

## Child Poverty In Armenia

Gohar Jerbashian  
Areg Jerbashian

### Abstract

Children are at the highest poverty risk in any country. Poverty is a blight denying poor children the opportunities that others quite often take for granted. Aiming at elaborating policies/recommendations to eradicate child poverty, the report touches upon social-economic conditions of households with children, presents some measures of child poverty, and highlights social costs of passing childhood in poverty.

### ბავშვთა სიღარიბე სომხეთში

გოჰარ ჯერბაშიანი  
არეგ ჯერბაშიანი

თითქმის ნებისმიერ ქვეყანაში ბავშვები სიღარიბის მაღალი საფრთხის წინაშე დგანან. სიღარიბე ზოგიერთ ბავშვს იმ შესაძლებლობებს ართმევს, რომელიც გარკვეული ფენისთვის ჩვეულებრივ სხელმისაწვდომია. პრობლემის გადაჭრის თვალსაზრისით სასურველია შემუშავდეს პოლიტიკა, რომელიც საგრძნობლად შეუწყობს ხელს არსებული ვითარების გამოსწორებას სოციალ-ეკონომიკური მდგომარეობის გაუმჯობესების გზით.

There is a continual deliberation on what “poverty” means, and how to measure it. Perhaps the most convincing definition emphasizing the relative nature of poverty is: Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or are at least widely encouraged and approved, in the societies in which they belong (Townsend, 1979: 31).

Poverty negatively affects children not only via worsening their material conditions but also limiting access to quality health care and education, creating barriers for social inclusion, and deteriorating the opportunities that others very often take for granted. Along with lack of money poverty is a psychological condition which has a serious impact on the socialization of children: it hampers their adaptation to school, makes them lower their aspirations, accept their “fate” and be

content with little. Because of lesser life expectancy (due to higher mortality rates) and lower level of literacy (because of higher drop out rates) poor children lack the opportunity to accumulate knowledge and skills enough to sustain themselves in the future. They are more likely than non-poor children to experience a number of adverse outcomes including poor health and death, failure in school, out-of-wedlock births, and violent crime. Recognizing that a poor child with no future prospectus is a huge loss of human capital for the nation, tackling child poverty must be a cornerstone for building a progressive, free of poverty society.

Omer Moav developed a theory that offers an explanation for the persistence of poverty within and across countries. Key assumption for the study is that individuals' productivity increases with their own human capital. In contrast to poor households that as a rule choose relatively high fertility rates (resulting on the quantity of children) with relatively low investment in their children's education, as a result of which their offspring are poor as well, high-income families choose low fertility rates with high investment in education (influencing the quality of children) of their offspring, and therefore, high income persists in the dynasty. For low wage earners, the opportunity cost of time is low, and hence children are "cheap" and the relative price of child quantity increases with the wage rate" (Moav, 2003: 2).

Some analysts believe that poverty itself generates a way of existence that constituted a unique "culture of poverty". Politicians and policymakers allege that it is "futile and wasteful to mount public policy initiatives to ameliorate the lives of the poor because the culture of poor people themselves mandates endemic and enduring poverty." Living in chronic need develops special sets, values and stable behaviour patterns which are passed on "as inheritance" and which in their turn promote the intergenerational poverty (Philen). The analysts however, rejected considering the roles of education, substandard housing, poor health, inadequate medical care, job opportunities, and racism or discrimination in generating and prolonging poverty.

Evidence suggests that parents' education positively affects children's education: there exists a trade-off between quantity and quality of children, fertility is negatively correlated with education, and there is a strong negative correlation between women's schooling and fertility, a strong positive effect of parental schooling on children's schooling. The decline in fertility as incomes grow is the result of the rising opportunity cost of well educated women's time, who as

a rule prefer career advancement to having more children. Investigations show that mother's education and age; sibship size; mother reads, talks to child, answers verbally with positive voice; availability of books, magazines, and tape/record player; visits to museum; safe, tidy, and not dark home; and many other factors shape the environment favourable for intellectual development of a child. In general, physical environment, parental styling, cognitive stimulation, health at birth, childhood health, child care quality, and participation in Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs are those most significant factors that affect the child's intellectual development, which is the basement of human capital accumulation (Guang & Harris, 2000, p. 437).

