Stakeholder involvement in the EU Pilot project on comparable reference budgets. Finding the right balance

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Outline

• Reference budgets
• Projects
• Stakeholder involvement
• Added value
• Pitfalls
• Some key factors for successful involvement
Reference budgets

- Illustrative priced baskets of goods and services that represent a targeted living standard, e.g. ‘adequate social participation’

- Used for many purposes: setting minimum income levels, evaluating adequacy, contextualising poverty indicators

- Determining additional income support, debt advice, financial literacy,...

- Various methods, consensus-building is essential
Previous projects

**ImPRovE (FP7): 7 countries, 2012-2016**

**EU Pilot Project: 28 countries, 2014-2015**

**EU and national dimension**

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Results

Total ImPRovE reference budgets by basket, couple with 2 kids (EUR/month), 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Private Tenant</th>
<th>Outright Owner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budapest</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcelona</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milan</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antwerp</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helsinki*</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Housing (private tenant)
- Housing (owner)
- Food
- Clothing
- Rest and leisure
- Personal and health care
- Safe childhood
- Maintaining social relations
- Mobility
Figure 4. The low cost food basket expressed as a percentage of the at-risk-of-poverty threshold for a single person (woman) in 24 countries*, 2013
Stakeholder involvement

• **EU level**: European Commission, Indicator Sub-Group (SPC), European Minimum Income Network, European Anti-Poverty Network, FEANTSA, Caritas-Europe, European Trade Union Institute, Business Europe, ...

• **National level:**
  - **Finland**: Trade unions, Political parties, Associations (Home economics, parental associations, students associations), Child welfare agencies, EAPN Finland, The National Institute of Health and Welfare, The Consumer Research Centre
  - **Luxembourg**: Ministry of Social Affairs (funder), NGOs, Social Welfare Offices, Ministry of Health
  - **Spain**: NGOs and Charities, Parents’ associations and schools, Barcelona Town Hall, Ministries
Stakeholder involvement

- Funding
- Steering / advisory Committee
- Preparation of baskets of essential goods and services
- Discussing acceptability
- Dissemination and support
Why stakeholder involvement?

• Build consensus around indicators
  - Increase support (esp. if wide range of opinions)
  - Reality check
  - Increase their use
  - Improve motivation, interpretation and explanation

• Support development

• Disseminate results
  - Make sure they are used by others (e.g. government)
  - Make sure they are used correctly (e.g. hold politicians accountable in case of misuse or neglect)
  - Use the budgets in their own work
Pitfalls

• Undermine support if no agreement or feeling of being overruled

• Some may try to influence outcome in function of their ‘political’ interests

• Timing of project if gives rise to ‘negotiations’ (within and between stakeholders)

• Some stakeholders are already ‘overburdened’
Some key factors

• Involvement required from the start
  - Create ownership
  - Ensure people share the same view about the problem to study, situation or needs
  - Ensure understanding of (reasons for) limitations

• State role of each stakeholder clearly
  - procedures, timings, resources, if possible to reach a “formal” written agreement, etc.

• Good contacts, meetings at regular intervals (clear contact person)
Some key factors

- Balance between stakeholders, ‘equal power’?
- Promote co-responsibility between organisations
- Careful with funding agencies