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Description of research

Semi-structured interviews **aimed at** identifying distinct patterns of thinking about inheriting social inequalities, inequality dimensions, factors petrifying them, and the role of policies in overcoming them and poverty.

Sample. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 15 top national politicians and experts, including representatives of the government, NGOs and business organizations. Trying to get a wider spectrum of opinions, respondents were selected regarding their political dependence, field of competence and level of responsibility. A list of respondents is provided in the Appendix A.

All the respondents were contacted in advance by sending them a letter, which shortly described the matter of the project, the main objectives and the cast of executive consortium. Questionnaires were also enclosed, so that respondents could find out about the interview content in advance. Later the date and time of the meeting was settled by phone or email. Interviews were conducted in Vilnius and Kaunas, January-March, 2005.

The **questionnaire** was constructed considering the guidelines sent by the coordinators, i.e. open-ended questions were formulated in such a way that a respondent was free to express his/her opinion. Questions focused on the main topics and problems listed in the PROFIT document provided by the project coordinators. Four versions of the questionnaire were prepared (in Lithuanian language), with the focus on:

- Educational policy
- Labour market policy
- Social welfare policy
- Educational policy, labour market and social welfare altogether.

At the beginning of the research, an amendment was made in order to better understand the perception of Ilofl among other social issues. Each respondent was given a list of social problems to be evaluated on 5 point rating scale.

Interviewers also had their own questionnaires, which were composed by the same principles, but had additional questions, so that to help an interviewer better capture the perception of the issue and assessment of policies (in Lithuanian language too).

Depending on the length of the questionnaire, one interview took 45 to 90 min.

The following **restrictions** appeared during the research process:

- *Research period.* The start of interviews coincided with the new parliament election. This together with the Christmas time rescheduled the beginning of the interviews till the mid January.
- *Extent of the questionnaire.* Because of the intensive calendar politicians could spare only about one hour for the interview. Sometimes such a tight schedule obstructed to elaborate respondent's position regarding Ilofl.
- *Interferences during the interview* (interruptions of visitors and colleagues, phone calls, inappropriate environment, for example parliament restaurant) disturbed the flow of interview, concentration of thoughts and reduced possibility to use the time effectively.
- *Lack of specific knowledge.* In a few cases, casual opinion of respondents about the research topic showed up. Also, the *level of enthusiasm* answering the interview questions was different, and this could influence the results.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed. In the table bellow, interview number, focus of the interview, as well as respondent's description is provided¹.

Grid 1

Description of interviews

Interview No.	Respondent's description	Competence area
1.	Parliament member	Education policy
2.	Parliament member	Education policy
3.	Government representative	Education policy
4.	Parliament member, former economic actor	Labour market policy
5.	Parliament member, former trade-union representative	Labour market policy

¹ The sequence of interview numbers and the sequence of the list of respondents provided in Appendix A disagree.

6.	Trade-union representative	Labour market policy
7.	NGO representative	Labour market policy
8.	Parliament member	Social welfare policy
9.	Parliament member	Social welfare policy
10.	Government representative	Social welfare policy
11.	Government representative	Social welfare policy
12.	Parliament member	Social welfare policy
13.	Parliament member	Social welfare policy
14.	NGO representative	Education, labour market, social welfare
15.	NGO representative	Education, labour market, social welfare

I. Perception of inheritance of social inequalities and its relative importance among other social problems

At the beginning of the interview most respondents were asked to rate a number of social problems, including Ilofi, poverty, unemployment, criminality, migration, corruption, etc. on 5 point scale². It appeared that majority of politicians and other experts assessed Ilofi as one of the most important social issues together with poverty, unemployment, alcoholism and drug abuse.

1. Groups/categories of young people, who have the greatest, and the most restricted opportunity to obtain high social status

Families living in villages/small towns, families with slender income and problem families were named by the respondents as orders, having major impact on youth's possibilities to reach higher social status than their parents have.

Majority of the interviewed stated, that children/youth from *families living in villages/small towns* have bare possibilities to integrate into society successfully.

Children who live in city have more possibilities because of child's sponsorship, for example, if I live in Kaunas I don't need to pay for rent etc., besides it is easier let the child go, than it is for those who live in province (Parliament member, interview No. 1).

² Since list of social problems was constructed during the course of the research, not all the respondents were asked the question.

According to respondents, this is determined by high poverty level in these regions, village environment (accessibility of new technologies, general economic level of the region), some of them emphasized worse education quality in rural schools and specific dominant valuables like alcohol dependence.

In "gloomy" village (...) it's a murder, because there are no other valuables than only a bottle... In the village where father chases mother with an axe in his hands, where children are yelling in the corner, I don't know how it is possible to allow such children to have their own children. Because, as you noticed, it repeats from generation to generation (Parliament member, interview No. 2).

Families with slender income have no sufficient financial possibilities to enable the child successfully integrate into society and labour market. Some of the respondents specified unemployment as the main reason of poverty. One respondent related such a situation with the impoverishment of the middle class, when families fell behind failing to move to a higher level during the nation's transformation period.

A child whose parents are rich lives in such conditions, which let him to use the Internet. If parents are not obscurant and are interested in arts, it is normal to meet people from this surrounding at home, it is interesting to listen to parents' conversation, or to read books. At this time nobody other can see this. That is the difference. So human needs and possibility to form them differ. A child whose parents are rich in any case potentially has better possibility. (Government representative, interview No. 3).