Early studies of the effectiveness of ECD programs demonstrated remarkably higher IQ scores of ECD program participants than those who did not take part in such programs. However, with passage of time the IQ scores of these two groups leveled out and the value of ECD programs was questioned. Nonetheless, long-term studies of ECD program participants illustrate significant benefits of the program that in effect bring sustainable results: higher levels of verbal, mathematics, and intellectual achievement, greater success at school, including less grade retention and higher graduation rates, higher employment and earnings, better health outcomes, less welfare dependency, lower rates of crime, and greater government revenues and lower government expenditures. ECD programs enable the participating children to enter school "ready to learn", helping them achieve better outcomes in school and throughout their lives (Lynch, 2004, 3-4).

Children participating in ECD programs receive psychosocial stimulation, nutritional supplements, health care, and their parents receive training in effective childcare. Grade repetition and dropout rates are lower, performance at school is higher, and the probability that a child will progress to higher levels of education increases. ECD is associated with decreased morbidity and mortality among children, fewer cases of malnutrition and stunting, improved personal hygiene and health care, and fewer instances of child abuse. ECD also leads to better socially adapted adults who are less aggressive, more cooperative, and show reduced criminal behavior and less delinquency (Mayer-Fulkes, 2003, p. 4).

In making their life plans teenagers are inclined to take into account the support which the family can provide them with. Money and parents' (more critically mothers') education are the two essential

family resources that enable school-children to make their future plans. Both the family's material wealth and the mother's high educational status contribute to the forming of teenagers' life-long strategies: raising their aspirations, facilitating adaptation to school conditions and boosting their readiness to take responsibility for their future. The wealthier and more educated are the parents (especially the mother), the higher are the children's aspirations and plans, and the stronger is the confidence that their plans will come true. On the contrary, absence of both kinds of these resources propagates social outsiders who are either prepared to give up any hopes of success and humbly acknowledge that they are doomed to poverty and are stuck to it (Shurygina, 1999).

### *Measuring Child Poverty*

Poverty risk largely depends on the structure of a household and the number of dependants in it. In Armenia, households having children below age 7, or having 3 and more children are among those exposed to poverty risk most of all. Children are the most vulnerable segment of Armenia's population. In Armenia, 34.9% of preschool age children were poor and 5.1% very poor in 2005 (correspondingly 41.9/8.0% in 2004), being the highest among all age groups. The second highest level of poverty was in the age group 6-14 for which the poverty incidence was 32.0% and extreme poverty rate was 5.3% in 2005 (36.6/7.2% in 2004) (SSPA, 2006, p. 22).

Why so many children are poor? The main reason of this is that the poor families as a rule have more children. Additionally, poor families being unable to sufficiently invest in education and health of their children expose them to high risk of persistent poverty as a result of suppressed earning capacity due to poor human capital accumulation.

Table 1.  
*Poverty line in Armenia, 2001-2005 (in USD)*

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Extreme poverty line	18.5	18.2	20.1	23.4	29.0
Poverty line	30.6	30.2	32.0	36.3	44.3

Source: ILCS- 2005, p. 22, ILCS- 2006, p. 28,  
[/www.edrc.am/project.html?cat\\_id=71](http://www.edrc.am/project.html?cat_id=71), own calculations

Table 1 and Table 2 reveal that the majority of households in Armenia overcome only food poverty line without even reaching the complete poverty line. The large families with more than 6-7 members and having more children mainly live on money less than the food poverty line, that is in extreme poverty.

Table 2.

*Per capita income by family size and presence of children in the family, Yerevan and Kotayk, 2004-2005 (in USD)*

Number of Household Members	Yerevan 2004		Yerevan 2005		Kotayk	
	w/o children	with children	w/o children	with children	w/o children	with children
1	70.5		63.3		39.8	
2	52.9	35.9	64.4	44.2	44.5	30.3
3	55.3	58.6	48.9	71.9	41.2	31.9
4	50.6	48.0	66.6	49.1	46.4	32.7
5	38.1	38.5	52.9	38.9	36.4	29.8
6	47.2	29.1	37.0	38.8	56.5	24.3
7	28.0	31.2		36.4	32.4	28.5
8		24.4		30.2		20.8
9		22.0		27.0		18.6
10		20.1		30.8		28.6
11		11.2		38.3		35.2
12		18.3		36.6		22.4
13		18.9				13.5
14						6.9

Source: CRRC-Armenia Data Initiative 2004-2005, own calculations

Nearly all the CRRC-Armenia surveyed households perceive themselves as more poor than non-poor. Households without or having less than 4 children inclined to feel belonging to the middle-middle to higher-middle social class, while those having more than 4 children position themselves in the lower-middle social class. In general, with the increase of the number of children in the household the feeling of being in poverty increases and recognition of belonging to a lower social class strengthens (see Table 3).

