



By 2030 poverty is to be ended in all its forms.

No one should have to live in extreme poverty any longer. In particular, at-risk or vulnerable groups should be enabled to follow a path out of poverty. Target 1.2 is important for Germany: By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to the German definition.

STRATEGIC POVERTY REDUCTION IN GELSENKIRCHEN

➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?

Located in the Ruhr Region, Gelsenkirchen is one of the cities in Germany with the highest proportion of children receiving social security benefits. The city has set itself the task of improving these children's opportunities for participation, in order to break the poverty spiral of lack of education, unemployment and receipt of social welfare.

➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Back in 1997, the city council of Gelsenkirchen voted unanimously in favour of Agenda 21, and one year later voted unanimously to establish the 'aGenda 21' workshop for the future. In 2016 the city signed the specimen resolution 'The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Building Sustainability at the Local Level', drafted by the Association of German Cities and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions.

➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?

To enable children to grow up well, they are supported from birth until they join the workforce. This involves establishing prevention chains, networks and structures for sustainable education. There are also counselling services and networks for parents and children as well as numerous out-of-school learning opportunities – for instance as part of an adult education programme.

➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

As part of the 'City of the Future 2030+' programme run by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Gelsenkirchen will devise ideas for a holistic development of the municipality. This will expand existing education and participatory activities into a 'mesh of networks' designed to give all children better opportunities for participation.



City of Gelsenkirchen

➔ North Rhine-Westphalia


Population:
260,000


Mayor:
Frank Baranowski





EDUCATION TO FIGHT CHILD POVERTY

In Germany, one of the wealthiest countries in the world, 12.9 million people are living in poverty or are at risk of poverty. According to the World Bank definition, anyone living on less than 1.9 US dollars a day is extremely poor. In affluent countries, poverty is seen in relation to the respective level of prosperity. In Germany, anyone earning less than 60 per cent of the median national income is considered to be relatively poor. Groups particularly hard hit by poverty include the unemployed, families with a migrant background, single parents and children. The City of Gelsenkirchen in the Ruhr Region has a high unemployment rate, and is one of the cities in Germany with the highest proportion of children receiving social security benefits. With the welfare of children in mind, the city is taking a firm stance against the problem of poverty – despite its empty coffers.

‘Experience has shown how important it is to begin supporting children as early as possible’, says Annette Berg, Head of Department for Culture, Education, Sports and Integration, City of Gelsenkirchen. ‘We support children from birth until they join the workforce by establishing prevention chains, networks and structures for sustainable education.’ This begins with the welcome visit to each family in Gelsenkirchen with a newborn child. The chain extends from counselling services for parents, through language training and sports promotion, to support with educational issues and child care services. ‘The various actors must form a community of responsibility to enable children to grow up well’, says Berg. The activities are integrated into the state programme ‘Leave no child behind’, in which Gelsenkirchen is a model municipality. ‘We want equal opportunities for all children’, emphasises Annette Berg. This is why the city performs social monitoring, which involves analysing parts of the city and evaluating the opportunities for participation available to the children living there.

Following a council resolution, in 2016 the city signed the specimen resolution ‘The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Building Sustainability at the Local Level’, drafted by the Association of German Cities and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions. By doing so the city committed to implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Here it will be able to build



The City of Gelsenkirchen intends to create equal opportunities for all children. (Photo: The aGenda21 Office in Gelsenkirchen)

on the lessons it learned when implementing Agenda 21. Werner Rybarski is director of the City of Gelsenkirchen’s ‘aGenda-21’ office – the organisational hub and information centre where things are coordinated and controlled. Education for Sustainable Development was always a high priority in the Agenda process, and is seen as key to reducing poverty. ‘We’re not just talking about school education in the traditional sense’, says Mr Rybarski. He goes on to explain that education touches on almost all the other SDGs. Through networking, out-of-school learning centres have arisen such as the creative workshop for children and youth run by the City of Gelsenkirchen and aGenda-21, which is also part of the adult education programme. Activities and projects offered by more than 60 providers are clustered here. They include dye-plant gardens where plants are grown that produce dyes, children’s environmental education projects, nature excursions and many other low-cost offerings for children and families.

Gelsenkirchen is also developing new ideas for sustainable urban development. One aim is to enable all children – regardless of their social background – to live self-reliant lives as members of the urban society.

INTERNET ADDRESSES

www.agenda21.info/english/start.htm

<http://skew.engagement-global.de/zeichnungskommunen-agenda-2030.html>