Social statistics shows, that poverty in the family doesn't permit the child even to get education. Another thing, there are no traditions, that could form thinking about learning necessity in such family (Parliament member, interview No. 9).

According to respondents, restrictions in the *problem families* basically are related with dominant value attitudes in the family, which do not develop child's perfection, intention to reach higher education and status; insufficient financial resources and genetics were also mentioned.

Particularly it's a group of social disjunction, essentially children from problem families, where violence, insobriety exists. Usually both parents drink, so children from such families don't get even secondary education (Parliament member, interview No. 9).

Among the orders, having major impact on youth's possibilities to reach higher social status than their parents have, *unemployed families* with limited financial resources and inadequate traditions and attitudes form restricted child's aspirations. Incomplete families and *disharmonious families* were also mentioned.

Children, whose parents are unemployed, it is evident, have lower possibilities because of social assurance of their parents". (Parliament member, interview No. 13).

There are no traditions that could form thinking about learning necessity in such family" (Parliament member, interview No. 9).

Some respondents haven't named any groups, but *parental status* and *dominant ethical attitudes*, determining child's possibilities, as the main factors that impede youth's possibilities to reach higher social status in society than their parents have.

Surely, I see relation between parental status and young man's possibilities to reach higher status in the society. (...) Even if his parents are not pillars of society, but he has possibility to communicate with his contemporaries, whose parents' like, possibilities and knowledge how to reach education are much more deeper and wider... (Government representative, interview No. 3).

It was noticed, that the most strides depend on child's *inner motivation* and not always formation of good external conditions will give the child incentive to reach higher status than his parents have.

Everybody can gain education if government has ordered juridical base and does something. Both, a child who lives in a rich family and a child who lives in the poor, may easily touch the bottom... (Parliament member, interview No. 12).

During the interview an opposite opinion was expressed, which accented social inequality as *inevitable phenomenon of society*.

This is a natural fact. Neither it's a problem, nor not a problem because people are not equal, they born in different families. And this variety is tackled not only by social status, but by other factors as well. (...) I think, that such approach is very dangerous, because it offhand implicates particular special means for those social categories, and as we know from methodical analysis they usually additionally separate the human ... resettlement, conditions, family, he straight falls out from labour market, because everybody knows that he needs to adjust these special conditions (NGO representative, interview No. 15)

2. The importance of low educational achievement in relation to the intergenerational transmission of inequality, in comparison with other social problems

Half of the respondents stated, that *low educational level is the main (factor) while passing from generation to generation* (Government member, interview No. 10), because *...background, gained in the family, forms human de-*

mands and other things (Government member, interview No. 3). Respondents agree, that *environment has one of the deciding impacts for a human: what is surrounding him, whom he is communicating with, if there are a lot discussions about science, education, valuables in the family – man willy-nilly is becoming educated* (Parliament member, interview No. 1). *Education is important for a human to get out from his topical environment”* (NGO representative, interview No. 15).

Some of the respondents had ambiguous opinions. They stated, that education has ***very high influence, but there are some other factors***, determining development of social inequality. Respondents claimed, that situation *depends not only on education, but also on the attitude towards education* (Parliament member, former economic actor, interview No. 4), and on *human’s capability to take responsibility, diligence* (Parliament member, former trade-union representative, interview No. 5).

Another group of respondents indicated, that education ***is not always important*** while reaching higher status. *If parents have low education, this does not necessarily mean that those children won’t seek education. So, if ...there is a normal strong family, parents are intelligent, though they have no education, and implant the children wish to gain the education* (Parliament member, interview No. 9). Some of respondents noticed, that sometimes *it is not important what educational level a person has, but if he can’t realize his knowledge in his work, he may go through the floor* (Government representative, interview No. 11).

According to one respondent, *parents usually wish and seek their children to reach more than they did. But there are parents, who are not interested in their children’s life.* (Trade-union representative, interview No. 8).

3. Other major factors and processes generating IIoff

Politicians noted inadequate ***state policy*** as the dominant reason of inequality development. The gap between authority and man, and appeasement of own interests influence the formation of policy pointed to the property differentiation.

It’s the policy oriented towards increasing of property differentiation. (...) Sometimes property differentiation increased up by hundred percent comparing with the last Soviet years (...) that is what affect people, so inequality between poor and rich is colossal. Sometimes even hardly comprehensible. So, the policy, oriented to so called free market, free economy, must be regulated some how (Government representative, interview No. 3).

Some noted,

all authorities 15 years pursued liberalistic ideology, not any other. It was desirable to represent freedom, but practically state's responsibility for socially naked people went aside. I think that in freedom, that was declared, authority gained most (Parliament member, former economic actor, interview No. 4).

Some politicians argued that **dominant political parties** in the parliament is a very important factor, determining which political parties have strong influence on government formation, what kind of priorities and attitudes will be dominant in policy, since *essential posts in boards are given not considering the competence, but political dependence*. (Trade-union representative, interview No. 8) *It is very important what position we take in government; is it more social-democratic or liberal creed. If liberal, then who is stronger, selection process, survival... If social-liberal position, which would be wonderful in today's situation, this position lets to move from dead-point and help people, who are in the worst social situation*. (Parliament member, interview No. 13).