Table 3.  
*Self assessment of economic condition and social strata of h/h*

	Yerevan				Kotayk	
	2004		2005		2005	
	economic condition*	social strata**	economic condition	social strata	economic condition	social strata
Families with: no children	3.60	2.99	3.58	2.48	3.74	3.00
less than 4 children	3.77	3.34	4.11	3.70	3.68	2.96
4 and more children	4.00	2.14	3.75	2.25	4.10	2.06

Source: CRRC-Armenia Data Initiative 2004-2005, own calculations

Note: \*1 being very good and 5 very poor, \*\* 1 being the lowest and 5 the upper levels

Table 4 illustrates that the frequency of taking loans, credit, or debt in order to meet their family needs increases parallel to the number of children in the family.

Table 4.  
*Share of families ever taken loans (in%)*

	Yerevan		Kotayk
	2004	2005	2005
Families with: no children	15.3	14.6	27.0
less than 4 children	22.7	26.0	40.1
4 children and more	28.6	50.0	45.2
Total	19.1	21.1	36.2

Source: CRRC-Armenia Data Initiative 2004-2005, own calculations

Source: CRRC-Armenia Data Initiative 2004-2005, own calculations  
*Human Poverty - Health and Education*

Health: Poor health status of people can be the result and reason of poverty. Poor people are in a vicious circle: sick people are more exposed to poverty, meanwhile those who are poor are more vulnerable to diseases and disability. In Armenia, health and education status have a significant influence on the perception of households on their overall socio-economic status. Households having a sick member are more likely to perceive themselves as poor than similar households with no sick members (SSPA, 2006, p.183).

The highest priority need of households in Armenia (2005) was healthcare, better nutrition being the next. There are inadequately met needs which are “more characteristic for the poor” healthcare, better nutrition and dwelling, as well as repaying debts, and another set of unmet needs that are “more characteristic for the non-poor” investments in own business, education, purchasing property, recreation and entertainment (PPPPA, 2005, p.81).

Table 5 shows that healthcare is such an urgent need that households took loans in order to gain access to the services in 2004 and 2005. The second priority purpose for which households took loans is the payment for education.

Table 5.  
*The main purpose of taking loans (in %)*

	Yerevan		Kotayk	
	w/o children	with children	w/o children	with children
business expenses/	2.1	10.6	9.4	11.7
education	8.3	16.3	10.9	15.1
purchase/ renovation of a house	8.3	6.7	9.4	11.7
medical care	31.3	24.0	32.8	44.9
capital goods	8.3	6.7	10.9	10.2
loans/debts/credits payback	2.1	3.8	9.4	12.7

Source: CRRC-Armenia Data Initiative 2004-2005, own calculations

About the poor health at birth in Armenia indicates the increase in the share of low weight births, which increased from 5.6% to 8.2% (1980-2002) and then dropped to 7.0% in 2005 still being very high. In 1980-2000, the incidence of anemia among the pregnant increased by more than fourteen times: from 1.1 to 15.7%. Afterwards thanks to taken by the Armenian Government measures the indicator dropped to 10.7%, though again being very high (Pachi, 2002: pp. 129-130,134; TransMonee:6; HA, 2005: p. 181). Unfortunately, recently active tuberculosis quickly has spread also among juveniles. Morbidity by active tuberculosis of 0-14 (15-17) age children increased by 1.4 (3.2) times during 1990-2005 and reached 38.8 per 100,000 children of the respective age (HA, 2005, p. 67).

