

Title: *Child Consumption Poverty in South Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States*

Author(s): Leonardo Menchini and Gerry Redmond

Institution/Country: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre; UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre and University of New South Wales

This paper examines consumption poverty in recent years among children in 19 countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and South Eastern Europe. The main measure used – current household consumption tested against an absolute poverty threshold of US \$2.15 converted at Purchasing Power Parity exchange rates – is found to be reasonably robust to sensitivity testing, and to correlate well with nonincome indicators of well-being among children. Absolute poverty among children is highest where national income is lowest, and where the density of children in the population is highest. Relative poverty (using the same measure of resources) on the other hand is higher in countries with higher levels of national income.

The paper disaggregates child poverty in two ways – according to household composition, and according to its urban, rural and regional dimensions. The most important findings from a policy point of view are the strong rural character of child poverty in several countries, and the relationship between child population density (at the level of the country, the sub-national region, and the household) and child poverty: where child population shares are higher, child poverty is also higher. This relationship, moreover, may have strengthened over time. Child population density needs to be seen more as a trigger to redistribution. In addition, the paper finds that in some countries, poverty among children of single parents is mitigated by a number of factors particular to the region, in particular migration and remittances. However, parental migration to economically support children raises important questions about material versus other aspects of child well-being that warrant further analysis.