

POVERTY IN FRANCE



European Year for
Combating Poverty and
Social Exclusion

2010
European Year
for Combating
Poverty and
Social Exclusion

Social Europe

Lycée Etienne Oehmichen Châlons-en-Champagne / FRANCE

<http://www.lyc-oehmichen.ac-reims.fr/>

“Europe joins forces to fight poverty and social exclusion

Almost 84 million Europeans live at risk of poverty, which means they face insecurity, and go without what most people often take for granted.

Inspired by its founding principle of solidarity, the European Union has joined forces with its Member States to make **2010 the European Year For Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion**. The key objectives were to raise public awareness about these issues and renew the political commitment of the EU and its Member States to combat poverty and social exclusion.

National and local events took place in every EU Member State, plus Norway and Iceland. Activities included awareness raising campaigns, workshops and information seminars in schools. Films, magazines and other information material were produced to help people understand how poverty and social exclusion affect their communities, and for those directly affected, increase awareness of their rights.”

Some figures

Our social protection systems are among the most highly-developed in the world and yet, today, many Europeans still live in poverty.

- 79 million people live below the poverty line (set at 60% of their country's median income). That represents 16%-17% of Europe's population.
- One European in ten lives in a household where nobody works.
- For 8% of Europeans, having a job is not enough to work one's way out of poverty.
- In most Member States, children are more exposed to this scourge than the rest of the population: 19% of children live under the threat of poverty.

<http://www.2010againstpoverity.eu/>

What is poverty?

Poverty is the state of having little or no money to afford basic human needs such as food, access to drinking water, health care, clothes, accommodation, education and good living conditions in general.

Figures in France (2008):

- between 4.3 and 7.8 million people
- 7.1% to 13.2% of total population
- 9th rank in Europe
- official poverty threshold : 878€ per month for a single person

Figures in Europe (2008) :

- 82 millions European citizens
- 16.5%

Who are the poor in France?

- **The working poor**

Having a job does not always protect people from the risk of poverty. In-work poverty is linked to low pay, low skills, precarious employment and often involuntary part-time working. The working poor are often distinguished from the poor who are supported by government aid or charity. 8.5% in Europe and 6.5% in France.

- **The Elderly**

There are about 990,000 people (10% of pensioners) above 65 years old living below the poverty threshold. 600,000 elderly people depend on the minimum pension given by the government. This number has been increasing and their situation is worsening.

- **Children and young adults**

Half the poor are less than 30 years old:

- one child out of ten lives
- 12.7% of 20-24 year-olds
- 700,000 of 20-29 year-olds

- **Women**

The female poverty rate is at 7.4% whereas male poverty is at 6.9%. They represent 53.5% of the poor.

- **Single parent households**

Without social transfers, 46% of single parent households live below the poverty line. Most of these single parents are single mothers.

- **Immigrants**

This population has the worst poverty figures. The rates are almost three times higher than the average population's poverty rate.

- **The uneducated**

The lack of diploma is a serious handicap in France and source of unemployment.

	Poverty rate
• No diploma	7.5%
• Diploma of Higher Education (2 years after the baccalaureate)	3.2%
• Working class	8%
• Executives	1.5%

Poverty map

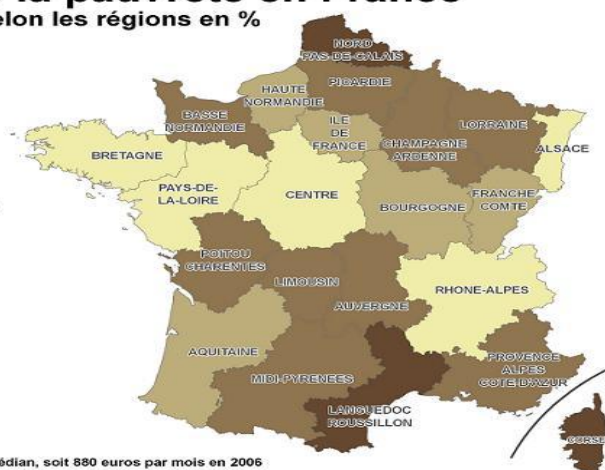
Répartition de la pauvreté en France

Taux de pauvreté* selon les régions en %

Taux de pauvreté (%)