Education: In Armenia, the economic activity increases along with the level of education. The highest economic activity was recorded among those having post graduate and doctoral degrees (89.5%), and those having higher education (80.2%). Average indicator of economic activity among the surveyed was 69.5%, with the smallest level of economic activity (17.0%) demonstrated by those with elementary education (EPEAA, 2002, p. 67). The households with better educated heads and spouses are less likely to feel poor: the higher is the level of attained education the larger is the deviation from feeling poor. Households headed by university degree holding individuals (or whose spouse has at least some tertiary education) assess their economic condition as being in poverty at 12.9% less than the general surveyed population. Nonetheless, high level of education does not always guarantee well-off life: among those having higher education 19.5% were poor and 2.6% were very poor compared to total indicators 33.5% poor and 6.1% very poor in 2004. Since 1998/1999, extreme and general poverty has dropped most of all among those Armenians who possess mid level specialization and/or university degrees. The share of poor with tertiary education declined by 1.7 times, and the proportion of very poor dropped 5.2 times (SSPA, 2006, p.57).

The pre-school education is the primary level of the educational system in Armenia. During soviet times, wide network of very developed pre-school educational system substantially contributed to the effective functioning of the primary and then secondary schooling. On the other hand, it provided the opportunity for parents, especially women, to enter the labor market. During the transition period the pre-school educational system has undergone significant changes. During soviet times, wide network of very developed pre-school edu-



cational system substantially contributed to the effective functioning of the primary and secondary schooling. Meanwhile, it provided the opportunity for parents, especially women, to enter into the labor market. During the transition period the pre-school educational system has undergone significant changes: particularly from 1991 to 2004, the set of public pre-school institutions (PSI) shrieked 1.7 times (from 1069 to 623) and the number of children enrolled in these institutions reduced by 3.0 times (from 143,500 to 47,791). In 2005, 21.5% of preschool age children were enrolled into the PSIs, as compared to 39.0% in 1991 (NGOAR: 12; SCA, 2005, p. 7, 13, 17)).

In general, from 1989 to 2003, pre-school enrollment rates (as % of 3-6 years old population) dropped from 48.5% to 27.8%. Primary school (children aged 7-14) enrollment rates decreased from 95.5% to 87.2%. Total upper secondary school (children aged 15-17) enrollment rates dropped from 67.5% to 49.2%. Most of these 15-17 years old children not attending schools have no occupation and hence nearly 30% of 15-17 years old teenagers are not engaged in any kind of creative and development programs, which eventually will turn against them when they start seeking jobs. Vocational/technical secondary enrollment rates declined from 31.6% to 12.1%. Meanwhile, it is interesting to observe that during this time period higher educational enrollments (gross rates, percent of population aged 19-24) increased from 19.3% to 22.7% (by 17.7%) (TransMonee, 2005).

While the enrollment rates in basic education are pretty high (95%) and they do not differ substantially across consumption quintiles, the enrollment rates in high school are substantially lower - about 70.0% nationally and the difference between poor and better off households becomes almost 10%. The enrollment rates in preschool/tertiary institution are about 41.0/38.0% among students from the richest quintile, and only 19.0/5.0% for those from the poorest households. Irrespective of socio-economic status of the h/h, the enrollment rates by age and sex are very similar for 7-14 age group. At age 15 (the end of general education) there is a sharp decline in the enrollment, especially among the poor and it drops even sharper at age 16. Nonetheless, some 20-30% of 17-20 years old young people from the poorest quintile enroll into a tertiary level educational institution and hence tend to receive specialty that hopefully will shift them from poverty (SSPA, 2006, p. 98, 120).

Juvenile Crime: Crime not only harms individuals, it also hampers the country's social, economic, and judiciary development as well as jeopardizes the most important societal values. Most children

who come into conflict with the law do so for minor, non-violent offences and in some cases their only "crime" is that they are poor, homeless and disadvantaged. Juvenile crime is not a particularly dramatic one in Armenia: the share of 14-17 age offenders among the disclosed ones was 5.4, 5.6, and 5.7% in 2003-2005 (SCA, 2003: 156; SCA, 2004: 258; SCA, 2005: 158). Some 0.8% of 14-17 years old adolescents committed a crime in 2003 and 2004. In most cases the juveniles engage in light "traditional" crimes (theft, larceny, robbery, hooliganism, bodily harm). Most of the juvenile crime (67.3% in 2003) is committed by those who don't work or study or by socially marginalized and poor adolescents (SYA, 2005: 183).