Some respondents stated, the policy priorities and activity to realize them depend on **politician's personality**. *There is a problem that in the government there are no spiritual and humanist people. And the point is, that everywhere followed old nomenclature, which was used to take everything on its way* (Parliament member, interview No. 2). *Politicians should act more, and their influence should be stronger solving this (II of I) problem* (Government representative, interview No. 11). One of respondents underlined in policy such appearance as "brotherhood-in-law", i.e. means using relations while giving certain posts, and that is stimulating the spread of lobbyism while initiating political decisions.

Most of politicians pointed out that the main reasons and processes, that motivate the transfer of social inequality from generation to generation lie *in peculiarities of post-communistic states development*, which 15 years almost have no new traditions (Parliament member, interview No. 1). Some politicians accented, that today we have sequences of 50 years of Soviet occupation, which formed **public attitudes**. *First of all behavioral poverty settled down. It brought social economic poverty, because through the behavioral poverty a person had certain stereotypes, lost caste, besides there was collective property system, a person wasn't educated (if talking about those who are 40–50 years old now), he grew up in the environment of duplicate behavior* (Parliament member, interview No. 9). It was a totalitarian state, and people used not to feel personal responsibility in the family and work, so the Soviet way of thinking impedes different processes of progress in the state, economic development, and on the individual level – adaptability to changes, and that is stimulating development of social disjuncture. *Social-economic-political processes are different, people can't adapt, because of their mentality* (Parliament member, interview No. 9).

Not only generations must change, but also the way of thinking, viewpoint to life. (Parliament member, interview No. 1).

One of the peculiarities of post-Soviet state development we can assign the **switch from planned to market economy**. It was mentioned, that privatization was implemented not on democratic way and this effected social differentiation as well as formation of social inequality.

In my opinion we don't create the model of social state, we are on a liberal way, with economy things ahead, to reach the welfare for the state and not for single individuals. Because of this appeared strong differentiation. And this is the main reason, why we turned to free market under hard conditions, where the stronger can take everything, and the rest must be content with very little (Parliament member, interview No. 8).

As one of reasons of social inequality development **impoverishment of the villages** was pointed out. This determined low family income in agrarian regions. One respondent noted, that development of social inequality depends on

environment, genetics, environment in which you live, eventually on your everyday life, way of thinking, focusing. (...) If mother spends her rest money for the child buying the ticket to the theater, and they will talk about what they saw on their way home, even macaroni with butter will be tasty and the child will remember that book or theater was great, and the eating can wait. (Parliament member, interview No. 12)

There was opinion, that social inequality naturally exists as phenomenon and doesn't depend on any policy. Respondent claimed, that **proper political means** must be chosen, which will be used not to solve one individual problem, but directed "to create better conditions for all people" (NGO representative, interview No. 15).

4. The impact of ICT development on Ilofi

Opinions of the politicians varied on this point. Majority of the respondents couldn't answer straightly and noted possibility of **double affect of IT development** on Ilofi. Some respondents accented, that attention to IT would increase, and IT would improve the possibilities of people placement in the state as well as abroad. They stated, that it is only change of conditions, which will affect the rich as well as the poor. So the conditions to use these technologies will equalize step by step. *Realistically already today we can say, that Internet is accessible. The question is - is there intension and motivation?* (NGO representative, inter-

view No. 15). In this instance the problem lie in the creed of man, in the motivation to pull out all the stops. *If man has some push, intension, he will reach the information one way or another* (Government representative, interview No. 3). So those, who have energy and curiosity inside, will make better skip than those, who do-nothing, who having possibilities to use IT do not use them.

Some of respondents noted dearth of spirituality when IT takes stronger position in our days, activity, and communication and there they see menace of disjuncture and isolation.

The disjunction may increase not between those who have no possibilities to use IT, but between those who have them, because they are drifting apart (NGO representative, interview No. 15).

If it's too difficult for a man to use verbal communication, if he grew up in environment which wasn't stimulating to speak, explain, he feels better communicating with machine, typing or writing a letter. For a man who has comfortable environment, congenial, social disjuncture deepens into another side... (Parliament member, interview No. 12).

But they do not discount the possibility that it is possible

to take child's fancy with reading by using computer, and to implement not only fight games but also progressive and spiritual attitudes (Parliament member, interview No. 2).

One of the respondents stated, that evaluation of IT impact depends on what you take

if we take the gap between people, who have possibilities to use IT and people who have no such possibilities, this gap will be marked and will grow. But if we take a general standard, it will grow without a question. So it is better to let for at least small part to go forward (NGO representative, interview No. 14).

The majority of respondents expressed *negative attitudes* evaluating IT development as possibility to decrease social disjuncture.

I think it will increase (social disjuncture) and I'm sorry to think about the future. Today IT develop in a such speed, that even normal man, having all possibilities have no time to process everything, don't catch all the technological innovations. Upcoming 10–15 years I don't see any perspective – everything will depend on economic level, state policy and maybe only then will turn to people, will be mindful of them (Parliament member, interview No. 1).

As particularly painful problem respondents penetrate possibility to use IT in villages and big cities.

We talk about IT development in Vilnius, occidental way of living and possibilities to get information, when people in villages already have no phones

I don't talk about computers and upcoming 30 years having such gross national product, such economic situation this gap will increase (Parliament member, interview No. 9).

Only few politicians expressed *positive attitudes* evaluating IT in practice trying to decrease disjuncture because of computer literacy appears in all strategic programs and the possibilities for using IT becoming better and better.

Using and ability to use will go forward step by step and will become accessible to everybody. I think, it will not reduce the opposition of inequality, but decrease them (Government representative, interview No. 10).

