mother is unemployed and so we have less money. This year I’m going to swim but I’m not going to have music lessons because we have less money. My mother is unemployed because the company said that they had no other place for her work. She was sad and I know she cries about it.”

Bruno, age 9 years, Portugal

“My mother is depressed, she cannot work and she is always sick. I am feeling alone and lost. The social worker is helping us.”

Julienne, age 10 years, Malta





# Case Studies

*The case studies below give a greater sense of what it means to be a child growing up in a family living in poverty within Europe today. No two families living in poverty are the same, each is unique, each is precious and each is worthy of respect by virtue of their shared humanity. Yet, as is evident, these children and families struggle to get by in life rather than get on. The way in which the poor are perceived has changed. As Rosie from England says, "It feels like a crime to have children." Like the children's voices, these case studies reveal the depressing reality of life lived amongst the poor, the social exclusion which they experience, the lack of opportunity and shame they feel.*

*The price paid for any growing divide between the rich and the poor within Europe is paid most heavily by the most vulnerable – not least our children and the generations to come. Caritas believes that we have the ability to address the need; now more than ever we need the will to do so. This is the call to action that Caritas makes across Europe with its Ten Pack of Recommendations to Reduce Child Poverty and this latest publication; giving voice to the children themselves, together with our photographic exhibition of children and families in poverty. We hope that you will make the eradication of child poverty a top priority across Europe.*

## LONDON, ENGLAND



Rosie said, "It feels like a crime to have children."

Rosie is the mother of four children, her 7 year old son has Down's syndrome and also has severe behavioral difficulties which impacts upon the whole family. Her partner is long term unemployed despite having qualifications. They live in a two bedroom flat on the 2nd floor of a block of flats that has no lifts. Each day Rosie has to climb up and down the stairs with her 2 year old and seven year old sons. Carrying shopping adds to the burden. The flat is very small and she has to store the children's clothes in "bin bags" on the landing as she has no space indoors. Her seven year old son suffers from sleep apnea, so every night she is up three or four times. His behaviour is very disruptive and as all her children share one room; this disturbs the sleep of the whole family.

Rosie lives on limited funds; she buys all the children's clothes from charity shops and relies on the kindness of others to give her clothes. She has never bought herself any new clothes. Gas and electricity price rises have meant that the heating is only on for short periods even in the coldest weather.

The school holidays add extra pressure as she lives in a densely populated area where there are no green areas

for the children to play. The local park is inhabited by gangs of youths who take drugs and drink alcohol. Any activities that are available cost money, an expense that Rosie cannot afford. The four children have to spend all the school holidays in a small two bedroom flat. They cannot join their friends as there is no money to go to the cinema or bowling. They do not have the latest fashion and feel different from their peers.

Recently Rosie's 17 year old son went to a prestigious venue in London to sit an exam. He told his mother that he felt different from all the other boys there. They all had new leather shoes whilst he had old plastic shoes. Rosie's children often ask why they cannot have the same as other children.

Attending school provides more expense, when her two eldest sons started secondary school they were given a grant of £100.00 to buy school uniforms. Each year the children grow out of their uniform and are also required to take part in different sporting activities which means they also need new sports kits. However, there is no more help with buying the children clothes, furthermore the uniforms have to be bought at the school uniform shop.



## ARMENIA

Michael is 15 years old and has Down's Syndrome. Michael can walk, speak, has good vision and hearing. Although he performs activities on his own, his mental abilities are underdeveloped.

Michael has very caring and attentive parents. Michael's family has no house. They live in a container, with no utilities. From time to time, to ease the conditions they move to their relative's house for a short time.

Michael lives in severe socio-economic conditions. His father has a visual disability and has no job. Michael's mother also has serious health problems: arthritis and spine problems. In spite of her health condition she still takes very good care of her son and her husband.

Michael is registered at a special school but cannot attend the school because of transportation problems. Sadly he cannot take a public bus by himself; he needs somebody to guide him. The Armenian law states that children with disabilities can take the public bus for free but it does not include the parent/carer. If he attended the school regularly he could make significant progress. Michael's family income consists of a disability pension and state allowance, approximately 90,000 AMD (170 Euro) which is hardly enough to pay for medicine.

There are cases when a disabled child cannot make many improvements but Michael's case is different. He has the potential to improve but due to financial problems he is left without education.

Poverty has a negative impact on disabled children and their families. It directly impacts on the possible improvements a child can make. Poor housing conditions, lack of nutritious food and regular medication prevents the developmental progress of the child. Whilst people with disabilities are vulner-

able to poverty; disabled children who have parents with disabilities are even more vulnerable. This is the case with Michael.