Juvenile crime has specific causes: one of those being longer "transition" period from adolescence to adulthood. Thus if 50% of young people aged 18 had jobs in 1987 in Europe; in 1995 the indicator was attained at 20 (LHDR, 1999: 147-148). This extended period of social maturation brings with it an extended exposure to the danger of criminal involvement. In Armenia, the 50% employment is achieved by 30-34 age group people (25-29 age males) (LMA, 2004, 18). Another reason for the increase in juvenile crime is expanded female employment and absence of affordable social services. Women, whose unwritten "social role" in Armenia is care after and upbringing of children, with increased employment and reduction in the number of child care institutions and youth activity centers, left the youngsters somehow out of care. Alongside, currently children have a significantly greater exposure to the "fruits" of the adult world. They have direct access to information mostly via TV programs and Internet, which are full of violence, criminal, and erotic films and stories. Images of violence promote the notion that only the physically strongest win in this world. The image of such a winning "macho" is upheld also by non punishment of socially sound criminal cases (including cases of corruption). Dual standards in the society, especially in the sphere of education where the minors have much direct relation, creates distortions in child behavior.

Child Labor: In Armenia, some 5.1% of 7-17 years old children work as per child's answer, while as per parents' answer the share of working children was 4.5% (7.1% boys and 1.8% of girls). In total, 63.6% of working children stated that the main cause of working was the acute financial hardships faced by their families. Dominant share of children were performing housework and every third child was paid for the work performed (RLFCLAS, 2004, p. 39, 56).

Nearly all employed children work on oral agreement and are not registered with an employer and hence neither their labor nor social rights are protected. Article 140 of the Labor Code envisages shorter working hours per week: 24 hours for from 14 to 16 years old working children and 36 hours for those working children that are elder 16 and smaller 18. Nonetheless, the Survey revealed that 33.8%/22.1% of working children spend more than 25/35 hours at work, which of course implies that they spent more time at work than at school, and 7.7% of working children work more than 56 hours a week, which is too much even for adults (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Hours Worked by Employed Children in a Week  
Labor Force and Child Labor in Armenia, NSS, 2004, p. 72

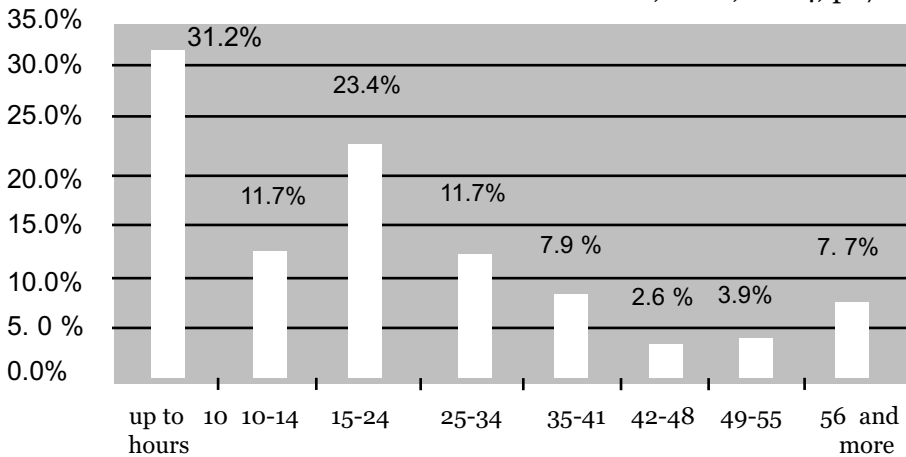


Table 6 illustrates the most important factor for getting a job. The majority of respondents thinks that the most powerful means to get (have) a job is to have good connections. The weighty share of the factor of “money” in getting a job, we think, is mainly associated with self-employment opportunities and it might also be related with the possibility of getting a job through pleasing the employer.

Meanwhile, it is worth noting that subtotal of the factors “Hard work”, “Education”, “Professional abilities, talent”, and “Work experience”, which in effect supplement each other and comprise three factors that shape professional attainments, generally outweigh the factor of “Connections”. This means that all these critical factors that though being diminutive separately, together act as counterweigh to the factor of “Connections”.