In summary, respondents distinguished two main groups, having most limited possibilities to access IT: *low-income individuals/families* and those *living in villages*.

5. The impact of European integration on inequalities

Talking of undergoing changes under the influence of integration of Lithuania in European Union, respondents agreed, that it is *a multiple process* (Government representative, interview No. 3) and it is hard to expect unambiguous answer how it would affect the transfer of social inequality from generation to generation.

Generally, increasing phenomenon of *migration* was mentioned as one of the mechanisms reducing poverty and social inequality in the European integration context. Majority of respondents positively assessed the migration, because for many people it is a possibility to break this perverse circle, to change personal and family's situation, particularly in the sense of income.

Opened markets, possibilities to leave to other countries it is so easy to do nowadays. It increases mobility; possibilities to take part not only in topical, but also in international labour markets (NGO representative, interview No. 14).

Frequent of them depart trying to make a fortune, that is to reduce this wealth differentiation (Government representative, interview No. 3).

Some experts stated that entering EU would deepen social inequality and penetrate risks in migration phenomenon, because those who depart to work in nonofficial sector displace workers from their non-official sector in these countries and have no social assurances, and don't know what they will do after a while. Some of respondents mention that the migration will have a short positive effect.

Will they return back after they earn some money? But again it will be a problem, because they will lose cohesion here. (NGO representative, interview No. 7).

Those who earned money and came back to Lithuania for a short time appears possibility to escape from poverty trap and to rise to higher social strata. However, when money comes to an end everything starts from the beginning (Parliament member, former trade-union representative, interview No. 5).

Some respondents pointed out that *economical* development; European Union's support for our country and possibilities to use allocations from *structural funds* will contribute to better tackling a problem of social inequality.

That's why Lithuania entered economic society, we want to live better – commercial trade, one will leave, other will come, and maybe economic begins to rise. (...) it's natural, if nation is more prosperous, social relations are better, and only then we will have this rising of the middle class (Parliament member, interview No. 9).

However, some respondents doubted that financial support would help Lithuania to tackle this societal problem because of unequal conditions to get this support.

Structural funds and their support, I think, will be more disjunctive than integrative. Nevertheless, they are more accessible for those who are stronger, grosser, and faster. And straight there will be disjuncture (NGO representative, interview No. 15).

The best projects will belong to Vilnius, better to Kaunas, good to Klaipėda, but nobody will notice projects from Skuodas. No how, never...(...) And if such situation never wake up, social abyss between public groups will only increase (Parliament member, former economic actor, interview No. 4).

Social politics of European Union also obligate Lithuania to change, enact, adjust pro rata particular legislation, documents, related with reducing of social inequality, and according to opinion of some respondents this is a positive phenomenon assessing the influence of European integration to the reducing of social inequality.

Since we ratify various international documents or try to undersign documents which impel us to take care of low income, capacitate us to rise income level for those who get low income. I would assess the European integration thorough positively taking a look from various aspects, such as perfection, new intelligence gaining (Government representative, interview No. 11).

The politics of European Union of poverty negotiation practices particular means and we appear in this context as well. So, European integration because of social politics and possibilities for people I would assess positively (Government representative, interview No. 10).

6. Prospects for IIofI in Lithuania. Reasons and consequences

The majority of respondents forecasted, that social inequality from generation to generation would reduce in Lithuania. They related these improvements with economic development in Lithuania after entering European Union, development of new technologies and reforms in state policy, special programs.

The act of support – we afford support only for those, who really need it, we don't dissipate it for those, who have note, though I have property, some illegal business, but I don't declare property, income and so on. In such case we do the same as other countries do: the support or service, which comes out from taxpayers' money, will be given only for those, who really need it. It is step-by-step process and can't be done in a short period. (...) This is general policy (Parliament member, interview No. 8).

Respondents pointed out, that changes would not be instant, because not everything depends on politicians. There must be society's volition, public spirit, invigorating responsibility of every member of society for themselves, others and the state, while tackling the problem of social disjuncture.

The problem must decrease, but it must be the problem of all society. People impeach politicians, Government, but if child is put-upon in the family, if services of Child's liberty protection don't work, ... one politician or 140 politicians will not be able to help, it is the problem of the whole society (Parliament member, interview No. 8).

The social inequality, higher or lower, will stay, because it is natural part of society. But its level depends on us: from state policy and from people attitudes towards other people. Only positive attitudes towards other people may reduce divide between social levels (Parliament member, former trade-union representative, interview No. 5).

The lack of political volition enacting appropriate solutions was mentioned as one of factor suppressing reduction of social inequality, because

politicians, who would be able to affect these processes in a positive sense, are too shy, in all modesty. We hear a lot about objectives to do, to make a progressive revenue system. But those, who have maximum, who can to resist, they do so (...) and I can't say, that I saw something about stabilization or reduction of social differentiation in electoral programmes. And there are no signs, that we go this direction. There, there is no such political volition, but it could be (Government representative, interview No. 3).

Negative tendencies, speaking of relevance prognosis of social inequality, were also mentioned. Generally they were related with global processes, peculi-

arities of revenue system and lack of adaptation mechanisms for persons from risk group.

If inequality rises up in other countries, I think, in Lithuania it will have possibility only to rise. From the above-mentioned research we can see, that instead of increasing of the middle class we have transition not from medium level to middle, but from medium to lower level and from lower to upper level. (...) Differentiation of income, progressive system of differentiated income tax must be set. I think, global process will increase differentiation. And Lithuania has no possibility to avoid it (Government representative, interview No. 11).