- de 10 à 11,5 % inclus
- de 11,5 à 13,2 % inclus
- de 13,2 à 15,5 % inclus
- de 15,5 à 19,3 %

Moyenne France 13,2 %



* Seuil de 60 % du niveau de vie médian, soit 880 euros par mois en 2006
Source : Insee. Année des données : 2006

Rédaction Mathias IREU - NOVEMBRE 2010

www.inegalites.fr

Alternatives Internationales, Hors Série n°8, December 2010

THE WELFARE STATE

KEY TOOL TO COMBAT POVERTY

LOCAL POLICIES

The local council proposes various aids to help people solve their financial and social problems.

Food

In case of emergency the CCAS (Centre Communal d' Action Sociale – Local social action centre) gives a check to people to enable them to buy food in specific stores.

“Le Marché de Pauline” is a social supermarket. Its customers are families and single people who depend on social aids. The products are sold 10% of their value. The beneficiaries can also participate in cooking, Do-It-Yourself, budgeting and health workshops with social workers.

Housing

Stabilization accommodation: an emergency shelter is offered single women or couples without children in serious financial difficulty.

Temporary accommodation: for single people (men or women), families, battered women...

Social rehabilitation accommodation centre: for a period of 3 to 9 months, this centre accommodates, supports and accompanies people in great financial straits.

Emergency number: 115

Toll free, 24/7, to help the homeless and people sleeping in the streets.

The CCAS (Centre Communal d'Action Sociale)

Three hundred employees (social workers, educators, councillors, nurses, doctors...) work in this public structure to assist and help the families of the district. It is subsidized by the government, the local council and private donations.

Its actions are varied:

- day care centers for children under six
- social aids
- RSA (revenu de solidarité active) – a social benefit aimed at completing low salaries and encouraging beneficiaries to work in order to get out of the total assistance system
- emergency financing to pay electricity bills
- food coupons

Le Contrat urbain de cohésion sociale – Urban contract for Social Cohesion

Offrir une chance à chacun – Everyone is given a chance (no one is to be left out)

The Urban contract for Social Cohesion of Châlons-en-Champagne is a set of actions to help six socially underprivileged neighborhoods. The contract was signed between the City, the government, Social housing and local associations.

The contract is set upon five major priorities:

- The access to employment
- Local economic development
- Housing and living conditions
- Citizenship and prevention of juvenile delinquency
- Health and education

How does the Regional Council fight against poverty?

The Champagne Ardenne Regional Council:

- organizes meetings with local firms to prevent outsourcing of activities and jobs
- shelters for the homeless in winter
- rehabilitation and building of affordable housing

GOVERNMENT POLICIES OF REDISTRIBUTION

One of the responsibilities of the state government is to pursue actions aiming at reducing inequalities and the rate of poverty in the country. The origin of social protection in France dates back to medieval times, with fraternal benefit societies. In the second half of the nineteenth century, systems of social assistance developed gradually, often launched by employers marked by social awareness, then relayed by the first laws. In the early 20th century, modern social insurance was created, offering employees protection against certain risks: accidents, sickness, disability, maternity, old age, death ... During the Second World War, the National Council of Resistance designed the system of Social security, now at the heart of social protection. It was created just after the Liberation, by an order of 4 October 1945, followed by other texts.

Government policy frameworks have since been trying to limit growth in income inequality. Government social policy involves social welfare and protection through a system of redistribution. This redistribution can be pursued through taxation, social transfers and investment in education, health and other social services.

In France, the welfare system costs an annual €500 billion or more than 30% of GDP. Social transfers (such as unemployment, family and housing benefits, free education...) can reduce the risk of poverty by 38%.

Taxation

- Personal income taxes
- Property taxes
- Corporate taxes
- VAT
- ...

Social transfers

- Assistance benefits (Minimum revenue, Aid to Single mothers, Housing benefits, Minimum pensions, unemployment insurance, sickness benefits...)
- Social insurance
- ...

Health care

In the field of social protection, 1999 was characterized in France by the creation of universal sickness cover (CMU) providing everyone, including the most disadvantaged, with access to health care.