Table 6.  
*Most important factor for getting job (in%)*

	Yerevan		Yerevan		Kotayk	
	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005
	h/h w/o children	h/h with children	h/h w/o children	h/h with children	h/h w/o children	h/h with children
Hard work	5.9	5.4	3.5	5.3	4.1	9.5
Education	8.6	7.7	7.7	8.9	3.9	9.5
Professional abilities, talent	4.8	5.4	4.3	4.8	2.9	5.9
Work experience	1.0	1.3	1.5	1.9	2.8	4.5
Subtotal:	20.3	19.8	17.0	20.9	13.7	29.4
Connections	19.3	19.2	19.4	22.2	12.1	23.3
Luck	0.9	1.1	4.8	4.7	1.9	4.4
Money	4.7	6.7	3.3	6.0	3.6	10.8
Health	1.3	1.5	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.1
Being young and female	1.0	1.1	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.1
Aspiration, desire	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1
New jobs	-	-	0.1	0.4	-	-

Source: Own Calculations on the basis of CRRC-Armenia Data Initiative 2004-2005Dataset

### *Conclusions and Recommendations*

According to statistics, nearly every third resident of our country is poor and about 7.5% of the population lives below the minimum subsistence level. Unemployment of parent(s), loss of a breadwinner, large size of the family and other social risks result in a desperate situation for numerous children. In Armenia, the presence of two and more children under 14 in a household increases the probability of being poor by 11.4%, in 2004 (SSPA, 2004, p. 41, 122). Social welfare

benefits have not been providing the needy children with adequate resources enabling them to sustain decent standards of living allowing them to cumulate skills and knowledge enough for shifting from poverty, and taking full participation in customary for Armenian society activities.

In developing countries with poor economies children represent the greatest poverty risk. Poverty is a blight denying poor children the opportunities that others quite often take for granted. Recognizing that a poor child with no future prospectus is a huge loss for the society and nation, reducing child poverty and laying ground for building up human capital should be at the focus of state and society attention. In this regard it is critical to analyze the social-economic conditions of households with children, to measure child poverty and social cost of living childhood in poverty, and develop policies to eradicate child poverty. Sustainable economic growth for Armenia is possible only through human capital accumulation through educational attainments (Manasyan & Jrbashyan, 2002, p. 11).

Extending the availability of these services to poor children is vital for the anti-poverty strategy: good childcare not only has the potential to improve educational and developmental outcomes, protecting children from some of the impacts of poverty, but it also allows parents to enter employment or to raise their hours of paid work to increase earnings. It is nice to state that the government of Armenia has adopted a UNICEF-endorsed strategy to increase pre-school enrolment and enhance access to early childhood development services.

The Government of Armenia has introduced a new order of poverty family benefits that are supportive to redistributing more financial assistance to families with children. Up-rating benefits and tax credits is vital to maintain their relative value. To make real progress over time, the value of benefits to children ought to rise above the rate of the fastest growing of prices or earnings. Recent focus on benefits for children has been welcome but children's benefits do not act in isolation. It is the family income that must be considered and so adult benefits cannot be ignored.

Recent reductions in poverty rates are welcome, but poverty still remains high especially among children. Tackling child poverty must be a cornerstone of building a progressive, modern society, both decent and successful. High inequality and poverty rates threaten not only the upbringing of children but our social and economic wellbeing and development.

The importance of eradicating child poverty is evident and is based on the manifestation of negative impact that poverty has on childhood and on later life opportunities. The state and society should take the challenge of eradicating of childhood poverty as soon as possible. Child poverty programs should ensure all children have full access to the development and health programs.

Quite often the hidden costs of education (e.g. trips, activities, meals, and “school support” contributions) push out poorer children from their schools. This especially happens in high classes, and many children start to work to support their families. To this contributes also non-adaptability of school curricula to the market demands: secondary school programs are more oriented to preparing the children to pass university enrolment exams not at providing them life skills. Therefore, the school programs should be substantially revised. Meanwhile, the government must intervene to make school a positive and protective environment for all children especially the poor ones, reducing the impact of poverty particularly through substantial contribution in the form of providing books, subscription and inclusion in extracurricular activity groups and sports clubs, or provision of season tickets to museums to the poor children.

