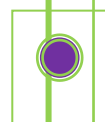
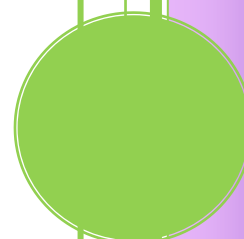


**RESEARCH REPORT ON THE  
SITUATION OF LONE PARENTS IN  
SUPERMOM PARTNER COUNTRIES:  
Italy, Germany, Poland, France, and  
the United Kingdom (Northern  
Ireland)**



Lifelong Learning Programme

EU Lifelong Learning Program Leonardo da  
Vinci Transfer of Innovation





## **INTRODUCTION**

“Supermom Kick-Off 2010” is a European Transfer of Innovation project, funded under the Lifelong Learning Programme Leonardo da Vinci grant by the German National Agency Bildung für Europa am Bundesinstitut für Berufliche Bildung. The aim of the international partnership project is to transfer the Supermom training programme, developed in Germany, to Italy, Poland, France, and Northern Ireland.

Supermom offers vocational orientation and training in film skills for unemployed single parents, both mothers and fathers. The training combines vocational training courses and practical work with informal learning and confidence building. The Supermom film skills course will empower the lone parents, raise their professional as well as personal competencies, and increase their opportunities in the labour market. In order to achieve this aim, the partnership has researched the situation of lone parents in each partner country. This research will enable us to successfully adapt Supermom to create a programme that is appropriate for the situation in each country.

This research is intended to serve as an overview of the situation of lone parents in each Supermom partner country: Italy, Germany, Poland, France, and the UK (Northern Ireland). The partner organisations contributed information about lone parent demographics, modes and availability of childcare, social welfare benefits, employment and education levels of lone parents, poverty among one parent families, and the potential for employment within that country’s film industry.

The methodology used to compile this research report was to collect information from the partners and merge this information into a collaborative report. The partner organisations drew their data from a range of sources such as university-conducted sociological studies, government statistical reports, national and EU policy documents, and, in some cases, research conducted by themselves and other non-governmental organisations.



It is important to note that in some cases figures are likely to be under representative of the actual numbers of lone parents as a result of lack of data and/or the use of restrictive definitions. In some European countries, lone parent families are not widely recognised as a group or their needs considered or supported through policy. It is not surprising therefore that certain data was unavailable in certain countries. The lack of research into the situation of one-parent families in a specific country can reveal that governmental or social attitudes are not predisposed to see lone parents as a distinct group that merits study, or as a group in need of targeted support.

In some cases, therefore, partner organisations have provided anecdotal or narrative evidence to explain the situation of lone parents in their countries, in place of statistical data. This is especially the case in Poland, where localised university studies have helped to illustrate certain parts of lone parents' lives, but where there is really no overall, national picture.

It should also be noted that there are differences in the definition of lone parenthood between the countries. For example, some countries recognise the break-up of a cohabiting relationship as equivalent to the divorce of married persons, and some do not. More detailed information on this point is contained in the 'Lone Parents Defined' section, which follows.

Because much of the data from partner countries was only available in different formats and for different years, this allowed them to be only informally compared. As a result, direct comparisons between all countries were sometimes not possible. However, for the purposes of the Supermom Project, the data contained in this report is sufficient to highlight key areas of similarity and difference between the situations of lone parents in each partner country, allowing for the particular needs of the lone parents who will take part in Supermom to be considered.



## **LONE PARENTS DEFINED COUNTRY BY COUNTRY**

**ITALY:** According to ISTAT, the Central Statistics Agency, a lone parent family is a family composed of only one adult (widowed, divorced, single). This defines a situation where one parent lives alone with her/his children. The partner lives in another house (in the case of a parent who is single, or in a legal separation or divorce) or is not alive anymore.

**GERMANY:** The definition of lone parents as used by the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is: 'mothers or fathers who are unmarried, widowed, separated or divorced, who live with their child or children up to the age of 18 years in one household.' This comes with a stipulation that the mother or father does not live with another adult in the same household.

**POLAND:** The only definition available is that which refers to one-parent households in every European country, in Child Poverty and Well-Being in the EU: Current status and the way forward (European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Unit E.2). It states that 'a lone parent household refers here to a household in which a single adult lives alone with one or several children.' We may take this basic definition as a common denominator that also works in Poland, since Poland does not have its own specific definition.

**FRANCE:** The definition of a lone parent from the French National Institute for Statistics and Research (INSEE) is a parent with full-time responsibility for the care of one or more single children under the age of 25 (with the condition that none of these children have children). For the French Family Allowance fund, the definition of a lone parent is a widowed, divorced, separated or single person currently supporting one or more children on a full-time basis, with the condition that the lone parent does not live with a partner.

**UK:** According to the terminology used for the General Household Survey, 'a lone-parent family consists of one parent, irrespective of sex, living with his or her never-married dependent children, provided these children have no children of their own.' The UK census further specifies that the children only count as dependent



if they are 'aged either under 16 or from 16 to (under) 19 and undertaking full time education'. The GHS further stipulates that 'married or cohabiting women with dependent children, whose partners are not defined as resident in the household are not classified as one-parent families because it is known that the majority of them are only temporarily separated from their husbands (for example, because he works away from home).' <sup>1</sup>

Gingerbread NI, the only lone parent support charity in Northern Ireland, uses a slightly different definition, expanding the term of 'lone parent' to include parents who have full custody of children while the spouse/partner is in long-term institutional care (i.e. prison or long-term hospitalisation). For their purposes, and taking into account different legislation in Northern Ireland, Gingerbread NI also expands the definition of a dependent child to include: 'any child under the age of 18 years; a person who is over 18 years and due to a physical or mental disability is unable to become independent of his/her parent; or a person pursuing education/training who is unable to become independent of his/her parent.' <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Crispin Jenkinson, 'Measuring Health Status and Quality of Life' 1998, Question Bank Topic Commentary on Health, <http://qb.soc.surrey.ac.uk/topics/health/jenkinson.htm> [The Question Bank is an ESRC funded Internet social survey resource based in the Department of Sociology, University of Surrey].

<sup>2</sup> Gingerbread NI website, 'Membership: Who can join as a lone parent member?' [www.gingerbreadni.org/LPAssMembership.htm](http://www.gingerbreadni.org/LPAssMembership.htm).



## **SECTION A** **LONE PARENT DEMOGRAPHICS**

**ITALY:** 5.624 million lone parents.

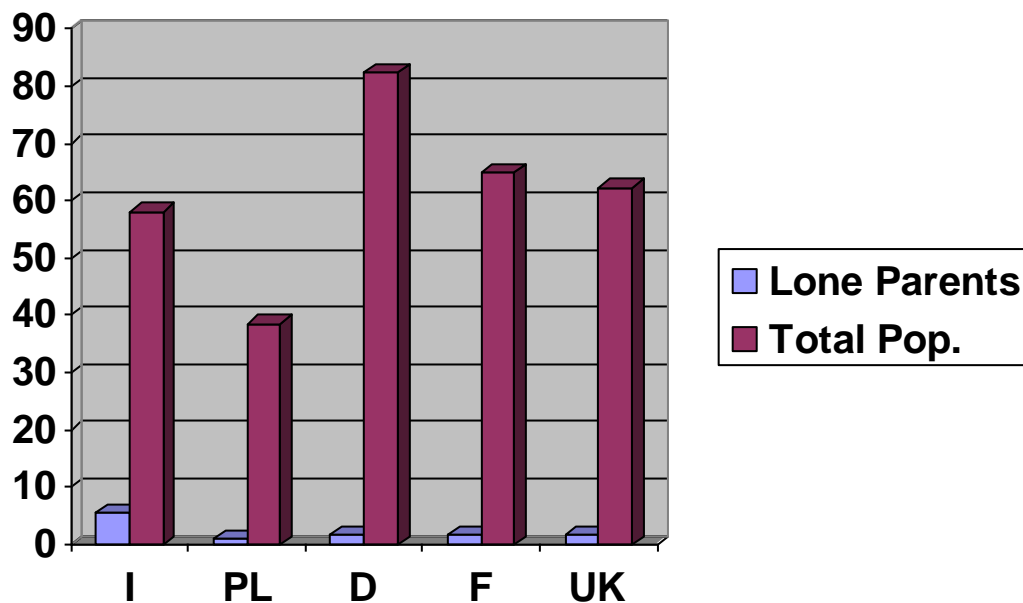
**POLAND:** According to Institute of Public Affairs there are more than 1 million lone parent families.

**GERMANY:** 1.6 million one-parent households with children under 18

**FRANCE:** 1.758 million lone parents in 2005

**UK:** 1.7 million lone parents in the UK (92,000 in Northern Ireland)

**Figure 1: Lone parents compared to total population of each country, in millions.** (Source for total population statistics: CIA World Factbook)



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Proportion of all families in country headed by a lone parent:



**ITALY:** 1 in 4

**POLAND:** 1 in 6

**GERMANY:** Almost 1 in 5 (19%). Interesting detail: 27% in East Germany – 17% in West Germany

**FRANCE:** 1 in 5

**UK:** 1 in 4 (Northern Ireland: 1 in 4)

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Percentage of these lone parents who are lone mothers:

**ITALY:** 90%

**POLAND:** 90%

**GERMANY:** 89,9%

**FRANCE:** 84,5%

**UK:** 90% (Northern Ireland: 93%)

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Percentage of these lone parents who are lone fathers:

**ITALY:** 10%

**POLAND:** 10%

**GERMANY:** 10,1%

**FRANCE:** 15,5%

**UK:** 10% (Northern Ireland: 7%)

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Main routes into lone parenthood:

**Single** (never married, never in a civil partnership\*):

**ITALY:** 7%

**GERMANY:** 35%

**FRANCE:** 35.8% \*

**UK:** 47%

\*(INSEE: “A lone parent formerly in a civil partnership or in a live-in partnership stays legally single after a separation or the death of his partner.”)