A universal entitlement to basic sickness cover on the criteria of residence and which is immediate and permanent and may be free or otherwise depending on the means of the beneficiary. All stable and regular residents in France will automatically become members of the general sickness insurance scheme if they do not already hold an entitlement under another basic scheme, notably linked to a professional activity.

Basic medical treatment is free.

Social housing

Social housing - HLM (*Habitation à Loyer Modéré*) – is intended for families and households whose resources are below a fixed threshold. The income threshold for assessment of eligibility for social housing varies by location and household size. For a family of four in Paris the maximum threshold is around €43,000 a year whilst in the regions it is around €31,000. Tenants of social housing must face a test of their resources every three years. If their income is above an income threshold, they are required to pay an extra charge.

The 'right to housing' in France implies that disadvantaged people suffering poverty or housing difficulty enjoy priority access to social housing. However, people actually have serious difficulty obtaining access to social housing in France, especially in Paris. The 'opposable' right to housing could help some disadvantaged groups, though it has significant limitations.

The Solidarity and Urban Renewal (SRU) Act requires local authorities with more than 35,000 inhabitants (1,500 in the Paris region) to ensure that at least 20 percent of all housing will be social housing by 2020. Some municipalities are thus compelled by law to boost their public housing stocks over a 20-year period or face fines but many are choosing to ignore this obligation. Towns that fail to achieve this goal would be subject to a fine of 152 euros per unit of housing below the quota.

Yet, some prefer to pay fines rather than invest in deeply unpopular social housing projects because paying the fines is cheaper and helps win votes.



<http://www.french-property.com/>

<http://www.france24.com/>

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inst/publications/discussion/dp19408.pdf>

MICROFINANCE

It is a system intended for low-income clients who traditionally lack access to banking and related services.

More broadly, it is a movement whose object is "a world in which as many poor and near-poor households as possible have permanent access to an appropriate range of high quality financial services, including not just credit but also savings, insurance, and fund transfers."

Those who promote microfinance generally believe that such access will help poor people out of poverty.

Often people don't have enough money when they face a need, so they borrow. A poor family might borrow from relatives to buy land, from a moneylender to buy rice, or from a microfinance institution to buy a sewing machine.

Most needs are met through mix of saving and credit.

Funding needs:

- Lifecycle Needs: such as weddings, funerals, childbirth, education, homebuilding, widowhood, old age.
- Personal Emergencies: such as sickness, injury, unemployment, theft, harassment or death.
- Disasters: such as fires, floods, cyclones and man-made events like war or bulldozing of dwellings.
- Investment Opportunities: expanding a business, buying land or equipment, improving housing, securing a job (which often requires paying a large bribe),

In France there are two types of microcredits:

Personal microcredit or social microfinance

It is a loan of less than €3,000 with an average rate of 3.5% to finance small personal projects (driving license, car, house equipments...). This loan is intended for people who cannot get personal loan at the bank. The personal microcredit is also called social microcredit because the beneficiary is always unemployed or a working poor. The money is to be paid back in small installments. People thus feel they are trustworthy.

Professional microcredit

This loan of less than €25,000 is intended for those willing to create or take over a business but do not have enough financial guaranties to obtain a standard loan. To benefit from this type of loan, the borrower must be supported by a network of specialized counselor agencies (France Initiative, France Active, Boutiques de Gestion, Fondation 2ème chance) whose work is to help build up the project and study the business plan.

A NON-GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY

A Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) is a legally constituted organization that operates independently from any government. However it can be funded partially or totally by governments.

According to the World Bank, they are private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development.

French Red Cross:

- **Creation date:** In May 1864.
- **Headquarters:** Paris, France.
- **President / Manager:** Jean-Francois Mattei
- **Logo:**

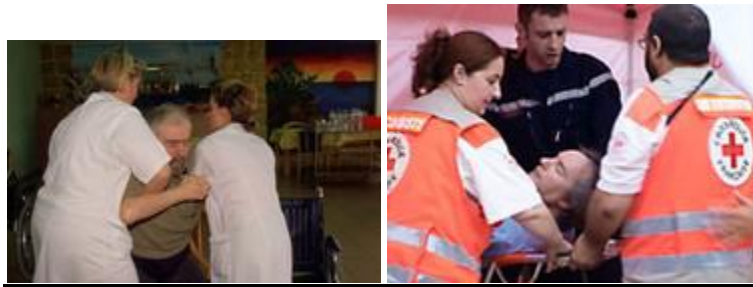


Founded in 1864, the French Red Cross is an association, recognized of public utility since 1945. It was founded to protect human life and health, to ensure respect for all human beings, and to prevent and alleviate human suffering, without any discrimination based on nationality, race, sex, religious beliefs, class or political opinions.