Essentially, negative talking coming up because the prices getting up, if Constitution guarantees free education or treatment and there are no allusions to it. It is written. But if there are no adaptation systems, that actually on easy terms... If they live far away from Vilnius, they must have some solvent mechanisms for adaptation, some extra investment to attract them, to raise them till the level. If no, these people will stay as they are. For the meantime there are no such mechanisms (Parliament member, former economic actor, interview No. 4).

II. Opportunities and ways of overcoming IIoff

1. The relative responsibility for reducing IIoff

The respondents were asked to single out the main bodies what should take responsibility to overcome or at least to reduce the circle of intergenerational inheritance of inequality. The interview content analysis reveals that the categories of *the state*, *politicians*, and *family* were among the most often mentioned ones. Such categories as *non-governmental organizations (NGOs)*, *community*, *all-of-us*, *civil society*, and *local authorities* have also been mentioned by the respondents.

It can be recognized some kind of consensus among respondents regardless their political dependence, field of competence and activity. Majority of them singled out *the state* as the main subject what should be most responsible in dealing with inequality inheritance issues. Respondents use the category of *the state* having in mind both Legislative (*The Seimas*) and Executive Branches of government.

The State is not a simple piece of land; the State is citizens living in it (Parliament member, interview No. 12).

If it is so that the State represents people, then the State should be most responsible to deal with problems of inequality (Trade-union representative, interview No. 6).

The State is the only body that is confident to control and supervise the activities of other public actors, whatever they are – NGOs, Church, private enterprises or local authorities. This coordination is some kind of tactical rules (NGO representative, interview No. 14).

It is important to notice that in spite of the fact that the state is empowered to make fundamental decisions to reduce poverty and inequality inheritance problems, still it is very *defected* to put these problems at least into daylight or to put them not to the list of declarative priorities of the state policy, but to the list of pending priorities of the state policy. Both politicians and business and NGOs' representatives acknowledge these mistakes in state policy formation; they name different reasons. Clientelistic relations, bureaucracy, and symbiotic relations, emerging between top-politicians and influential businessmen, are among commonly mentioned reasons.

Very important factor is patronage and personal social relations... It is so called "brotherhood-in-law" custom... There's no active civil society in Lithuania, and the situation is that bureaucrats work for bureaucrats... Let's take a look at up-to-date political reality in Lithuania: conservatives, failed in the elections for the second time, represent themselves as working class spokesmen. And social democrats, with A. Brazauskas (prime minister) in front of the coalition in power, become the capital representatives. When Lithuania became the EU member, the prices grew up rapidly in *VP Market* (the biggest supermarket net in the country). A. Brazauskas ordered to reduce them and *VP Market* submitted to A. Brazauskas authority. And why did he order? There's some kind of agreement: you can raise the prices, if nobody cries, good, if somebody cries, then you reduce (Trade-union representative, interview No. 6).

The other most usually mentioned category was *politicians*. From one point of view they are elected, and they represent Lithuanian citizens. In that way they are the top actors participating in the process of formation of general State development strategy. From the other point of view, to say that politicians (not the state, for example) should take biggest responsibility for reducing Ilofl means that the respondents are almost ready to name particular persons.

There is a human factor everywhere. It depends how we understand our mission: do we understand it very narrowly – that I occupy very favorable position and I fulfill my own interests at first – or do we understand that to be elected means to have a mission to serve the citizens of the State. When we understand that everything will change (Parliament member, interview No. 8).

Politicians look for the victory. And if it is their final purpose then the problems to solve are selected according their 'convenience': to solve them or not, even don't put them into daylight. If you want to experience the state's advance, do not let people to live in 'scrapheap' or do not let people beg ... (Government representative, interview No. 3).

If politicians paid as much attention to the solvation of problems creating inequality as they paid to deal with their own issues then decisions would be different but in a positive sense (NGO representative, interview No. 7).

Family as one of the main social institutions is very important subject/actor influencing appearance and salvation of many social issues. Family and its characteristics make crucial impact on inequality inheritance, especially if we have in mind ‘problem families’ – families where such social practice as alcoholism, drug abuse, violence, perverted values, etc. are dominant. That’s why many respondents put category of **family** in line with **the state**. Almost half of the respondent put **family** in the first place as most responsible to deal with inequality inheritance.

Family is responsible to overcome the circle of inequality. Many issues have to be solved in that level because it (inequality inheritance) is quite personal and delicate thing (NGO representative, interview No. 15).

In many cases **family** was mentioned together with **community**.

Sometimes political means can stimulate negative incentives; give incentives to wait for something, to do nothing. In general, any social assistance provokes inactivity and dependent status. And if this support is provided in community, where people know each other, where own leaders are, the influence is made on motivation, and particular person feels some obligations, he feels ashamed to do nothing. And what shame is to go and claim for social assistance? It becomes anonym when it becomes a part of the state policy. It becomes anonym and disrupts personal motivation. That is the reason why I think that inequality inheritance overcoming means have to be initiated and implemented in the lowest levels of society (NGO representative, interview No. 15).

The European Union (EU) was never mention by the respondents as a potential actor that should be responsible to deal with inequality inheritance problems in Lithuania. Furthermore, EU was singled out as having no competence to intervene Lithuanian domestic issues, because social policy, according EU legislative, belongs to EU country-members’ domestic affairs.