**Widowed:**

**ITALY:** 54%

**GERMANY:** 6%

**FRANCE:** 9%

**UK:** 7%



**Divorced or Separated:**

**ITALY: 39%**

GERMANY: 59%

**FRANCE: 39.2%**

UK: 46%

**\*No national statistics were available in Poland. See narrative below for a more general explanation of lone parenthood in Poland.**

## **A DESCRIPTION OF LONE PARENTHOOD IN POLAND**

**Widowed:** Widows –women or men who lost their life partners— often need to overcome financial and psychological problems. The primary reason for single parenthood in Poland is widowhood.

**Divorced:**<sup>3</sup> According to the Central Statistical Office, 2006 saw the highest number of divorces in Poland’s history. 71,900 married couples got divorced in 2006 compared to 67,600 divorces in 2005 and 66,600 divorces in 2007. The divorce factor is nearly 3 times higher in cities than in the country. Following a divorce, direct parental responsibility for the child(ren) is usually vested in mothers.

**Separated:**

Legal Separation was set in Poland in 1999. Number of legal separations has been increasing very fast (2005- 11.600 separations, 2006- 8.000, 2007- 5.000 and in the next years is approximately on the same level).

The Polish partners also raised the issue of economically driven separation among a group known as “Grass widows”: This term relates to women or men whose husbands/wives emigrated, usually to other European countries or the USA, because in Poland they had lost earning capacity. These partners stay abroad

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<sup>3</sup> Agnieszka Borowicz – Bartosik, WSInf, Lodz 2009.



for varying lengths of time, from a few months to a few years, which has a great negative impact on family bonds. The parents caring for children in Poland are effectively lone parents, even if they are still married or in a life partnership.

### **Single Mothers:**

Single mothers fall into two main categories:

Independent mothers: a new model of motherhood in Poland.<sup>4, 5, 6</sup> Women who are in a strong position in the labour market and independently prosperous (usually professionals) often don't decide to marry or cohabit with the father of a child if this person is unsuitable for them. Motherhood is a conscious choice for them. Such women are usually aware of their rights and able to draw strength from communities formed on a voluntary basis, and they fight for a family model that truly relies on equal partnership of the family members.

Teenage lone parents: Growing up in impoverished neighbourhoods and experiencing multidimensional deprivation can lead to teenage parenthood, which is as much a consequence of poverty as a harbinger of poverty for the next generation.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Poland Survey, Restart, WSINF.

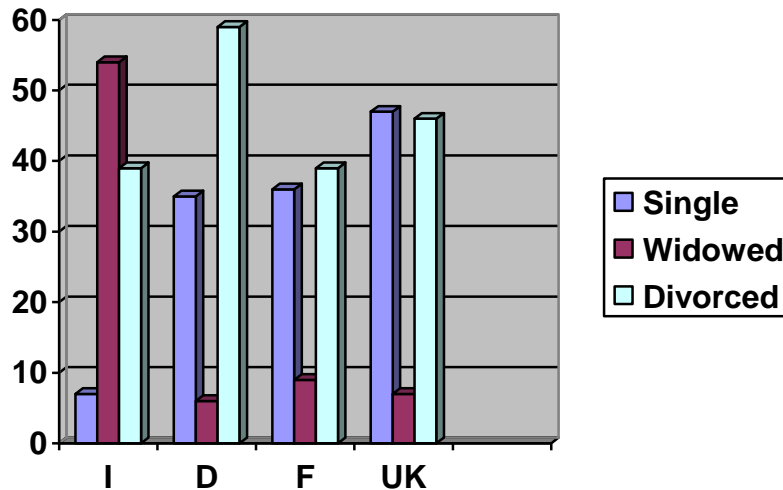
<sup>5</sup> Matki Polki Obywatelki(2009-11-14) <http://www.nowamatkapolka.pl>.

<sup>6</sup> Sylwia Stodulska , Samotny rodzic szuka miłości, <http://sympatia.onet.pl>.

<sup>7</sup> Prof. dr hab. Wielisława Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Institute of Sociology, University of Łódź, Project WZLOT (SOAR)



**Figure 2: Routes into Lone Parenthood (as a percentage of total lone parents)** No statistical information is available for Poland.



\*Note 1: Most countries calculate separated and divorced lone parents as one category, so they are calculated together in the graph. The only partner country that provided different figures for separation and divorce is Germany, where 17% of lone parents are separated and 42% are divorced. These two categories taken together make up 59% of the total lone parents in Germany.

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What is the average age of lone parents in your country?  
 What is the average length of lone parenthood?

In **Italy**, the average age of lone parents is 35—in fact, 93% of lone parents are aged 35 or older. 51.6% are over the age of 55; this partly reflects the high percentage of widows among Italian lone parents, which is a more traditional route into lone parenthood there. It appears that in Italy, the average length of lone parenthood increases the older a lone parent is. Among lone parents aged less than 45, the average amount of time they have spent as a lone parent is 6.6 years. For lone parents aged



between 45 and 64 the average increases to 8.4 years, and lone parents aged 64 or older have spent on average 28.1 years as a lone parent.

In **Poland**, on average, divorced spouses' age at the moment of divorce is about 45 years old for men, approximately 35 years old for women. However, this does not account for the average ages of persons who became lone parents through the death of a spouse, teenage parenthood, or other routes. No more specific data was found for either of these questions in Poland.

In **Germany**, the average age of lone parents is also fairly high--46 years old for single mothers, and 52 years for single fathers. 71% are over the age of 35. However, unlike in Italy, only 2% are older than 55. Also in contrast to Italy, the average length of time a person remains a lone parent is only 3 years.

**France's** most recent data on lone parent ages is from 1999. No average age is given overall, but the majority (40% of lone mothers, 44% of lone fathers) are between the ages of 40 and 49, with a sizable minority (33% of lone mothers, 20% of lone fathers) being between the ages of 30-39. Thus the average age of lone parents in 1999 was likely about 42 years old. There was no available data on the average length of lone parenthood.

**The UK** has the youngest average age of lone parents among the partner countries, at an average of 36. As with every partner country, only a very small percentage of these are teenage parents—in the UK, only 3% of lone parents are under the age of 20. The average length of time that a person remains a lone parent is 5.5 years in the UK.

### **Summary of Section A: Lone Parent Demographics**

Among the partner countries, the average proportion of lone parents to total families is 1 in 5, meaning about 20% of the families in these countries are headed by lone parents. Poland has the lowest proportion of identified lone parents out of the partner countries, with approximately 1 in 6 families being headed by a lone parent.



In every country, statistics show that the majority of lone parents are women and most of these are adult women rather than teenagers. Average ages of lone parents in each country range from 35 to 46.

The breakdown of routes into lone parenthood shows a few great differences among the partner countries. In Italy, the majority (54%) of lone parents are widows/widowers, with only a small percentage of lone parents being single (never married), and a distinct minority becoming lone parents as the result of a divorce or separation (this is changing, however; see below).

Germany, however, reports that a majority (59%) of German lone parents are divorced or separated, only a small percentage are widowed, and a distinct minority are single (never married). The UK and France, meanwhile, show that nearly half of all lone parents are divorced/separated, and nearly half are single (never married), while only a small remaining percentage are lone parents because of the death of their partner.

Poland has an interesting anomaly in that a significant number of persons caring for children on their own are still married or in a life partnership. However, due to Poland's high rate of worker migration, their spouses or partners (usually male) are working in other countries. In some cases, these parents are effectively separated (for economic reasons) for several years, and although the emigrated spouse may continue to contribute financially to the family, the remaining parent must cope with all family and childcare issues alone.

In Italy, research shows that social and cultural changes are modifying the kind of one parent families and the reasons for them. According to ISTAT, separations have doubled and divorces have increased by 61% since 1995. In a context where the rate of new marriages has also decreased, this shows a trend in which marriage is losing its popularity. At this rate, and given the average age of widows and widowers, in the near future widowed persons will no longer account for the majority of lone parents. Rather, separations, divorces, cohabitation/civil



partnerships and the choice to have a child outside of marriage are beginning to characterize this kind of family.

The Italian partner notes that, due to social stigma in many parts of Italy, single mothers who become lone parents due to a separation or a divorce live in greater isolation compared to widows. Thus the informal network of help is weaker for divorced or separated women than it is for widows, and such social exclusion often leads to poverty.

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## **SECTION B** **LONE PARENTS AND SOCIAL WELFARE BENEFITS**

What is the lone parent employment rate (i.e. out of the total number of lone parents of working age and ability, what percentage are working)?

**ITALY:** No data available

**POLAND:** No data available

**GERMANY:** The rate is 59.9% - but mainly part time (42% full time, 58% part time)

**FRANCE:** 69.2% of all lone parents are working (see table below for a more specific picture of employment and unemployment for lone parents). This breaks down by gender: 68% of female lone parents are working, and 80% of male lone parents are working.

