

Eurochild

World Children's Day 2020

Webinar 1:

Putting Children at the Heart of Europe's Recovery

What is an 'economy of well-being'?

Why and how does it prioritize children?

Wednesday – 18th November 2020

Panel Discussion

- **From Eurochild's perspective what needs to be prioritized in governments' responses to manage the virus and to recover our economies?**
- **How is this informed by our Childonomics model?**
- **How do we envisage this can be used in the future to guide decision-making?**

I believe that our governments must not think, and plan in silos.

Our governments and policy makers should think and plan on a long-term basis, and also adopt holistic approaches, in their work to break the cycles of disadvantage.

There needs to be a change in mentality.

There needs to be clear policies for national, regional and global governance.

All this can be achieved if Agenda 2030 with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals is effectively taken on board.

COVID-19 has brought a health emergency which subsequently created a domino effect and a multitude of social and economic repercussions, compounding on the pre covid, vulnerable and disadvantaged communities in our societies even further.

Research is also showing us that children have been hit the hardest in this unprecedented period of time in our lifetime, albeit children are not a

category at risk from a medical viewpoint, as the pandemic continues to spread across the world, children's daily lives are being transformed completely and drastically.

Moreover, as the study on Combatting COVID-19's effect on children, by OECD, reports: *'the pandemic has the potential to create new vulnerable children and countries must prepare to respond to growing needs for support'*.

It is, therefore, all too clear that the pandemic has not only created a health emergency and an economic crisis, but definitely it is effecting all aspects of human life with Children as a vulnerable, are the most effected.

From our own first hand experience, when engaging with Children in conversation, we know that they are yearning for the right governing decisions and the right policies to be brought into being to fight off these effects, that are pulling down their aspirations of wellbeing.

Children are telling that they want their rights to be safeguarded.

Children are insisting that they want to participate fully on decisions that effect their very own lives now and in the future.

Pre pandemic we had already seen, Children's movements taking root to demand a more equal and equitable, global society.

The pandemic is exacerbating the inequalities and the inequities.

It is, therefore, crystal clear that focusing on economic recovery on its own, will not take us far.

The need to holistically strategize the economy and the needs of children and the wider society has never been so evident.

The pandemic has brought to the fore the lack of resilience in many of our empowerment and protection processes and systems.

The predominant inequalities which have been further exacerbated by the pandemic, are subsequently compounding further and creating even more severe risks for children.

If I had to take one particular aspect of the dreadful effects of the pandemic on children, I would choose the terrible situation of children falling out of the education system.

Never before, was the educational and digital divide so evident!

As the Director-General of UNESCO said: ‘..... the global scale and speed of the current educational disruption is unparalleled and, if prolonged, could threaten the right to education.’

This is one of the most horrible effects of COVID-19 and is a very clear example of how the pandemic is threatening Children’s Rights.

Eurochild, however is an optimist. After much consultation and studies, we are perceiving the pandemic as a time for reflection a time for thinking outside the box, to develop the right strategies and policies so that we can

ensure a holistic approach to the much-needed sustainable development in all sectors.

We are perceiving the pandemic as a learning curve, whereby we must not ignore the lessons that are being learnt.

In this sense Eurochild has increased and is continuing to enhance its advocacy to reach out to governments and authorities, so as to create more awareness of the need that economic strategies must be people-centered, putting Children in particular at the heart of all Recovery Strategies and Plans.

We are advocating for Economies that look ahead and assess social impact beforehand, so that we build a preventive approach – a preventive support system – to sow resilience.

This is where our Childonomics model comes in.

When in 2014, Eurochild led this initiative of developing Childonomics, no one ever knew that in a few years' time the need for such a model would become so important.

Childonomics is a project which now needs to go into a next stage, whereby the scientific tool kit needs to be further developed.

Childonomics is basically a tool to determine the long-term social and economic return of investing in children, and specifically in various child empowerment and protection services. It is a tool that can predetermine the social impact of the economic investment.

It provides a method, which any available relevant data can be used to compare the social and economic investment, and also evaluate the outcomes of the different existing or proposed services.

It can be the tool that allows policy makers to make the necessary informed decisions about what works and what does not work.

It can give the necessary landscape to policy makers to invest sustainably.

It is definitely a transparent tool to help organisations and networks to strengthen their advocacy for the necessary changes to be made in strategies and policies to safeguard Children's rights.

It is a guarantee for Children's wellbeing to be at the core of all policies.

In brief, Childonomics, provides the evidence that investing in children is worth it.

Childonomics can be the catalyst that provides the basis of long-term sustainable planning.

Childonomics provides the assurance of not throwing much precious resources down the drain, but ensures an approach to meaningful growth and inclusive prosperity.

Childonomics is essentially the definition of what an economy of well-being, is.

Finally I would like to take the opportunity to publicly encourage OECD to partner with Eurochild on the development of this important tool. Childonomics is a game changer.

OECD understands the dire need for such a tool. Eurochild and OECD are on the same page in our believe for the importance of our policy makers, to make wellbeing central in their work for better societies.