Despite high pace of economic growth, the unemployment rates decrease very slowly. On the other hand, many of the poor children live in households with one or more parent has no paid work. Work on its own does not guarantee adequate income because of very low wages. Public policies should concentrate not only on creating just new jobs but better jobs providing sufficient means for decent living. To this will support also the increasing of the minimum wage in the economy above the minimum consumption basket.

In order to attain higher degree health status of the population, particularly increased life expectancy at birth and at working/reproductive ages, the limited means of the state budget should be more targeted on programs that should be selected on the basis of their long-run public impact; namely invest in early childhood health care (including pregnancy care and nutrition) and educational programs: Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs as well as in vocational and higher professional quality education that ensues competitiveness of their graduates in the labor market.

< Education is one of the most effective means for having young people productively occupied and providing means to build up high competence for finding not just a job but better job. However, if the education does not meet the labor market needs, schools will be abandoned by many students.

< Creation of new and strengthening of existing vocational schools that prepare specialists of high demand specialties, will bring children back to education

< Establishment of military schools/colleges for adolescents, will bring many children into order

< Expansion of the network of extracurricular activity centers (e.g. Youth Centers) for the youth and support the children from poor families to participate in the activity classes that the child has a talent for.

< Better and coordinated work with the Armenian Apostolic Church, might keep children within the boundaries of national and human values.

< Involvement of asocial teenagers in above mentioned institutions as well as in sports schools, especially team sport groups, will keep them busy and out of antisocial conduct and hence prevent criminal behavior.

< Promote policies of social contracting with non-commercial organizations for child care programs, envisaging special programs for vagrant and beggar children.

< Summer recreational programs: a great number of children will be provided with some means of productively spending their free time, especially during summer holidays.

The strategic approach in fighting child poverty should combine direct government involvement in mitigating the negative influence of poverty on children with measures to advocate people lift themselves out of poverty through work. In the case of child poverty, covering poor children with quality state funded early childhood development programs as well as raising lone parent employment are especially essential. The programs should assure that all children have the best possible start in life and to provide equal opportunity so that each child can fulfill his/her potential.

The importance of eradication of child poverty is evident and is based on the manifestation of negative impact that the poverty can have on child's future opportunities. Child poverty programs should ensure all children have full access to high quality health care, development and educational programs. Keeping children and young people productively occupied is one of the most efficient ways of preventing juvenile antisocial behavior. In general, contributing to revitalization of PSIs and supporting the children from poor families to enroll in the high quality ECD programs and youth activity centers, taking measures to increase enrolment of vulnerable children into the

schools (especially vocational educational establishments) would ensure competitiveness of these children in the labor market at their adulthood and contribute to the irreversible eradication of poverty in Armenia.

## References

- EPEAA: Education, Poverty and Economic Activity in Armenia. (2002). UNDP. Retrieved June 5, 2005 from [http://www.undp.am/docs/publications/publication\\_sarchive/gipa/main.htm](http://www.undp.am/docs/publications/publication_sarchive/gipa/main.htm)
- Ph. R. Blog. *Oscar Lewis and the Culture of Poverty*. Retrieved March 25, 2007 from <http://robertphilen.blogspot.com/2007/03/oscar-lewis-and-culture-of-poverty.html>
- Guang G. & Harris K.M. (2000). The Mechanisms Mediating the Effects of Poverty on Children's Intellectual Development. *Demography*, V. 37, No.4, 431-447. <http://muse.jhu.edu/demo/demography/v037/37.4guo.pdf>
- HA: Health in Armenia. (2005). *National Institute of Health*, Retrieved September 5, 2006 from [http://www.niharm.am/Public/Stat\\_Book\\_2005/05\\_Head\\_2.pdf](http://www.niharm.am/Public/Stat_Book_2005/05_Head_2.pdf)
- LFCLA: Labor Force and Child Labor in Armenia Survey. (2004). National Statistical Service, Yerevan. Retrieved August 10, 2005 from [http://www.armstat.am/arm/Publications/2005/ashx\\_het/index.html](http://www.armstat.am/arm/Publications/2005/ashx_het/index.html)
- LHDR: Lithuanian Human Development Report. (1999). UN. Retrieved July 15, 2005 from [http://www.un.lt/images/socialine\\_raida/en/1999/10CHAPTER1999.pdf](http://www.un.lt/images/socialine_raida/en/1999/10CHAPTER1999.pdf)
- LMA: Labor Market in Armenia. (2004). National Statistical Service, Yerevan. Retrieved August 11, 2005 from [http://www.armstat.am/arm/Publications/2005/ashx\\_97\\_03/index.html](http://www.armstat.am/arm/Publications/2005/ashx_97_03/index.html)
- Lynch R.G. (2004). Exceptional Returns: Economic, Fiscal, and Social Benefits of Investment in Early Childhood Development. Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved May 15, 2005 from [http://www.epinet.org/books/exceptional/exceptional\\_returns\\_\(full\).pdf](http://www.epinet.org/books/exceptional/exceptional_returns_(full).pdf)