### **Lone parents in the job market (by gender)**

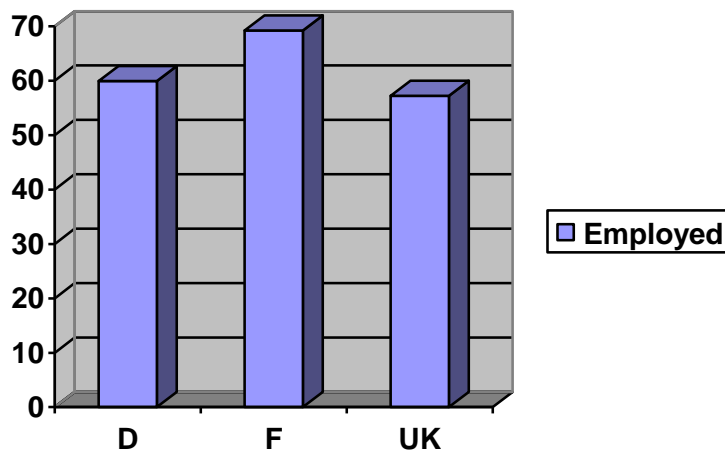
	Women	Men
Inactive (unemployed and not looking for a job)	15%	11%
Unemployed (looking for a job)	17%	9%
Working full-time	51%	75%
Working part-time	17%	5%

*Source: Insee, enquête étude de l'histoire familiale 1999.*



**UK:** 57.2% of lone parents in Britain (England, Scotland, and Wales) are working. The rate is even lower in Northern Ireland where only 52.4% of lone parents are employed outside the home (Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey, 2008). Lone parents who enter the labour market are also less likely than other groups to remain in employment. Adam et al (2006) found that up to 15% of lone parents move into work each year, a rate similar to that of other non-employed individuals, but they have more than double the exit rate of non-lone parents with a considerable amount of cycling between benefits and work. (Adam et al, 2006).

**Figure 3: Percentage of Lone Parents who are working (full or part time).** No data available for Italy or Poland.



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Are social welfare benefits available specifically for lone parents? If so, what are they? How do they calculate the amount of the allowance?

**ITALY:** The social welfare benefits available in Italy are called “assegni familiari” (family allowance). Assegni familiari are determined according to the components and the income of the family unit, and to the condition of the family (presence of both parents, absence of one parent, presence of disabled people). The amount of the allowance is calculated according to tables updated every year, where incomes and related amounts are



included. The Budget Law of 2007 introduced changes that mean there is now no difference between lone and couple parenthood for calculating the basic family allowance; the basic allowance is the same. This is because the income of both parents is taken into account when determining the basic allowance, even if the parents are separated or divorced and are not living together.

On the other hand, the distinction between lone and couple families is still relevant for the additional allowance, which is targeted at families composed of parents and at least three dependants (children under age 21, disabled adult children or disabled siblings of the head of household). The new table varies according to the specific wage and composition of families. The exact amount is calculated deducting from the allowance a variable amount according to the wage. The new table includes 6 different kinds of family, including lone parents, that can claim the additional allowance.

**POLAND:** Family benefit, the basic form of financial support for families, is granted to two-parent families, lone parents or child guardians established by a court. Families must fulfil income criteria in order to receive the benefit. Family benefit with supplement allowances is available for any family whose average monthly income during the previous calendar year does not exceed 504 PLN per person (583 PLN in case of raising disabled child). An extra 80 PLN per child (no more than 160 PLN for all children in a family) is reserved for a family caring for a child with an adjudicated disability or with an adjudication of substantial disability. Pro-family tax relief is for every parent, including single parents; it amounts to 1173.30 PLN per tax year.

Lone parents may be eligible to claim a few additional benefits:

- An extra allowance for single parents is a supplement to family benefit. The conditions for eligibility are fulfilment of income criterion and single parent status. This additional payment amounts to 170 PLN monthly per a child, no more than 340 PLN for all children in a family.



- Possibility of tax return shared with a child.
- Preference in case of examining letters of application to crèche or kindergarten.

In May of 2004 the Child Support Fund was liquidated. The new draft legislation on the Child Support Fund, passed by the Parliament in 2006, caused a series of absurdities<sup>8</sup>. Lone parents, who could no longer rely on disbursements out of the Child Support Fund, but only on a negligible child support allowance (PLN 170 per child or PLN 250 per disabled child), protested and said they had no resources to feed their children. Poland was washed by a wave of fictitious divorces, because the law passed by the Parliament provided that the allowance was not due to parents who chose to re-marry.

#### **GERMANY:**

There are several benefits for all parents upon the birth of a child. Maternity allowance is compensation for the loss of earnings for a period before and after the birth of the baby. Parental allowance works out at 67% of the parent's average income for the last twelve months. The maximum allowance is 1800 Euros, and the minimum is 300 Euros. Parental allowance is paid for 14 months; for single parents, they receive all 14 months of the allowance themselves, while for parents in relationships, one partner receives the pay for 12 months, and the other partner receives it for 2 months.

People who are on a low income (under 600 Euro for single parents) can apply for children's allowance of up to 140 Euros per month for six months. Parents who receive social security benefits or category II unemployment benefits are not entitled to children's allowance. Parents who receive social security benefits or who are unemployed can apply to their local social security office for a one-off payment to help pay for their antenatal care and baby equipment.

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<sup>8</sup> *Samotnym matkom pomogła zmiana władzy (Single mothers helped by power shift)*, <http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/kraj/1,34309,3287953.html>, 2006-04-17.



Unemployment benefits category II (Arbeitslosengeld II/Hartz IV) are for people who are unemployed for more than 12 months. 31% of single parents in Germany are on this category of benefits.

Families and single parents on low income can also apply for housing allowance. Tenants are entitled to a rent subsidy (Mietzuschuss). Homeowners can also receive financial compensation for their expenses (Lastenzuschuss). The amount of financial help depends on the income.

### **FRANCE:**

The main actor is the National Family Fund (*CNAF – Caisse nationale des allocations familiales*) and its local agencies, the Family Allowance Funds (*CAF – Caisse d’allocations familiales*). The State, employer’s organisations and trade unions are jointly responsible for the management of the CNAF.

French social policies include financial support for lone parent families. Benefits were available specifically for lone parents from 1976 until 2009, when there was a major reform in French social welfare.

**1976 to 2009: Lone parent allowance (*API – Allocation de parent isolé*)** was a means of providing specific, means-tested financial support designed for low-income one parent families. As of 2006, the maximum monthly API was 735 Euro for parents with one child plus 184 Euro per additional child. Full API was still granted for three months after the lone parent started paid work or paid training, and 50% of API was granted for nine additional months. Lone parent recipients were eligible for employment ‘activation measures,’ but were given no individual support for integrating into the labour market and still very little access to childcare services.

**2009 reform: Active solidarity income (*RSA – Revenu de solidarité active*)**, a general measure for all recipients of minimum social income, replaced other social benefits. RSA is a payment that supplements earned incomes for recipients who are working, or replaces other social benefits for unemployed beneficiaries. Its



general aim is to encourage people to work by boosting low incomes earned from employment and providing individual support for recipients. It is a minimum payment that supersedes the minimum social allowance (*RM*), and for single parents, the lone parents allowance (*AP*) for unemployed beneficiaries.

## **UK:**

Most family benefits in the UK are applied either to all families, or to all families below a certain income. For example, all parents in the UK currently receive Child Benefit of £20 per week for the first child, and an additional amount for every additional child. However, proposed amendments will restrict Child Benefit so that households where at least one income is over £45,000 per year will no longer receive Child Benefit.

Persons living on low income are eligible to receive Housing Benefit, which helps all those on a low income to pay part or all of their rent. In addition, those who receive Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance are also eligible to apply for Community Care Grants, which provide money to cover the cost of high priority necessities, usually clothing or household items like essential furniture and kitchen utensils.

Persons who are receiving Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance are eligible for the Steps to Work programme, which allows them to take vocational and educational training courses up to NVQ Level 2, usually for free.

More specifically, lone parents are eligible to claim Income Support (£65.45 per week) simply because they are lone parents, but only until their youngest child is 7 years old. As of October 2010, if a lone parent's youngest child is aged seven or over (from autumn 2011, aged five years or older), they are no longer eligible for Income Support if they are claiming it solely because of their lone parent status. Lone parents with a youngest child over the age of seven may claim Jobseeker's Allowance instead (also £65.45 per week), but must be actively looking for work in order to claim it. However, lone parents with children under the age of 12 are *not* obligated to accept just any job offer to remain eligible for



Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance. They have the right to restrict their working hours to the time when their children are in school.

Another important source of income for working parents is Child Tax Credit, which is paid through HM Revenue and Customs to eligible families. If the head of house is working, the family will receive more tax credit based on the number of hours the parent works. Lone parents can claim an additional amount of tax credit, but only if they are working. If a lone parent pays a registered childminder in order to work, another supplemental tax credit can pay for up to 80% of the childcare costs (up to a limit of £175 per week for one child, £300 per week for 2 children, etc).

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Do work-related requirements apply to social welfare benefits? If so, what are they?

**ITALY:**

There is one benefit, the Family Unit Allowance, which is only available to families in which at least one member is employed. The ANF differentiates the allowance in relation to the number of members of the family and the make-up of the family unit's income.

For the allowance to be paid, the interested parties must be dependent on the applicant and the household income must not exceed certain limits. However, this benefit is still only for families headed by employed persons, so the lone parent would need to be working to receive it.

**POLAND:**

There is no relation between employment status and benefits.

**GERMANY:**

Maternity leave is available only 14 months; afterwards unemployment benefits II will be received. When receiving this type of support, the will to find a job needs to be proved regularly. In case one rejects a job offer, the benefits can be reduced. For



single parents this is valid when the children are older than 3 years.

**FRANCE:**

From 2009, the revenu de solidarité active (RSA or working solidarity income) is a major reform in French social protection. Firstly, it replaced the minimum welfare benefits paid to people of a working age, among them API specifically for lone parents, along with the associated bonus mechanisms. Secondly, it is a significant income supplement for poor workers, with the objective being both to ensure financial support and to prompt a return to work. In this way, there is a work-related requirement to RSA: it foresees the possibility to add RSA benefit to work-related incomes when they are too low, in order to avoid the poverty threshold effect of social incomes. The RSA framework also requires the signature of a mutual involvement agreement between the local Family agency and the single parent recipient. For RSA recipients other than lone parents the same agreement is required, but with another administration (Job agency or local government’s administration). RSA is accompanied by other individualised actions to favour the recipient’s employability (this is same for lone parents as for other recipients).