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## GERMANY



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Kevin was born as the third child of Marion and Jürgen. Jürgen has no qualifications and works in a low-skilled job with periods of unemployment. Marion only works part-time with short hours. The family gets transfers: These vary between unemployment benefits (when Jürgen has no job) and additional benefits for the children. They constantly live at risk of poverty.

When Marion discovered that she was pregnant with Kevin, the couple were unhappy because of their financial concerns. However, they decided to keep the baby. When Kevin was two years old the family had to move from their 100 square meter flat into a much smaller flat because they could no longer afford the rent. The new flat is in a shabby looking house and has very old sanitary installations. Since the move, the family have not invited friends or friends of the children to their home. They are too ashamed. This also means that they do not celebrate the birthdays of the children. They

also lack the money for an off-site party or celebration. Kevin had problems in the football team which he joined. Due to lack of money he could not afford football boots or the photo for the player's license.

When Kevin was three years old, the youth welfare office wrote to the family because they had forgotten to attend the screening examination for Kevin. This was out of stress, says Marion. The doctor diagnosed delayed development and prescribed early intervention. This helped.

At seven years of age Kevin went to school. He got new clothes and school materials. The family had to take out a loan to afford these. However, Kevin was still unhappy because he had an old satchel, previously belonging to his older sister which was very 'girlish'. Even the pictures taken on his first day at school were too expensive and his family could not afford to buy one.

## GREECE

Katerina is 17 years old. One year after she was born, her brother Spyros was born. They lived together with their parents, their grandmother and their uncle on an island.

When she was very young Katerina's father and her uncle became involved in illegal activities, including drugs. Her uncle was imprisoned, her father lost his job and her grandmother became ill. An aunt took Spyros to live with her in Athens. Katerina continued living with her family on the island.

The environment on the island was rather poor and appropriate care was unavailable. Katerina's mother was unable to raise her properly and provide her with an appropriate education. Her progress and her participation in school were insufficient. Katerina lived in seclusion because of her family's illegal activities. Life at home became extremely hard for

her. She became undernourished due to their poor financial situation. Katerina had no toys, books, clothes etc. She suffered from poor health and her personal hygiene was neglected. Her mother had three more children from extramarital affairs.

At the age of 8 and with Caritas' care she was sent to Athens to a special care centre for children. She has limited contact with her parents and her psychosocial behaviour is such that it is difficult for her to live outside the care centre.

Katerina would like a diary so that she can write about her boyfriend; she would also like some cosmetics such as lipstick and mascara. Katerina does not want to go back to her family and feels comfortable and happy at the care centre, because she feels protected, something that she did not feel at either of her parents' home.



## LUXEMBURG

Julien is a boy of 11 years. Like his parents he was born in Luxembourg. His parents speak Luxembourgish, German, French, Portuguese and a bit of English. Julien's parents grew up in the city of Luxembourg, not far away from where they live now. They have never been able to break out of the cycle of poverty. Both sets of grand-parents came from Portugal and tried to earn enough money to survive in a rich country like Luxembourg and to offer a better future for their children. Over time hopes have been destroyed. Julien's own parents were not, as had been hoped, successful at school.

They live in the urban residential district of Pfaffenthal which is known for its difficulties, there are many immigrants and socially disadvantaged families. If teachers can make a choice about where to teach, most of them will not select this school because of the pupils' poverty, language, unsupportive parents, poor motivation and the bad reputation of the school. The education level is so low that even children with good results from that school have problems being successful at further education.

Julien's father got a job with poor employment conditions, and his mother tried to earn some money from jobs as a cleaner so that they could buy a small

house and start to renovate it. The house was in a miserable condition. As they had so little money, Julien's father had to do everything himself; it took him five years to improve the house.

During this time the three children grew up in a construction area and often didn't have the facility to take a shower or to wear clean clothes. Their parents needed to use the income for the house repairs. The children had inappropriate furniture and were always hungry. As a result they ate a lot when they got to the day care center, which also provided a secure place where nobody laughed at them because they had body odour or second hand and old clothes that didn't fit them properly. The children's health and development was also affected. For example, when Julien was in need of spectacles, he had to wait six months until his mother could effort to buy them.

The day care center provides a safety net between the parents, school and other institutions to help the family improve their conditions. Julien likes to come to the daycare center because it gives him access to excursions, books and toys, which his parents still cannot afford. Sadly, there are times when his parents could not even afford to pay the daycare centre, so Julien has been very sad to have to stay at home.

## MOLDOVA

Olya, is 5 years old and goes to kindergarten in the village where she lives with her HIV positive mother. She was fortunate to escape the mother-to-baby transmission of HIV. It is hard to live in a village and to be stigmatised by your neighbours because your mother is HIV positive. Despite the stigma, Olya is happy to be with her mum, even if she does not have the clothes, dolls or sweets that her peers have.

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