On the other side, the respondents hardly could identify actors, really dealing with inequality inheritance issues. Only some of them singled out that that is **person** and at most **family** left alone to fight their own surviving and children raising problems, because even

Political opposition is busy trying to do harm to political position, not to criticize but to do harm willing for Governmental crisis. In that case the problems of ordinary people are left alone; nobody from top-political levels takes care of them (Government representative, interview No. 3).

2. Institutional cooperation and social networks creation in reducing IIofI

The respondents were asked to evaluate the up-to-date situation in cooperation between central and local authorities, between state authorities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) sector.

Respondents agree that *central and local authorities* have to cooperate and pay attentions to each other's limits of competence, and some of them single out that they miss effective and constructive cooperation. The respondents mentioned various reasons, which, according to them, create obstacles to effective cooperation between these two levels of state authorities: inadequate perception about limits of competence of both of these authorities towards each other; defectiveness of centralized tax system; absence of legislation and authorities, responsible for cooperation; lack of human and financial resources to maintain cooperation and so on.

The opinion of respondents diverges talking about, let's say, qualitative reasons of ineffective cooperation or lack of it. Some of respondents think that there are so many different problems in the regions that central authorities are unable to meet needs of all of them, and local authorities sometimes *blackmail the central government to adopt even anti-Constitutional practice*. (Government representative, interview No. 3). The opposite opinion concerns issue, which can be named as too standardized state policy, which is not flexible and sensitive to local problems.

Some respondents noticed not only lack of *cooperation between central and local authorities*, but lack of cooperation between different branches of central authorities.

The problem is that implementation of state programmes is distributed item by item among various governmental offices and departments, and the worst thing is that there is no coordination unit supervising how the programme is implemented. The officials are concerned to represent the interests of their own departments, and finally there is no one common understanding about final result (NGO representative, interview No. 15).

Talking about cooperation between governmental organizations and NGOs, most part of respondents evaluate NGOs as playing very positive role in making civil society in Lithuania. However most of them also acknowledge that human, knowledge, experience potentials of NGOs are not used in solving many social problems in Lithuania. NGOs are very weak, they struggle for surviving, and local authorities, who should take care of NGOs located in their territory, are not willing to cooperate: NGOs are seen as some kind of obstacles in keeping absolute authority monopoly in the sphere of social services' provision, for example, and so on.

There is a lack of information about beneficial input of non-governmental organizations solving various social issues and mediating social tensions and emerging conflicts, and everything depends on community's good will and civil conscience. If they are absent, it is very difficult for NGO to survive and work (Government representative, interview No. 3).

Some mistrust towards NGOs and their activities are common to all levels of governmental organizations. The respondents, especially representing top politicians' level express quite open mistrust in NGOs. NGO sector is mistrusted because it is seen as organized for narrow and selfish aims influencing only *poor group of people* (Parliament member, interview No. 2). *Organizations, of course, are very different, but some of them make NGO some kind of business. NGO is one of most open sector to create new jobs. And if there is no control, two children get some kind of social support, and three aunts or uncles have permanent income* (Parliament member, interview No. 8). Some of respondents mention not only NGO as third sector to fulfill various social needs of Lithuanian society, private sector also is able to provide some kind of social services, but *the entrance to social services sector is closed for them: they are not equal to compete with governmental sector and its' budgetary financial support* (NGO representative, interview No. 15).

One more important aspect was enclosed during interviews: Lithuanian society cries for the growth of conscious civil society. The situation in the field of the state and NGO cooperation will change *whet citizens become more and more rational, and begin to claim to fulfill political promises and duties of their representatives* (Parliament member, interview No. 8). The lack of the state-NGO cooperation usually goes together with lack of transparency: *many initiatives in Lithuania are declarative, just for a tick...* (Parliament member, former trade-union representative, interview No. 5). It is interesting to notice the majority of respondents, talking about the 'ticks', mention that many ticks are put in Lithuania due to the EU requirements.

3. Impact on policy-making

The main factors, influencing policy-making in Lithuania are **political priorities** chosen by ruling parties, and **political coalitions**. *Politicians are very free to ignore everyday problems of ordinary people pretending that there is no money* (Government representative, interview No. 10). Selection of political priorities is significantly influenced by the **personal characteristics** of the politicians in power: *their background, their spiritual features, world view and honesty* (Parliament member, interview No. 2). A big problem is that politicians put their own interests to the first place. In that case, political priorities are laid out

according *personal political convenience* (Government representative, interview No. 3).

Regular elections and **changes in political power** also make influence on development and search for new political strategies and priorities. And these political changes are seen both as positively and negatively influencing political decisions. The negative influence is explained mostly by temporality and difficulties trying to maintain permanent and stable relations between social partners.

There is no unified politics. Political parties in power change every election. They enter top-political sphere making reference on political programmes where is absent the state *per se*, there is no vision of state development. That's why we have to make a shift with fighting fires in such spheres as social policy (Parliament member, interview No. 9).

Some respondents mentioned lobbyism as one of negative factors, influencing policy-making. Usually political decisions are formed before they reach the passing procedure of particular legislation in the Seimas. **Interest groups** are able to intervene in legislation preparation process, and usually, according respondents, these interest groups represent narrow interests of people, who are empowered because they are rich; they have good relations and contacts with top actors in the *Seimas* and Government. On the other way,

officials who usually are not interested to find or use the best, up-to-date, most advantageous solutions form most political decisions. It means, very conservative, passive practice dominates in the field of formation of political decisions (NGO representative, interview No. 14).