The calculation of RSA benefit takes into account work-related incomes. The method of calculation is:

$$\text{RSA amount} = (\text{basic RSA amount} + 62\% \text{ of incomes from work/activity}) - (\text{incomes} + \text{social benefits for housing})$$

**Basic RSA amount for a lone person depends on the number of supported children :**

Number of children	Basic RSA amount for a lone person
0	466,99 €
1	700,49 € *
2	840,59 € *
For each children more	186,80 € *

**\* Basic amount can be increased in specific cases, like for instance for a lone parent of a child under 3.**

*Source : Family allowance funds – Rates from 01/01/2011*



## **UK:**

Lone parents can claim Income Support until their youngest child is 7 years old without seeking work. If a lone parent's youngest child is aged 7 or older, the parent must be actively seeking employment in order to collect benefits such as Jobseeker's Allowance. All parents can claim basic Child Tax Credit whether or not they are working (although the tax credit is considerably less if the parent is not working). But if a lone parent is not working, she/he cannot claim a special lone parent supplemental tax credit. Child Benefit is paid to all parents regardless of their employment status, and Housing Benefit is also not dependant on employment (in fact, people who are working lose a certain amount of Housing Benefit).

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## **SECTION C** **LONE PARENTHOOD AND CHILD POVERTY**

What is the poverty risk for children from lone parent households compared to couple families?

In the EU-25 as a whole, as well as in most non-EU countries, the poverty risk for children living in lone-parent households is almost twice as high as the average poverty risk for all children together (34% against 19%).

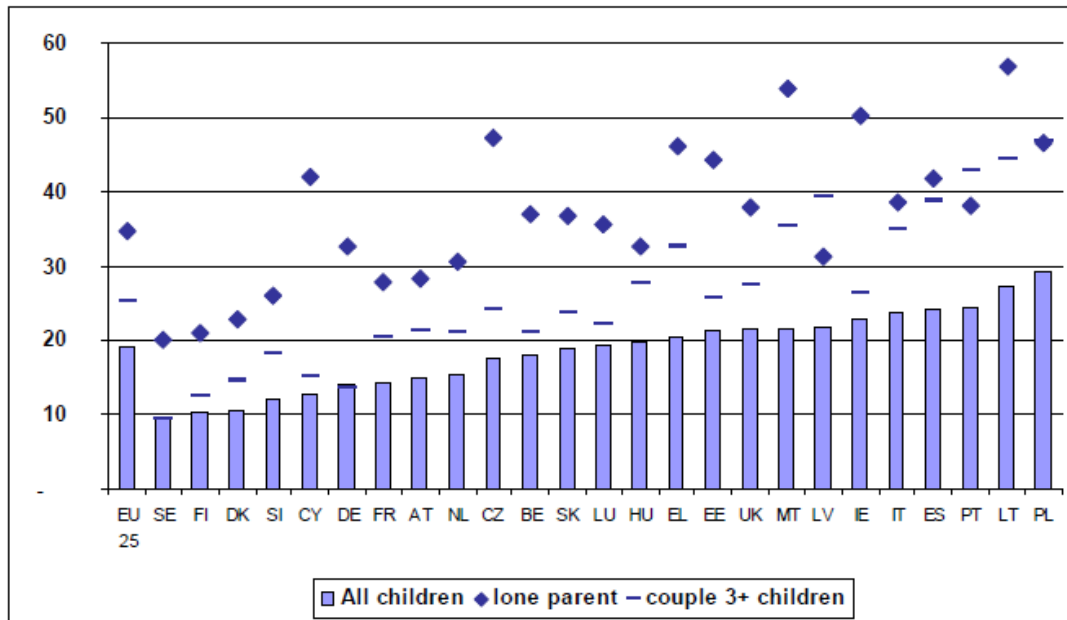
Large families (with 3 children or more): in the EU-25, the poverty risk for children growing up in large families is 25%. It ranges from around 10% in SE and FI to ca. 40% or more in ES, PT, LV, LT and PL.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Child Poverty and Well-Being in the EU: Current status and the way forward*, European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Unit E.2.



## At-risk-of-poverty rate of all children and of children living in households most at risk (%), EU-25, 2005



Source: EU-SILC (2005) - income year 2004 (income year 2005 for IE and the UK), UK data provisional

### ITALY:

According to the report about the condition of mothers and children drawn up by the association Save the Children, Italy is 17<sup>th</sup> in the list of conditions of poverty for mothers among 160 countries analysed. 1.6 million mothers are poor, and one million of them are single mothers, living in precarious conditions with economic difficulties. And the situation is not much better in couples; 15.4% of couples with a minor child live in poverty, and this percentage increases with any increase in the number of children. Today, having a child seems to be a challenge no matter what the family structure.

According to an ISTAT report on poverty in 2005, single parents have greater levels of poverty compared to the average (13.4%) and such situation is more common in the North of Italy where there are more single parents compared to the South.

Separation and divorce lead to an economic disadvantage, especially for women. Women are more at risk of poverty as a



result of separation, and they are less likely than single fathers to create a new couple. 7.9 % of separated/divorced persons between the ages of 35-64 years old are poor, in particular women (9.5% of separated/divorced women are poor against 5.8% of separated/divorced men). This discrepancy is due partly to the unbalanced share of duties in families, and to discrimination against women on the labour market. Considering that more than 70% of lone parent households are supported by only one salary-earner, and that salary earner is most often a woman (because 81.2% of single parents are women), it is clear that lone parent families face several barriers that combine to keep them impoverished. The situation looks set to become worse because the rate of separations is increasing among low-income families.

**POLAND:** 29% of all children in Poland live at risk of poverty (the highest child at-risk-of-poverty rate in the EU-25), and the poverty rate for children in both lone parent and couple families rises as the number of children increases. However, children from lone-parent families have a more severe risk of poverty than children in two-parent families: in 2005, nearly 48% of children from one-parent families were at risk of poverty.

**GERMANY:** The risk of poverty is almost 3 times higher for children from one-parent families compared to children in two-parent families.

**FRANCE:** In 2007, 17.9% of all French children under 18 were living below the poverty threshold, while 38.4% of children under 18 from lone parent families were living below the poverty threshold. It means that the percentage of poverty risk is more than twice as high in lone parent families as in all kind of families taken together. However, there is no available comparison between specifically children in couple families and children in lone parent families.

In 2008, the poverty rate of lone parent families was 31.7%, while the poverty rate of couple families (with or without children) was 10.2%. This means that the risk of poverty is three times as high in lone parent families as in couple families; however, this includes



couples without children. Figures to compare lone parent families with couple families with children are not available. Since there is a higher risk of poverty for families with children than without, this makes direct comparison impossible.

**UK:** Across a range of indicators, lone parents are the household group most vulnerable to poverty. A study by Hillyard et al. (2007), which constructs a Northern Ireland Living Standard Index (NILSI), concludes that lone parents have the lowest standard of living of any household type and are more than twice as likely to be in hardship as any other type.

This means that children from lone parent families are twice as likely to live in poverty compared to other children. The high risk of poverty holds true even if the lone parent is working: 23% of children who live with a working lone parent are still considered poor according to national definitions of poverty. Of the children in Northern Ireland who are living in persistent and severe poverty, 72% live with a lone parent (Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey).

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What financial support is available for children from one-parent households?

**ITALY:** Please see Section B, 'Lone Parents and Social Welfare Benefits.'

**POLAND:** In addition to the social benefits detailed in Section B, the children of lone parents are entitled to receive maintenance payments from the non-resident parent.

**GERMANY:** Please see section B, 'Lone Parents and Social Welfare Benefits.'

**FRANCE:**

1- Benefits to all families

Allocations familiales: These Family Allowances are provided to all families with at least two children under 16 (or 20 according to the child's activity and resources). Some premiums are granted for children aged 10 to 14 or 14 and more.



Complément familial: This benefit is an income-related Family Allowance complementing the Allocations familiales. The household means are compared to a ceiling in taking account of the household composition, lone parent families being dealt with as bi-active couples and so granted with a heavier weight.

Allocation de rentrée scolaire: paid once a year under means-testing conditions, this New School-year Allowance is to compensate families with children from 6 to 18 years old for the expenses at the start of the new school year.

Allocation d'éducation de l'enfant handicapé is a special needs allowance for disabled persons under 20.

## 2- Allowances for young children

PAJE is a means-tested financial support that replaces all allowances dedicated to the arrival of a young child since the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2004. PAJE stands for Prestation d'accueil du jeune enfant, which translates as 'allowance to welcome a young child'.

PAJE is made of:

- Basic allowance with a bonus for the birth or adoption of a child and a monthly income-related family allowance given to families with at least one child under age 3
- Allowances for child caring; the amount depends on the chosen childcare solution and child's age (more or less than 3)
- Allowance for parents of children from 0 to 6 who decide to keep working, and to support them in funding childcare

Other allowances (*Complément de libre choix d'activité - Clca* and *Complément optionnel de libre choix d'activité – Colca*) aimed at compensating parents for the income loss due to the reduction or interruption of paid activity. The first one (Clca) is granted until the parent's youngest child reaches the age of 3, and its amount depends on the number of children and the income reduction. The second one (Colca) was implemented in 2006 and is granted to parent(s) of at least 3 children that stop working entirely. Its amount also depends on the parent(s)' previous activity income. It is higher than Clca but is available for a shorter time : it is granted for 11 months after the child's birth or adoption.

