

2.6 million more children plunged into poverty in rich countries during 'Great Recession'

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EXCERPTS

A new UNICEF report shows that 2.6 million children have sunk below the poverty line in the world's most affluent countries since 2008, bringing the total number of children in the developed world living in poverty to an estimated 76.5 million.

Innocenti Report Card 12, *Children of the Recession: The impact of the economic crisis on child well-being in rich countries*, ranks 41 countries in the OECD and the European Union according to whether levels of child poverty have increased or decreased since 2008. It also tracks the proportion of 15-24 year-olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The report includes Gallup World Poll data on people's perceptions of their economic status and hopes for the future since the recession began.

While early stimulus programmes in some countries were effective in protecting children, by 2010 a majority of countries pivoted sharply from budget stimulus to budget cuts, with negative impact on children, particularly in the Mediterranean region.

"Many affluent countries have suffered a 'great leap backwards' in terms of household income, and the impact on children will have long-lasting repercussions for them and their communities," said Jeffrey O'Malley, UNICEF's Head of Global Policy and Strategy.

"UNICEF research shows that the strength of social protection policies was a decisive factor in poverty prevention. All countries need strong social safety nets to protect children in bad times and in good - and wealthy countries should lead by example, explicitly committing to eradicate child poverty, developing policies to offset economic downturns, and making child well-being a top priority," O'Malley said.

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"Significantly, the report found that the social policy responses of countries with similar economic circumstances varied markedly with differing impacts on children," O'Malley said.

Read the full release online at UNICEF's press centre ^[3]

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