Even the brilliant idea is possible to move away in the bureaucratic corridors (Trade-union representative, interview No. 6).

The **lack of information** creates the situation when people don't know their rights to claim for political responsibility. Politicians and interest groups are free to manipulate information through media channels. According respondents, media plays very important role in civil society formation in Lithuania. *If people could find information concerning social inequality and property differentiation in newspapers, there was more probability that society would claim for real action of politicians* (Government representative, interview No. 3). Some of the respondents stress that information accessibility problem is very harsh in rural areas. *Of course, it is easier to give orders to benighted mass* (Parliament member, interview No. 2).

4. Impact of group interest conflict on the IIoff issue

There is no more significant consensus among respondents neither both the question concerning existence of social conflicts nor the one concerning the main participants of them. The respondents are willing to notice dominating opinion about some tensions or even conflicts between *owners and employees, rich and poor, public and third sector, central and local authorities* etc. There were some cases where these tensions were named as artificially created mostly as electoral tricks.

Many of the respondents mention the issue of owner-employee and rich-poor conflicts, however the opinions diverge. Some of the respondents are willing to find some tensions between these social groups. However they are not willing to motivate their standpoint very properly. Most common explanations concern the conditions of 'wild capitalism' we experience, and money factor: *to have money means to have power, and those who command the power determine most important decisions* (NGO representative, interview No. 14). Those who have money and command the power are able to buy media to make influence on public opinion.

The other part of respondents affirms that there are no interest conflicts between owner and employee, these conflicts are artificially created and they remind post-soviet rudiments of mentality. *There is mutual dependence between rich and poor. If all were rich, who would work? They are not conflict categories. They are collaborating categories* (NGO representative, interview No. 15).

The study of the interview material revealed some interesting aspects concerning social tensions and conflicts. There was expressed an idea that conflicts exist in relations between public and third sectors, and central and local authorities. These conflicts are usually asserted as some kind of competition in the context of power division in particular cases. And this competition emerges due to legislative defects: the spheres of competence are not clearly defined in legislation. The other interesting aspect revealed in the respondents' answers is the idea about existing tension between capital city and the rest of Lithuania. Lithuanian politicians and officials declare the EU origin idea about equal regional development, but the priority is given to the diverse development of the capital city. *The greatest attention is paid on the development of Vilnius, 60 percent of investments also 'go' to Vilnius, and the rest of Lithuania is in a state of neglect. That is very defective state policy* (Parliament member, interview No. 1). Even EU structural funds are used to benefit enterprises located in the capital city.

The most vulnerable groups are ordinary people who pay all taxes and have no rights to social assistance, and *youth, because they are mostly politically passive and don't participate in elections* (NGO representative, interview No. 15). Politicians are least to initiate real actions to overcome circle of inequality com-

mon to these social groups because they don't claim for privileges and at least their civil right to be adequately represented by the elected politicians.

The biggest governmental attention, according respondents, is paid to such social groups as

farmers, because they 'blackmail' Government for various privileges, and the officials have no time to analyze their problems more deeply, so they just devote money without too much of thinking; pensioners, because they consist a stable part of electorate; medical sector, because everybody is afraid to get ill; lawyers, because everybody is afraid to have any kind of problems with the law (NGO representative, interview No. 15).

5. Changes and improvements needed in political sphere to reduce IIofI

Opinions of respondents what changes should be implemented to overcome this perverse practice in dealing with inequality inheritance in the country differed very much. This topic and insides expressed by the represents more or less are related to other characteristics of the respondent: field and nature of work, field of competence, expert knowledge of particular issues, political dependence, ideology, values and so on.

It is interesting to notice that some of the Parliament members and top-officials acknowledge that one of the key-problems in the IIofI *status quo* is the ***top-politicians attitude*** to the problem *per se*. The respondents expressed the wish for themselves:

We need to change our attitude to ordinary human being. We need to fulfill our own good wishes and use our skills, but to create a system to protect ourselves from society (Parliament member, No. 5).

We need to devote much more attention to realize clearly the problem of inequality transmission from generation to generation (Government representative, interview No. 10).

Talking about changes needed in political level, respondents think that all levels of political decision-making and implementation should be more supervised. The respondents mention the need of all levels of ***supervision*** and political action ***coordination***.

We need not to 'cook' new laws but to supervise how they are implemented. And this supervision has to be applied from the very beginning when the new legislation is in the status of preparation till its' adoption and real implementation (Parliament member, interview No. 8).

The supervision of policy implementation is necessary not only on the political level, but the society also has to realize that it is the one whose interests politicians are elected to represent. There is a need for *civil society* formation in Lithuania.

We need changes in electoral consciousness, because not the God but electorates give power to politicians (Parliament member, interview No. 8).

Social activity is the only way out of the *status quo* of the IIofI problem, the other way there are interest groups, powerful interest groups which don't want fundamental changes in existing social relations customs, and they know that the society is not watchful and NGOs are weak to ensure social balance (Parliament member, former economic actor, interview No. 4).

The respondents singled out the *changes in electoral system* - precisely the implementation of majority-based electoral system – both in national and local election as one of the means to start to deal with the problem of inequality inheritance putting it into the political agenda, making it one of the main political priorities.

That can be one of the means to block the possibilities to access the parliament of these people who have the only purpose – to get the power. And where is this declared serving the state, serving the nation? (Parliament member, interview No. 2).