## 3- Benefits to lone parent families



*Allocation de Soutien Familial (ASF)*: a means-tested family support paid to the surviving spouse, lone parent or family taking on the responsibility for raising an orphaned child. It is also paid for children to lone parent families when the non-resident parent does not pay alimony, or pays less than the amount of ASF.

#### 4- Tax credits

The French income tax is calculated once a year for the whole family or *foyer fiscal*. The choice of the tax rate depends on the *Quotient familial*, which is more or less the ratio between the taxable income and the structure of the family (the number of people in the family). The family structure is calculated based on the number of parents and children: each of the spouses counts for one, and each child for a half, except for the third child who counts for one. For lone parent families, the calculation is slightly different, as each child counts for one. The tax paid by lone parent families is consequently lower than the one paid by couples, given the same level of income and the same number of dependent children.

**UK:** Aside from maintenance payments (which are paid to the lone parent rather than the child), there is no special support for children from lone parent families. Children from low-income families benefit from the social welfare listed above in Section B, such as the Child Tax Credit and childcare supplement tax credit, via their parents.

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Is the non-resident parent required to make maintenance payments?

In all of the partner countries, there is a legal obligation on the non-resident parent to make payments in at least some cases.

In **Italy**, the non-resident parent has to pay a maintenance allowance to the single parent who looks after the child. The duty to provide maintenance payments lasts until the child is no longer a minor or until the minor child (less than 18 years old) is able to earn his/her living.



In **Germany**, there is a legal obligation to pay maintenance, and the amount depends on the income, the number of children and their age. The 'Düsseldorf table' is used to calculate the amounts.

In **France**, parents are under a legal obligation to feed and maintain their children. The courts set child support liabilities for divorcing parents, whether the divorce is by mutual consent or joint petition; the judge will set the amount of child support along with custodial/contact arrangements. Cohabiting non-married couples may also use the courts where they cannot come to an agreement upon separation. There are no formal guidelines for calculation of child support in France, but the judge usually takes into account the needs of the children and the income of the non-resident parent.

In France, child support is not paid in about 10 per cent of cases and irregularly paid in another 40 per cent. The resident parent can ask the Family allowance funds to recover child support on their behalf after two months of non-payment. Payments can be deducted from the salary or bank account of the non-resident parent, or collected by a tax collector or bailiff.<sup>10</sup>

In **the UK**, in some cases, the non-resident parent is responsible for maintenance payments for their children, and this is determined by the court. However, only 1/3 of lone parents actually receive maintenance payments for their children, either because the non-resident parent is not required to make payments, or because the non-resident parent does not make the payments that are required. It is often difficult for lone parents to recover unpaid maintenance, as this requires a lengthy court process.

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<sup>10</sup> Helen Barnes, Patricia Day and Natalie Cronin (1998), 'Trial and Error: A review of UK child support policy'. *Occasional Paper 24*. London: Family Policy Studies Centre.



## **SECTION D**

### **MAIN BARRIERS TO WORK**

What are the characteristics of lone parents who are not in work?

#### **ITALY:**

The average age of lone parents is 35 years old and most have a medium level of education; they often have a degree. Lone parents who are not in work are sometimes people with past experience of drug or alcohol addiction. In this case, they can benefit of a contribution equal to 20% of their annual salary if they certify their problem. Unemployed lone parents can also benefit from individual training allowances in addition to unemployment benefits.

#### **POLAND:**

Main characteristics of lone parents who are not in work:

- Low level of qualifications,
- Low level of self-esteem,
- Low level of job expectations,
- Defensive focusing on child/children,
- Often work without registration (working in a 'grey area'),
- Dependent on social care benefits

#### **GERMANY:**

Almost  $\frac{1}{4}$  of single mothers have a lower educational level than average women, besides less experience in the labour market (especially young mothers). However, the most common characteristic of lone parents who are not employed is that they have a child under the age of 3.

#### **FRANCE:**

Unemployed lone parents tend to be parents of a large family and/or with young children: 23.2% of lone parents families are not working, but it goes up to 40.4% for lone parents in charge of 3 or more children and to 45.3% for lone parent families with child(ren) under 3 years old.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> INSEE-DGI, 2001, Enquête revenus fiscaux (Algava *et al.* 2005).



Lone parents who are not in work are more often women (14.4% of unemployment for lone mothers against 10.4% for lone fathers), but this also reflects the inequality between men and women towards employment, whatever the household characteristic (lone parents, other couples).

Regarding unemployment and inactivity and especially for mothers (who comprise the vast majority of lone parents), the difference between lone mothers is increased by the lack of qualification much more than for other mothers. In the case of single mothers under 30, integration into the labour market is, more than for older single mothers, compromised by both maternity and lack of qualification or work experience.

%	Non- or low-qualified lone mothers	More qualified lone mothers (A-level or more)	Non- or low-qualified other mothers	More qualified other mothers (A-level or more)
Active employed	69.5	83.7	68.00	78.2
Unemployed	14.5	6.8	9.9	7.0
Inactive	16	9.5	22.1	14.8
Total	100	100	100	100

Source : Insee, Enquête emploi, 2004

### UK:

The following characteristics are typical of lone parents who are not in work. The more of these characteristics a lone parent has, the less likely he/she is to be employed:

- Have a child under 5
- Have 3 or more children
- Are single rather than divorced or separated
- Have a health problem
- Do not have any educational qualifications
- Do not have any recent work experience
- Are not looking to move into work (personal choice to stay in the home)



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What are the main barriers to work for lone parents?

**ITALY:**

For lone mothers, discrimination plays a role. In addition, it can be very difficult to combine work and childcare, except if the family or friends network or voluntary association can support the lone parent. There are also other economic difficulties, such as lack of money for transport or uniforms, and psychological frustration can play a large part.

**POLAND:**

Lone parents, particularly lone mothers, experience the following barriers:

- Problems with providing childcare (high expense in case of hiring a nanny for a child, low accessibility to crèche and kindergarten),
- Reluctance to sending a child to crèche (mothers would like to look after their child themselves, because they are convinced that only they can provide the best mothering care)
- Rigid timeframes at work – employers prefer to engage in full time employment, which clashes with child care availability
- Difficulties with being flexible in relation to time at work or working from home
- In the opinion of some mothers, employers see them from the angle of role of mother in most cases, which is connected with their absence at work because of illness of a child
- Home-related duties and responsibilities

**GERMANY:**

The main barriers, besides the above-mentioned educational level, are:

- Lack of child care options
- Problems with reconciling responsibilities of family and work (own doubts, expectations of others, etc.)
- Dependence on a certain location, less flexibility



### **FRANCE:**

The following barriers may prevent lone parents from finding a job or being successful in the labour market:

- Lack of qualifications
- Work-life balance and childcare issues
- Inequality between men and women, as the situation towards employment is more difficult for women and mothers count for 84.5% of single parents
- Lower living standard (lack of incomes, lower housing conditions, accommodation further from city centre or main areas of economic activity)

### **UK:**

Lone parents experience many barriers to gaining employment, particularly full-time work. Some of the factors that prevent lone parents from taking up employment include:

- Preference for staying at home
- Childcare difficulties
- Lack of confidence
- Personal bad health or child's health problems
- Financial issues—concerns about not being better off financially than they are currently
- Lack of flexibility in employment conditions
- Lack of skills and qualifications
- Desire to spend time with children

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What percentage of lone mothers have qualifications compared to mothers in couple families?

**\*No data was available for Poland.**

### **ITALY**

Among the elements that influence the low participation in the labour market, according to an ISFOL survey of 18 May 2010, the level of education and place of living are the most important, more than the status of being single or in a couple. The data show that more educated women are more economically active, but the rate

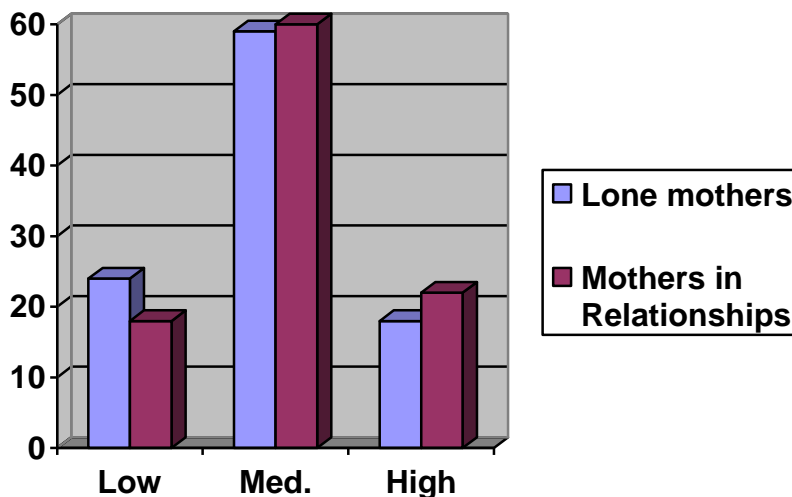


of activity varies according to the regions in which they live. The portion of inactive women decreases when the level of qualification increases. Another interesting facet of the data is the cultural model of reference--the daughters of working mothers are working.

Among the lone mothers emerges a high presence of unwillingly inactive women—lone mothers who are not working but wish to work (an average of 55%). Among the mothers in couple families, those who are not working but wish to work are an average of 34%. All of them declare that one condition that would encourage inactive women to re-enter the labour market is flexible or reduced working time. About 38% of inactive women are available to work up to 25 hours per week.

