

WOMEN'S POVERTY IN MUNICH

GENERAL REMARKS AND LOCAL STATISTICS

GENERAL REMARKS

There are several reasons for female poverty which are often interrelated. The reasons are e.g. single motherhood, dissolution of partnerships (married and unmarried), unemployment, part-time employment, domestic violence or a migratory background.

During the research for this project we found it very difficult to obtain gender-based statistics. There are definitely not enough statistics available regarding female employment or female poverty, no matter if one wants to look on a national or a local level. The few statistics we were able to acquire were often also dated.

LOCAL STATISTICS

- 68% of the female population in Munich are in some sort of employment relationship.
- According to official numbers 45,4% of all *Hartz IV* recipients in Munich are female. This number is highly controversial because the statistics are designed to omit certain circumstances, e.g. people living in "Bedarfsgemeinschaften".
- In regard to atypical employment relationships (1 €-Jobs, Mini-Jobs), there is an unusually high female quota of 70% (e.g. part-time jobs in 2010: 87.116 women, 25.012 men).
- The low wage income sector in Munich in 2005 consisted of 70% female workers.
- The long time unemployment rate for women was 43,5% in 2006.

Data provided by KOFRA e.V.

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS FIGHTING WOMEN'S POVERTY

KOFRA e.V.

KOFRA e.V. was founded in 1982. It offers a safe space for women to empower themselves and to take matters in their own hands.

KOFRA e.V. provides various services:

- Psychological, legal and employment law counsel (especially for *Hartz IV*)
- Women approaching *KOFRA e.V.* are mostly well-educated, and are between 30 and 45 years old
- Events specific to women (e.g. lectures, workshops and seminars)
- Bi-monthly magazine discussing recent women's issues
- Library with specific women's literature
- Internet café
- Communication with local authorities on specific issues to improve women's situation
- Solidarity fund to benefit women in need directly

KOFRA e.V. is funded by the City of Munich, donations, membership and workshop fees.

Einspruch e.V.

The organization was established in 2005, and is a collaborative effort of lawyers and social workers. Its clients come from all social strata, but are mostly single mothers and migrant women.

Einspruch e.V. provides various services:

- "Rechtsambulanzen" in several social service centers across the city, offering social legislation and employment law counsel for the needy
- Legal counsel for low wage sector employees, to show them their legal rights and possibilities to defend themselves
- Women's Law School: single mothers, older and migrant women are affected the most by the *Hartz IV* laws and the rules of the low wage employment sector, therefore special counsel and training is offered
- Training on recent legal issues, the main focus being the *Hartz IV* law, and employment laws of the low wage sector

Einspruch e.V. is funded through private donations, the City of Munich, membership and workshop fees.

KARLA 51

This women's shelter was established in 1996, and is located near Munich's central station. It is unique in Germany.

- *Karla 51* provides shelter, psychological assistance, food, clothes, laundry, privacy, and contact opportunities with other women
- Open 24 hours a days, 7 days a week
- Offers 40 single rooms with small bathroom, one kitchen on each floor
- Reasons why women come to *Karla 51* are e.g. domestic violence, life crises, financial problems, homelessness, relationship problems, unwanted pregnancy etc.
- Women are allowed to stay for 8 weeks
- During their stay, they are assisted in communicating with authorities and finding themselves a place to stay
- There are no exclusion criteria, any woman can come
- After their stay at the shelter, two out of three women are able to stand on their own feet

Karla 51 is funded by the City of Munich, the Evangelisches Hilfswerk, and donations.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REDUCE WOMEN'S POVERTY?

To reduce female poverty and poverty in general, social legislation and the labor market need to be transformed. First of all, social legislation needs a fundamental overhaul. The laws governing the basic income of those seeking employment in Germany – the *Sozialgesetzbuch II* – are degrading and turn human beings into mere objects. The controversial *Hartz IV* law has been proven to violate the *Grundgesetz* (e.g. no self-determination, forced labor), with its 1 €-Jobs being especially discriminatory to women. Second, the labor market, which tends to

exclude women and has been profiting from recent social legislation, has to be transformed as well. Women always have a harder time than men to be (re)hired and given a permanent work contract, especially after having kids or being unemployed for a longer time (often as a result of a temporary work contract). Women are also affected more severely by age discrimination than men. Increased job training programs by the government, especially for women who have been stuck in labor leasing programs, could improve the current situation drastically.