

Government of Finland

Replies to the Questionnaire to Member States prepared by the Independent Expert on the question of Extreme poverty and human rights, Ms Magdalena Sepulveda on cash transfer programmes.

(i) The Legal and institutional framework

The aim of the Finnish social protection system and its social welfare component is to guarantee everyone the constitutional right to indispensable subsistence and care consistent with the dignity of human life. Social service and income security together secure the support and care that individuals and families need at various stages in their lives, while also enabling participation in working life and ensuring gender equality. Prevention and treatment of social exclusion are an essential part of social welfare.

Please see more on the publication “Social Welfare in Finland”, page 4-5 and page 8 on private sector providers.

<http://www.stm.fi/Resource.phx/publishing/store/2006/10/aa1161155903333/pass%20thru.pdf>

(ii) Programme costs and coverage

Social welfare in Finland is mainly funded through taxes. In 2005, the expenditure on social welfare was EUR 42.3 billion, of which one third came from the central government budget. Social welfare expenditure accounted for 27,2% of GDP, which is close to the EU average.

Please see more on the publication “Social Welfare in Finland, page 26-27.

<http://www.stm.fi/Resource.phx/publishing/store/2006/10/aa1161155903333/pass%20thru.pdf>

(iii) Implementation procedures

Finland has an Act on the Status and Rights of Social Welfare Clients. It defines the major legal principles for the participation, treatment and legal protection of social welfare clients. The purpose of this Act is to promote a client-oriented approach, confidentiality in client relationships and the right of clients to receive high-quality social welfare services and to be treated well.

Please, see more on the publication “Social Welfare in Finland, page 27-28.

<http://www.stm.fi/Resource.phx/publishing/store/2006/10/aa1161155903333/pass%20thru.pdf>

(iv) Monitoring mechanisms and complaints procedures

Every municipality must have a social services ombudsman. The ombudsman promotes the rights of social welfare clients for example by publishing information on clients rights, by advising clients on matters related to application of the above Act, and by assisting clients in filing complaints to the responsible officials of the social welfare unit or to the municipal official in charge. The municipal social services ombudsman monitors development of the status and rights of clients in the municipality and submits a report on this to the municipal executive board annually.

Please, see more on the publication “Social Welfare in Finland, page 28.

<http://www.stm.fi/Resource.phx/publishing/store/2006/10/aa1161155903333/pass%20thru.pdf>

(v) Existing studies and evaluations cash transfer programmes

For example, National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES) monitors the state and distribution of welfare in Finland. It also assess the outcomes of the social security system, social and health services and other welfare policy. In co-operation with municipalities, STAKES develops welfare management and welfare promotion strategies. STAKES also develops and evaluates practices and methods in social services. In co-operation with other actors, it gathers information on good practices and provide innovative evaluation and development methods. The resultant information is disseminated interactively. In addition, they maintain statistics in the topic area.

For more information please see: <http://www.stakes.fi/EN/index.htm>