## GERMANY

Lone mothers have nearly the same levels of qualifications as mothers in relationships, with the majority having intermediate level qualifications. The only difference is a slight tendency for more lone mothers to have low levels and fewer lone mothers to have high levels of qualifications, as the chart shows.



Level:	Lone Mothers	Mothers in Relationships
Low	24	18
Intermediate	59	60
High	18	22



## FRANCE

Level of qualification of lone mothers, compared to mothers in couples:

	Lone mothers	Other mothers
No qualification	34.6%	27.8%
Qualification (from lowest to highest level)	64.7%	71.5%
Still at school	0.7%	0.7%

Source: INSEE, LFS 1990-2000.

## UK

40% of lone mothers have no qualifications, compared to 25% of mothers in couple families.

## SUMMARY OF STATISTICS

In France and the UK, there is a significant difference in the level of education between lone mothers and mothers in partnered situations. In both these countries, lone mothers are much less likely to have qualifications compared to other mothers. In Germany, however, the figures are approximately even. Slightly more mothers in relationships tend to have high levels of qualifications, and there is a slightly greater likelihood that lone mothers will have low-level qualifications compared to other mothers. But the numbers for intermediate level education, which make up the vast majority of total mothers, are approximately the same among both lone mothers and mothers in relationships. In Italy, research has revealed that unemployment is related to low levels of education, but there is no available comparison of the educational levels of lone mothers and partnered mothers.

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How many childcare places are available for children under the age of 4yrs? Are these places free (or subsidised by the government), or do parents need to pay for the childcare?



## **ITALY**

In 2005, according to a survey of the National Centre of Childhood and Adolescence Analysis, the total number including public and private was 3010 structures. There were 129,151 places in public childcare centres, and these could accommodate only 5.9% of the total number of children (in 2005 there were 2,185,898 children under the age of 3 yrs, according to ISTAT). 84% of the public childcare places are located in the Northern regions, with only 16% in the south. This government provision was integrated with a private offering of 1495 structures; 81% of these are in the north as well.

The average fee for an Italian family per month is about 300 Euro for a public childcare centre. This is about 10% of the average monthly expenses and 6.5% of the annual salary. The fee is usually calculated according to the salary declared by the family for public childcare centres, while private childcare centres have fixed fees.

## **POLAND**

There are two traditional types of childcare places (run by district authorities, authorised institutions such as NGOs, religious organisations and churches, or private persons):

- Crèche – from 4 months to 3 years,
- Kindergarten – from 3 years to 6 years

Some of these are subsidised by the district government, which means that parents pay only extra payment enacted by the city council (about 140 PLN) and for meals. In private institutions payments are much higher (about 400-1000 PLN).

There are two new forms of childcare institutions, usually free of charge (private but subsidized by district):

- Unit of kindergarten education (classes during some days)
- Kindergarten point (everyday classes)

## **GERMANY**

Only 23.1% of children under 3 years are in childcare (472,000 children). There are about 290,000 child care places for children between 1 and 3 years (“Kinderkrippen” and “day mothers”) but there is a much higher demand.



By 2013, 750,000 childcare places should be created for children between one and three years, according to an action plan of the government. The places are part-funded by the government but a certain amount has to be paid by the parents, depending on the place and the income.

## FRANCE

*Note: Figures are available for children under 3 or for children until 6, but not for children under 4. Please see our questionnaire for more information about the definitions of the various childcare options.*

In 2008, there were 1,152,489 places for collective or individual childcare for children under the age of 3 in all France (1,135,930 in Metropolitan France).

There are different modalities for childcare. Childcare is rarely free, even in public places, but there are allowances depending on the household income and the *Quotient familial*, which is more or less the ratio between the taxable income and the structure of the family (see Section C – point 2). Lone parenthood is also taken into account in the cost calculation. The places in public pre-elementary schools are free whatever the household income.

*Childcare places available for children under 3 (“formal” child care modalities) - 2008*

Child care modality		Number of places
<b>Collective day centres</b>	<b>(crèches):</b>	349 799
➤ Collective crèches		➤ 301,200
➤ Family crèches		➤ 45,827
➤ Parental crèches		➤ 2,539
➤ Micro-crèches		➤ 233
<b>Registered childminders</b>	<b>(Assistentes maternelles)</b>	613,880
<b>Pre-elementary school</b>		148,906
<b>Nurses</b>		39,904
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,152,489</b>



In comparison - total number of children under 3 in 2008 :	2,433,595
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### **UK:**

Childcare provision is recognised as a key point in the 2006 and 2008 UK National Action Plans on Social Inclusion, and substantial increases in provision have occurred in Great Britain (mostly England). However, the UK (and especially Northern Ireland) still does not have sufficient childcare provision, especially convenient and flexible childcare. The situation in Northern Ireland is far worse than in the rest of Britain: for every 6.4 children under the age of 4 in Northern Ireland, there is only 1 childcare place available. And of the available childcare places, very few are flexible and affordable or appropriate for children with special needs. During a Gingerbread NI study in 2008, University of Ulster researchers found 'significant gaps in provision, particularly with regard to appropriate childcare for children with special needs and during non-standard working hours.' The lack of availability of registered childcare (especially in convenient locations), and the lack of care during non-standard hours often result in a strong reliance on informal childcare through unregistered child minders (usually friends and family). This type of informal care is not eligible for government financial support via Working Tax Credits, meaning that the lone parent has to pay the full cost of unregistered childcare.

The only childcare that is directly funded by the government is occasional respite childcare run by Sure Start. This is not suitable for working parents, however, as it is not full-time or full-week childcare and it is not widely available.

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What other difficulties, if any, do lone parents in your country face?

### **POLAND**

There are several difficulties that are non-specific for lone parents, but apply to women. Women face discrimination at work, and they are paid lower salaries on average. Since the vast majority of lone parents are women, these barriers would apply to them as well. Polish workers also face high taxes in relation to their income and



expenses, and a complex bureaucracy makes the social benefits system difficult to navigate for many people.

A specific subset of lone parents, single teenage parents, faces additional difficulties. On the basis of over twenty insight interviews, Paulina Bunio proposed a collective picture of single teenage mothers living in the most socio-economically downgraded areas of Łódź as likely to be from neighbourhoods and families that experience cyclical poverty, and teenage parenthood further exacerbates this cycle.<sup>12</sup> She formulated a thesis of teenage lone parenthood as a possible consequence of an impoverished or socially excluded childhood. She described several aspects of single teenage maternity with reference to isolation: as absence of a life partner, as physical separation from people, and as a negative emotional condition. These interrelated types of isolation paint a picture of seclusion and social exclusion on nearly every level.

## **FRANCE**

Lone parents generally face lower housing conditions than other parents due to a lower standard of living. Other main difficulties are the ones above mentioned.

## **UK**

In addition to the barriers to employment listed above, and in addition to (although related to) the risk of poverty, lone parents face the following problems:

- Homelessness and/or frequent relocation
- Isolation, lack of support
- Stigmatisation, prejudice
- Stress, depression, low self-esteem
- Ongoing court proceedings, conflict, domestic violence
- Children – access, custody, needing support

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<sup>12</sup> Paulina Bunio, *Nastoletnie samotne matki z łódzkich enklaw biedy (Teenage mothers from Łódź's poverty neighbourhoods)*, presentation at the conference „Lone woman yesterday and today” organized by the Institute of History, University of Łódź and Institute of Sociology, University of Łódź and Informal Group Łódź Gender, Łódź, 5 March, 2009, WZLOT (SOAR) Project



## **SECTION E** **GOVERNMENT POLICY**

What government policies are in place to combat lone parent poverty?

### **ITALY:**

In Italy, only one law provides interventions and economic support to children and lone parents. This is law nr. 258 promoted by Livia Turco, which provides funding to regions and municipalities to realize innovative services and assistance centres that can give concrete support to lone parents. Such intervention plans should also include a reform of childcare centres that offer flexible and extended opening times.

In the meantime single mothers try to overcome difficulties, gathering together in associations or listening groups that promote important initiatives and provide solidarity and assistance to all the women that have to face similar difficult situations.

Another program is PARI: Programma d'Azione per il Re-Impiego di Lavoratori Svantaggiati (Action Programme to re-introduce Disadvantaged workers in the labour market). This program was promoted and financed by the Ministry of Labour in 2007 and ran until 30 June 2009. It has been realized in 18 regions with the technical assistance of Italia Lavoro S.p.A. It aimed at the creation of labour policies focused on active welfare, to meet the objectives of the Lisbon strategy and to create effective the social supports. The target groups were:

- 24,411 workers benefiting from any welfare allowances
- 32,161 disadvantaged workers that do not benefit from any allowance or support related to unemployment with particular reference to young people, women and persons over 50.

The incentives offered were:



- Resources for training paths linked to the working field
- Economic supports to the wage with the aim of supporting the worker that does not benefit from any allowance
- Hiring bonus addressed to the companies that hired target workers.

### **POLAND:**

It is difficult to determine if government policies exist to support lone parents. Lone parents themselves report that no specific support is available to them from the government.

### **GERMANY:**

The federal government recognises single parents as group that needs special support measures, especially after 2001 when statistics proved the relation between child poverty and the single parent familial make-up.

### **FRANCE:**

In France, there are some measures to combat lone parent poverty, and there are complete policies aimed at all types of households among vulnerable groups.

Lone parent families represent a challenge in French social policies and they are taken into account in public debates. Lone parents' high incidence of exposure to poverty has been an issue for public authorities, family associations and researchers since the 1970s. Nowadays, their integration into the labour market is a cue point, because of the link between lone parents' employment rate decreasing and the general unemployment rate increasing. To combat this, public debates and government policies focus on three main axes: facilitating lone parents' access to employment, ensuring a minimum income to the poorest ones and helping parents deal with the consequences of separation.