In the field of humanitarian action, the French Red Cross carries out actions to help needy people in France and abroad. With more than 50,000 volunteers and 17,000 employees, it is highly effective.

Model Adriana Karembeu is godmother of the association the French Red Cross.





- **Actions :**

- food aid – 30,000,000 meals are distributed each year
- 45 structures in France
- 1,500 shelter accommodations

www.croix-rouge.fr

CHARITIES

They are charitable associations whose generous actions or donations aid the poor, ill, helpless or homeless.

Secours populaire:

- **Creation date:** In 1945.
- **Headquarters:** 9 / 11 rue Froissart , Paris , Île-de-France .
- **President / Manager:** Julian Lauprêtre .
- **Slogan:** "All that is human is ours"
- **Logo:**



Created in 1945, the People's Relief Association is non profitable. It is financed by donations. The association's mission is to act against poverty and exclusion in France.



www.secourspopulaire.fr

Secours catholique :

- **Creation date:** 8 September 1946 .
- **Headquarters:** Paris , France .
- **President / Manager:** Relieves Francis .
- **Logo:**



This Catholic Aid Association was created on 8 September 1946 by Father Jean Rodhain. It is especially watchful to problems of poverty and exclusion, and seeks to promote social justice.

State-approved in 1962, the association has been declared of national utility in 1988. It is the French branch network of Caritas Internationalis.

Its volunteers help families get in touch with social services. Access to decent housing is one of the organization's main objectives.

NBA CARES



Introduction :

NBA Cares is the league's global community outreach initiative that addresses important social issues such as education, youth and family development, and health and wellness. The NBA, its teams, and players support a range of programs, partners and initiatives that strive to positively impact children and families worldwide. As part of the league's mission to demonstrate leadership in social responsibility, NBA Cares reaches communities through philanthropy, hands-on service and legacy projects. Since October 2005 when NBA Cares was launched, the league, players and teams have raised more than \$145 million for charity, provided more than 1.4 million hours of hands-on service, and built more than 525 places where kids and families can live, learn or play in communities around the world.

Our works :

The NBA and its teams and players have reached children and families near and far, from Boston to Beijing. NBA Cares works with internationally-recognized, youth-serving organizations that are geared toward these key social issues: education, youth and family development and health-related causes. As a long-lasting commitment to the communities and neighborhoods served, NBA Cares creates places for children and families to have places to live, learn or play.



Education :

From to Stay in School to Read to Achieve, the NBA has a long history of supporting education. Teams and players support programs that stress the importance of education and provide the necessary resources and safe places to foster growth that open doors to success in children's lives.

Youth and Family Development:

The game of basketball has the ability to bridge gaps and bring people together. Thanks to the popularity and visibility of the NBA and its teams and players, the NBA has a unique opportunity to use sport as a tool to address important social issues.

Health and Wellness :

NBA Cares works to address the multitude of health and wellness issues that impact people worldwide. These critical issues, such as HIV/AIDS and malaria prevention, and obesity prevention, are supported through NBA Cares programs and partnerships that drive education, fundraising, and awareness.

Live, Learn or Play:

Live, Learn or Play Spaces, including new and refurbished basketball courts, libraries, playgrounds, homes and technology rooms, are created in conjunction with NBA league and team community and business partners. These spaces provide the critical resources that pave the way for children's future success.

NBA Family :



The NBA's community outreach work extends beyond the league, its teams and the players. In fact, the entire NBA family, which includes former players, coaches, referees, parents, wives, community and government officials, corporate partners as well as celebrity fans, plays a vital role in enriching people's lives.

Partnerships :

Thanks to strong partnerships with internationally recognized community organizations, NBA Cares continues to positively impact lives around the world. Business partners have also joined NBA Cares in a joint effort to support projects and activities that provide ample opportunity to address a variety of social issues.

