

*What do EU Cities do against Poverty?*

*Local Governments' Strategies and Programmes to reduce Poverty*

**Institute for Management Accounting**

**Johannes Kepler University Linz**

A-4040 Linz, Altenbergerstraße 69

Univ. Prof.in Dr.in Dorothea Greiling (dorothea.greiling@jku.at)

Melanie Schinnerl, MSc (melanie.schinnerl@jku.at)

Michaela Walch, BSc BSc (michaela.walch@jku.at)

in cooperation with

**Institute of Economics**

**Johannes Kepler University Linz**

o. Univ. Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Friedrich Schneider (friedrich.schneider@jku.at)

**Institute of Societal and Social Policy**

**Johannes Kepler University Linz**

Ass. Prof.in Dr.in Christine Stelzer-Orthofer (christine.stelzer-orthofer@jku.at)

**Association of Public Services and Public Enterprises Austria**

MMag.a Heidrun Maier (heidrun.maier-dekruiff@voewg.at)

**International Centre of Research and Information on the Public, Social and Cooperative**

**Economy (CIRIEC) – Université de Liège, Belgium**

Barbara Sak (ciriec@uliege.be)

**European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services (CEEP) –**

General Secretariat, Brussels, Belgium

Carlotta Astori (Carlotta.astori@ceep.eu)

Poverty is a multidimensional problem – it becomes visible in a wide variety of areas of life and includes economic, social and cultural aspects.

Poverty as a complex problem also requires complex coping and handling strategies. Poverty and the risk of poverty have become permanent challenges in the European Union (EU) after the financial and sovereign debt crisis. The local authorities are faced with the challenge of reducing spatial differences in the districts. The municipalities face considerable demographic, cultural, economic and social challenges. - This brief outline of the problem makes it clear why a study focusing on how cities deal with this challenge is today a socially and economically relevant topic.

Within this project, in the six Western European EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom), where urban poverty is higher than in rural areas over a multi-year period, municipal poverty alleviation approaches will be considered economic sustainability. Policy recommendations are made based on best practices. In order to go beyond an inflationary or popular scientific labeling as "best practices", the project addresses the following research questions:

1. How is municipal success when reducing poverty measured?
2. What are central causes of poverty and challenges when fighting poverty?
3. How is the configuration of the interaction between network actors implementing successful municipal approaches?
4. What are the characteristic of successful urban strategies and interventions?

The multidisciplinary mode of the research project demands a triangular-method approach. The research project applies as research methods the systematic literature review, the document analysis as well as expert-interviews. For interpreting the data project follows a qualitative-interpretive paradigm. Case studies are conducted in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Individual municipal approaches are compared based on deductive, as well as inductive identified characteristics, with the intention of deriving recommendations for suitable municipal approaches from best practice cases.

If you have further questions or need more information, please contact the following e-mail address: <a href="mailto:Projekt-Armut@jku.at">Projekt-Armut@jku.at</a> (AT, DE, GB) or <a href="mailto:Carlotta.astori@ceep.eu">Carlotta.astori@ceep.eu</a> (BE, DK, NL)
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