A lot of reforms have been made in the last few years concerning for example social benefits (2007), child care (2004) and support



towards employment and vocational training (2007) for all families. Although they are not specific to lone parents, these reforms concern them as well. Lone mothers have a higher employment rate than mothers in a partnership. But the situation is different for low-qualified lone mothers or mothers having young children, who are more often unemployed than other mothers.

Recent public debates underlined the importance of making work pay and the need for childcare solutions. These two issues are important and interrelated because social benefits can be higher than employment income when all employment-related expenses are taken into account. Finding a childcare solution, paying transport and getting less social benefits can mean that lone parents are actually worse off working. So the point has been to 'make work pay'.

The 2007 reform of social benefit policies and consequent creation of RSA (Revenu Social d'Activité) aims at giving solutions to make work pay and implementing accompaniment measures to favor access to employment. It aims at combining the reduction of poverty with a better integration into employment.

As we saw previously, it is now possible to add work-related incomes to RSA (minimum income benefit). The idea is to avoid the threshold effect observed with the social income system. Before RSA, when an unemployed person accepted a job, as she was earning more, some social incomes were cut or reduced and her final income could become lower than before. Thus, the RSA system is designed to ensure that every additional hour worked results in a better total income for workers.

RSA requires the lone parent recipient to meet certain obligations, such as the signature of a mutual involvement agreement. However, it also requires the local Family agency to support the recipient's access to employment by implementing partnerships with training and public employment organisations and using existing measures for guidance, training, retraining, coaching, etc.



Nevertheless, RSA implementation is too recent to assess its benefit for lone parents or any other group accessing to employment.

There is also financial support for childcare: the amount depends on household's taxable income and the structure of the family. Lone parenthood is also taken into account in the cost calculation.

Another government policy for childcare facilities has been the implementation of new structures: Micro-crèches (see section D) since 2008 and 'Houses', or cooperative venues, of registered childminders (Maisons d'assistantes maternelles) since 2010. Cooperatives of registered childminders give childminders the opportunity to work outside their home and to work in the same place with other childminders. Maisons d'assistantes maternelles give the possibility to childminders without appropriate business-zoned accommodation to work, and provides more childcare facilities and options in very small towns and in rural areas, where crèches are too expensive for parents. Micro-crèches have the same money-saving benefit for parents in rural areas.

Government policies to helping parents dealing with the consequences of separation include a specific measure for lone parents: the Allocation de Soutien Familial (ASF). It is a means-tested Family Support paid to a widowed lone parent or a family taking on the responsibility for raising an orphaned child, but it is also paid for children to lone parent families when the non-custodial parent does not pay alimony, or pays less than the amount of ASF. Lone parents ask for ASF when they do not receive alimony, and the local Family agency help the lone parent to recover the correct amount of alimony that has been fixed by the court.

Laws from 4 March 2002 and 26 May 2004 also opened the possibility to use family mediation instead of (or before) going to court. The family mediator diploma was created in 2005 to support this process. In 2006, the National family fund (CNAF – Caisse nationale des allocations familiales) implemented a specific allowance to support family mediation when parents cannot finance it themselves.



## UK:

In the UK National Action Plan on Social Inclusion, lone parents have been recognised as a category of persons (potentially) suffering from social exclusion (see below). There are not many government incentives targeted specifically at lone parents, however; many initiatives benefit all parents. For example, all parents in the UK currently receive Child Benefit. This benefit is £20 per week for the first child, and an additional amount for every additional child.

There are a few extra measures intended to ensure that lone parents are financially supported and also encouraged to join the labour market. Lone parents can claim Income Support (£65.45 per week) simply because they are lone parents, but only until their youngest child is 7 years old. From 25 October 2010, if a parent's youngest child is aged seven or over, they are no longer eligible for Income Support if they are only claiming it because of their lone parent status. They may claim Jobseeker's Allowance instead (also £65.45 per week), but must be looking for work to claim it (like all other claimants). However, lone parents with children under the age of 12 are *not* obligated to accept just any job offer to remain eligible for Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance. They have the right to restrict their working hours to the time when their children are in school.

Persons who are receiving Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance are eligible for the Steps to Work programme, which allows them to take vocational and educational training courses up to NVQ Level 2, usually for free.

Lone parents living on low income are eligible for the same benefits that all low-income persons can claim. This includes Housing Benefit, which helps low-income people pay part or all of their rent, whether they are working or not, although this depends on the person's housing situation and many people are not eligible. People who receive Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance are also eligible to apply for Community Care Grants, which provide money to cover the cost of high priority necessities, usually



clothing or household items like essential furniture and kitchen utensils.

Another important source of income, especially for working lone parents, is Child Tax Credit, which is paid through HM Revenue and Customs to eligible families. If the head of house is working, the family will receive more tax credit based on the number of hours the parent works. Lone parents can claim an additional amount of tax credit, but only if they are working. If a lone parent pays a registered childminder in order to work, another supplemental tax credit can pay for up to 80% of the childcare costs (up to a limit of £175 per week for one child, £300 per week for two children, etc). However, this does not change the fact that many parents, especially in Northern Ireland, are unable to find registered childminders whose hours and locations suit their working conditions. Government investment in childcare has had great effect in helping lone parents in England, but there has been little progress in this area in Northern Ireland.

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Has the recession had any impact on lone parent poverty?  
If so, please explain in what way?

### **ITALY**

The labour market is somewhat precarious now, and often the only jobs available are temporary contracts that cannot guarantee long-term support for a lone parent.

According to a recent survey, 10% of lone parents cannot pay the mortgage monthly instalment. The percentage goes down to 6.3% for couple families.

### **POLAND**

Lone parents (especially women) are dismissed first from workplaces as the most 'troublesome' employees (needing to take time off work to care for children during school breaks and if the children become ill, etc.).



## **GERMANY**

The recession led to cuts in welfare benefits that affected lone parents. Parents' Benefit was cancelled for people receiving Unemployment Benefits II.

## **FRANCE**

Although no study exists specifically measuring the effects of the recession on lone parent poverty, some indicators show that the current economic context is detrimental to this group.

The causes of the transition from employment to unemployment – registered at the French public employment service (Pôle Emploi) – reveal that people in the most stable forms of employment are also being affected by the crisis. In February 2009, registrations at Pôle Emploi after a temporary work assignment or at the end of a fixed-term employment contract had increased by 10% compared with February 2008. Moreover, registration after a dismissal for economic reasons had increased by 31.4%. Also, the number of people deregistering from the Pôle emploi, particularly to return to employment, decreased by 23.2% in that same year.

This deterioration of the labour market is coupled with a heightened competition between the different categories of workers, with a risk of the more vulnerable workers being excluded in the long term. The opportunities for obtaining work may be reduced for young people with insufficient professional experience, women returning to work after a break, long-term unemployed persons, low-qualified workers or people with qualifications that are specifically linked to their previous job, and older employees. And apart from the older employees category, we saw previously that unemployed lone parents usually present these characteristics so they are among the most vulnerable groups among people at risk of exclusion of the labour market.

## **UK**

Lone parents are more likely than other parents to have low levels of qualifications. In a recession with so many job losses this makes it harder for them to find a job because they must compete against many more well-qualified and experienced workers for fewer jobs.



The recession has also caused major budget cuts in the UK, and while many of these cuts will impact most upon all low-income people, at least one affects lone parents disproportionately. The government has proposed a cap on Child Benefit, so that Child Benefit will not be given to households where at least one parent earns an income of over £45,000. This is prejudicial to lone parents because there is only one wage earner in a lone parent household, so the family will lose Child Benefit when the household income exceeds £45,000 (regardless of how many children are in the family). A household with two working parents, on the other hand, can earn up to £90,000 and still receive Child Benefit.

It is also more unlikely that funding will be available to bring Northern Ireland's childcare provision up to the standard of the rest of the UK, despite welfare reforms that force lone parents to look for work.

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Is there any reference to lone parents in your National Action Plan? If so, please explain and provide reference details.

**ITALY:** see above

**POLAND**

“In analysing the phenomenon of poverty and social exclusion, the authors of the National Action Plan for Social Integration in 2004-6 identified the following factors as fostering exclusion:

- unemployment;
- prolonged illness and disability;
- a large number of children in a family;
- being a lone parent;
- a low level of education; and
- residence in the countryside or a village, or other poorly developed areas.

“As for the issues of social security and counteracting poverty, the government has undertaken efforts to introduce a minimum guaranteed income.”



“Representatives of employers’ organisations for the most part stress a need to: increase the effectiveness of management of social funds; strengthen cooperation of local authorities with NGOs; and enhance the development of private enterprises that deal with welfare services, healthcare, human resources investments etc.

“Generally speaking, in the present situation of Poland the burden of the fight against exclusion and poverty lies predominantly on state institutions, although the new Plan stresses the necessity of developing civil society activity in this respect, and in 2004 the government prepared a National Strategy of Development of the Third Sector in Poland, having proposed a draft Public Benefit Activity and Volunteer Work Act (Ustawa o działalności pożytku publicznego i wolontariacie) in 2003. This Act allows taxpayers to transfer 1% of due income tax to a public benefit organisation of their choice. This and related legislative solutions may increase the capacity of the third sector in activities to strengthen social integration in future.”<sup>13</sup>

## **GERMANY**

In 2005 an action plan was agreed with 4 spheres of activity for German municipalities:

- Labour market integration / job placement & consultancy
- Qualification
- Childcare
- Neighbourhood as social network

The topic of single parents gained chief importance under the Minister Ursula von der Leyen in 2010.