- Manasyan H. & Jrbashyan T. (2002). *Explaining Growth in Armenia: Pivotal Role of Human Capital*, GDN. Retrieved June 15, 2005 from [//www.gdnet.org/pdf/draft\\_country\\_studies/Armenia\\_final.pdf](http://www.gdnet.org/pdf/draft_country_studies/Armenia_final.pdf)
- Mayer-Fulkes D. (2003). *Market Failures in Health and Education Investment for the Young*. Mexico 2000. GDN. Retrieved May 25, 2005 from [http://www.gdnet.org/pdf2/gdn\\_library/awards\\_medals/2003/r\\_m/reforms\\_poor/mayerfoulkes.pdf](http://www.gdnet.org/pdf2/gdn_library/awards_medals/2003/r_m/reforms_poor/mayerfoulkes.pdf)
- Moav O. (2004). *Cheap Children and Persistence of Poverty*. Hebrew University of Jerusalem - Department of Economics. University of London - Department of Economics. Shalem Center. Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR). Retrieved March 17, 2005 from [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=280856#PaperDownload](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=280856#PaperDownload)
- NGOAR: NGO Alternative Report: Armenia. (2004). *Child Right Information Network (CRIN)*. National Center for Democracy and Human Rights. Retrieved June 19, 2005 from [www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.35/armenia\\_ngo\\_report.doc](http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.35/armenia_ngo_report.doc)
- Pachi P. (2002). *Gender Issues in the Transition Economies*. WB PPPPA: Poverty and Pro-Poor Policies in Armenia. (2005). UNDP, Retrieved June 19, 2005 from <http://www.undp.am/docs/publications/2005publications/propooreng.pdf>
- SCA: Social Conditions in Armenia. (2003). National Statistical Service. Yerevan. Retrieved April 25, 2005 from <http://www.armstat.am/arm/Publications/2003/SV1203ARM/index.htm>
- SCA: Social Conditions in Armenia. (2004). National Statistical Service. Yerevan. Retrieved April 26, 2005 from [http://www.armstat.am/arm/Publications/2004/sv\\_12a\\_04/index.html](http://www.armstat.am/arm/Publications/2004/sv_12a_04/index.html)
- Shurygina I. (1999). Poverty Is Not Just Lack of Money, Women Plus...*Social Educational Magazine*, 1. Retrieved June 20, 2005 from <http://www.owl.ru/win/womplus/1999/bedn.htm>
- SSPA: Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia. (2005). National Statistical Service, Yerevan, Retrieved October 15, 2005 from [http://www.armstat.am/arm/Publications/2005/BD\\_04/index.html](http://www.armstat.am/arm/Publications/2005/BD_04/index.html)

- SSPA: Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia (2006). National Statistical Service. Yerevan. Retrieved April 25, 2007 from [http://www.armstat.am/arm/Publications/2006/POV\\_2006/index.html](http://www.armstat.am/arm/Publications/2006/POV_2006/index.html)
- SYA: Statistical Yearbook of Armenia. (2005). National Statistical Service. Yerevan. Retrieved June 26, 2005 from <http://www.armstat.am/arm/StatData/index05.html>
- Townsend P. (1979). *Poverty in the United Kingdom*, Penguin
- TransMonee 2005: Data, *Indicators and Features on the Situation of Children in CEE/CIS and Baltic States*, Innocenti Research Center. UNICEF. Retrieved June 15, 2005 from <http://www.unicef-icdc.org/resources/transmonee.html>