There has been a cooperative partnership between Federal Ministry for Families, National Employment Agency and Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs: “Perspectives for lone parents.” Another Project of the Federal Ministry for Families has

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2004/12/feature/pl0412102f.htm>



studied the reconcilability of work and family for lone parents and proposed a systematic development of local networks.

## **FRANCE**

There are references to lone parents in the French 2008-2010 National Action Plan for Social Protection and Inclusion:

- In Part I – General overview/ part 1.1.3 “Trends in poverty and inequality of incomes”, it is said that (NB: personal translation) [...] “lone persons (with or without a child) are the more exposed to poverty, and especially the lone parent families (among which women are a majority): one lone parent family out of 4 is poor in the monetary terms. [...]
- Part 1.2 General strategic approach basically points out that certain categories of persons are more exposed to poverty, among which lone parent families are mentioned. It also states that measures are being planned for the most vulnerable groups.

So lone parents are mentioned, but are included within the general category of groups exposed to poverty, rather than specifically.

## **UK**

The UK National Action Plan on Social Inclusion focuses on two main objectives: ‘improving access to quality services and tackling Discrimination; and the active inclusion of all, both by promoting participation in the labour market and by fighting poverty and exclusion (increasing labour market participation and eliminating child poverty).’ The Action Plan sets out lone parents as a category of persons who are at risk of social exclusion and poverty, and lone parents feature in the points on encouraging labour market inclusion. They are listed among the key target groups for whom the Action Plan intends to improve employment opportunities: ‘disabled people; older people; lone parents; people from ethnic minorities; those living in the most deprived areas; and people with low or no qualifications.’

The 2008 Action Plan aims to ‘increase employment for lone parents by 300,000’ by 2015. Part of this is to place greater ‘obligations for lone parents in line with other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. This is consistent with the government’s commitment to the principle



that once children are older, lone parents who are able to work and are claiming benefits should be expected to look for paid work' (please see above for more details on how this affects lone parents). Another area of emphasis is to improve the sustainability of jobs, rather than simply improving the rate of job entry, with greater focus on skills training and 'making work pay' through career progression. To this end, 'the European Social Fund will invest over £3 billion in jobs and skills in the UK in 2007-2013.'

In 2006, the UK Government set up the Social Exclusion Task Force (SETF) to focus more closely on the problems of severe deprivation and those who are most at risk of social exclusion. Two key workstreams of the Task Force are delivery of the Socially Excluded Adults Public Service Agreement and the Families at Risk Review. It is notable that lone parents are not listed within the category of Socially Excluded Adults, but lone parent families are likely to benefit from some of the initiatives taken as a result of the Families at Risk Review.

The children of lone parents are also presented as a separate category in the section on eradicating child poverty. The 2008 Action Plan claims that from 1998 to 2007, the number of children in poverty in lone parent families has decreased by 200,000 children, and the percentage of children (in lone parent families) at risk of poverty has dropped from 46% risk to 37% risk. (Note that these are UK-wide statistics rather than specific to Northern Ireland). However, it is notable that, despite this high risk, the children of lone parents are not mentioned as a vulnerable group in the Action Plan's section on child poverty.

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## **SECTION F** **THE FILM SKILLS INDUSTRY**

Are there any film-related employment opportunities currently available or emerging within your district/country? If so, please explain.

### **ITALY**

Unfortunately in Italy the funding for film production and cinema in general has been cut by the current government. The film related employment opportunities are few, and they are not well paid.

### **POLAND**

There are not currently any job offers in magazines or online job-seeking portals (e.g. [www.pracuj.pl](http://www.pracuj.pl), [www.infopraca.pl](http://www.infopraca.pl), [www.praca.org.pl](http://www.praca.org.pl)); as with many fields, much depends on how enterprising and independent in the job search a person is. Some potential opportunities for finding work in this field are self-employment or work in EU projects.

### **GERMANY**

Leipzig is the centre of media production in the federal state of Saxony. Not only is the TV Station MDR located in the city, but also close by in the media city are 70 support service providers for the film and media industry. Several popular TV series as well as talk shows are produced in the city. Leipzig hosts a well-known documentary film festival, the DOK-Filmfestival as well as several small film festivals. The association "Landesfilmdienst Sachsen" is engaged in media education for young adults.

### **FRANCE**

Film-related employment suffered from the economic crisis but less than other sectors. The upturn in cultural employment began at the start of 2010, with employment offers rising by 30% to 40%.

Within the cultural sector, the creative and especially audiovisual industries are concentrated in the Ile-de-France region. Creative industries represent 365,000 jobs in the region. In 2007, these



occupations represented 6.2% of the total salaried employment in Ile-de-France while only 2.3% in other regions.

Ile-de-France is the premier region in France for the audiovisual sector. It counts for 90% of French studios and employment opportunities. It is also the first region in Europe for film production, in terms of activity and in terms of employment.

The Northern district (Seine-Saint-Denis, where CNA-CEFAG is) has a long-term speciality in film and media-related activity. Three cities (La Plaine-Saint-Denis, Pantin and Montreuil) concentrate on key activities of the sector: studios and audiovisual enterprises such as Euromedia, AB, and Career Group. The creation of a Cinema centre (*Cité du Cinéma*) is foreseen and will be implemented in this area; it will comprise 9 film-sets (studios), cinemas (projection rooms), costumes and set (scenery) studios and offices for production enterprises. Works began in 2009 and opening is foreseen in 2012. The creation of such a centre shows the willingness to develop film-related activities in the area.

Another public initiative has been a financial one launched in 2009 to support the international status of France in the film industry. The international tax credit (C2I), part of the 2009 Finance Law, provides a tax reduction of 20% of filming expenses for film shoots initiated by a foreign production company in France. This measure makes France a favourite in Europe and contributes to the attractiveness of the Ile-de-France region internationally.

The film-related sector is evolving with digital technology and emerging employment opportunities are mainly related to it. Identified new jobs are related to digital techniques (cinema) and transcoding (video) in post-production and broadcasting/distribution. In relation to digital technologies, 3D and animation films are increasing and France has a recognised know-how and great activity (for instance in 2010, French animation film "Despicable Me" was n°1 in the US during its first week). Emerging employment opportunities require film-related and multimedia skills for animation, 3D and 3D video games.

## UK



The film business is an established and growing sector within Northern Ireland. Because Northern Ireland has the facilities to produce films from start to finish, the film sector provides employment for writers, actors, crew members, creative teams and designers, location managers, musicians and composers, digital editors, and caterers, just to name a few.

This is augmented by organisations such as Northern Ireland Screen, which is the government-backed lead agency for providing funding for film projects, delivering film-related educational programmes, promoting Northern Ireland as a production location, and providing training programmes and financial assistance for professionals to enhance their skills. This, in turn, helps build the Northern Irish economy as a whole. According to their website, in the last year alone (2009-10), Northern Ireland Screen's main production investment fund returned £22 million to the local economy on an investment of £3.9m.

There are many independent television companies operating in Northern Ireland, in addition to the UK state-sponsored BBC. There are also jobs available in teaching film skills to children through the Creative Learning Centres in Derry, Belfast, and Armagh. For example, the Creative Learning Centres and Northern Ireland Screen have introduced a course called Moving Image Arts (MIA), the first A-Level in the UK in digital film-making. Northern Ireland Screen has recently recruited for a Film Archivist and other development officers, and the Belfast Film Festival (in association with CineMagic) employs a number of staff and trains many more volunteers for the annual festival. In addition, digital film making skills are important in the advertising sector, especially with the increase in online advertising in recent years.

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Are there any employer/ investment/film agencies with whom you can work to investigate employment opportunities in the film skills or creative industries? Please explain.

### **ITALY**

There are some film agencies, but we should contact them and see what they can offer. We have one contact with IOLE film agency.

### **POLAND**

We can try to establish collaboration with the Work Office and ask about job offers in the media sector. We can also ask internet job agencies (e.g. [www.pracuj.pl](http://www.pracuj.pl), [www.infopraca.pl](http://www.infopraca.pl), [www.praca.org.pl](http://www.praca.org.pl)) if they can help us in this field.

### **GERMANY**

The MDR as a public TV station could be approached as well as the many other companies, public bodies and associations active in the film industry and situated in the city of Leipzig.

### **FRANCE**

In France, vocational training is funded with public and private funds. Companies pay a levy as part of a legal obligation to participate in financing training. Companies funding is collected and managed (to fund salaried and unemployed vocational training) by funded collecting bodies by business sector.

AFDAS is the funding collecting body for live performing arts, cinema, audiovisual, advertisement and leisure sectors. AFDAS is in charge of vocational training funds management at the national level for these sectors. It also runs the prospective observatory of employment and qualifications for live performing arts, audiovisual, film production and distribution. CNA-Cefag could work with AFDAS to investigate employment opportunities in the film skills or creative industries.

### **UK**



The film industry is a growing sector in Northern Ireland, thanks in part to government tax incentives and grants that encourage film companies to produce here. Northern Ireland Screen is one agency that may be able to help us find tutors for the workshops and provide connections with organisations that may be interested in the project.

A consortium of regional colleges and the University of Ulster provide degree courses in all of the creative and media arts related to film, radio and television. This is collectively called the Northern Ireland Skillset Media Academy, and it is part of a UK-wide Skillset Media Academy. The students in these media programmes may be willing to teach and supervise one or more of the workshops in order to fulfil their practicum requirements, and professors may be available to teach some skills as well.

The local Supermom launch has also helped us connect with various arts organisations and individuals who are willing to work with us on the training course, and these connections will be a good resource for the programme participants during their job search.

The annual Belfast Film Festival draws a large viewership and highlights the achievements of Northern Irish actors, directors, and production companies. The Belfast Film Festival and the Derry/Londonderry City of Culture film festival could be venues for displaying the finished work of the lone parents.