One more aspect concerning changes and implementation needed to reduce IIofI was mentioned *more attention to ordinary citizens, families and their children* to empower them to seek for knowledge and adequate educational background (the focus is made on the change in practice of study fees and study loan system). Top politicians representing different political parties and power status in *Seimas* (position and opposition) expressed the idea about the creation of *social credit system*. The main criterion to get that kind of social credit should be the social status of student's family.

III. Perception of impact of applied programmes and policies on reducing/persistence/increase IIofI

A. Educational policy and its impact on IIofI

1. Efficacy of the current educational policy in equalising opportunities

The vast majority of respondents agreed that educational policy plays a crucial role in overcoming IIofI. However, most of respondents indicated that Lithuanian government pays too little attention to educational problems and does

not regard education as a priority in overcoming social differentiation, Ilofl and other social problems.

The outcomes of current educational policy were assessed differently. Although public trust in educational system was mentioned as the highest in the country, as majority of population (68%) positively assesses educational policy in Lithuania, almost all respondents critically evaluated educational reform and educational policy aimed at decreasing Ilofl. The fact that educational system was reformed by replicating *Western model* which does not suit to local traditions and conditions was also criticized by a few respondents.

Restructurization of schools in Lithuania provided with a better choice of different schools, including gymnasiums, secondary schools, colleges, etc. On the other hand, this caused many problems mentioned by most of the respondents. For instance, despite legal and constitutional rights, interests of the educational communities including teachers and staff, pupils and parents have been often disregarded during the reform. This caused uncertainty for children, their parents and teachers, since they are not sure about their future, if they would be able to continue studying in the same school or would have to leave it and travel to another one.

Another failure of the reform is that closure of rural schools had dramatic consequences on the community development, since this meant the loss of meeting place, cultural center. In addition, in some remote areas, there is a problem of school transportation, which leaves rural children without a possibility to reach a school. Even such relatively positive examples of the reform as newly established gymnasiums, which provide with quality education, also have shortcomings, as they are barely accessible for those children who are from disadvantaged groups, including poor families and/or rural areas, etc.

Contradictions with teaching programs were also listed by the respondents. On one hand, school curricula are overloaded with huge amounts of information. On the other hand, they are ineffective in providing knowledge and training skills necessary for students' future life. Profiled education enabling students to focus on one subject area also restrains children's possibilities to change their minds in the course of their studies and focus on a different subject area. Teachers also suffer from paper work, i.e. writing reports, preparing different educational programs necessary for their qualification assessment. Respondents were concerned that such a situation causes problems of non-attendance, dropouts and increases social exclusion and Ilofl.

Almost every respondent strongly emphasized *regional differences* in Lithuanian educational system. It is assumed that urban schools have better teachers, are better equipped and provide with better quality education than rural ones. Family differences also exist. For instance, families living in rural areas usually cannot afford buying all teaching materials necessary for their children,

providing them with extra classes for fee or support them during their further studies. All the factors construct different start positions for young people later on in the labour market.

Vocational education was also mentioned among problem areas, which have to be solved. Approximately 70% of young people study in the institutions of higher education in Lithuania and only very few are willing to enter vocational schools and acquire vocational training. Therefore, labour market is lacking people with such qualifications as: constructors, plumbers, woodworkers, etc. Emigration of such people to other countries of the EU is another problem mainly caused by low wages.

Inconsistency between study programmes and reality was also mentioned when discussing **higher education policy** in Lithuania. Majority of respondents indicated that there is a lack of measures for equalizing opportunities of young people on this level. Despite several positive measures, including joint entrance to the universities which facilitates the process of entering the institution of higher education depending on the results of school graduation; reduced tuition fees (500 LTL or 145 EUR per semester); loan system to cover tuition fees or living costs (up to 4000 LTL or 1159 EUR per year), there are too little attempts to provide better chances for young people of different social groups to acquire higher education:

Therefore, it is necessary to combat non-studying students who do not learn, by taking fine in cash. However, later on it appeared that it was not exactly so, but the same has remained till now. I am saying this very responsibly, because that time I pushed this ideology myself at my university. However, I feel that I was wrong because today situation has changed, but logics remained the same. Therefore, I think that if we wish changes, it is necessary to do as I have said, that is try to support people, provide loans, pay scholarships not for the grades, good learning, since this strongly demoralizes students, as well as teachers. But it would be necessary to support students by social factor. So, this does not exist (Government representative, interview No. 3).

Obviously, higher education is lacking financial resources in order to provide more equal opportunities for different people by reducing tuition fees and improve quality of education. On the other hand, there is a lack of clear standpoint towards equalizing of opportunities of different social groups. The most serious problem is that colleges and universities do not provide their students with professional skills, focusing mainly on theoretical knowledge, which is a big problem when graduates are willing to enter the labour market.

Politicians and experts also pointed out lack of adult education. It is problematic when those who need knowledge in business development, political science, accountancy etc. cannot afford it because of financial reasons. Therefore,

more opportunities should be created for the adults, willing to improve their qualification and/or receive new knowledge.

2. Compensation programmes and their impact on equalizing educational opportunities of young learners

Most respondents argued that despite different measures and programs, many of them do not reach anticipated results. Higher education sector is lacking such programmes, especially for disabled people with physical and mental disorders:

In reality, it often appears that goals and objectives declared are barely achieved. There is more orientation toward simple employment, consumption of resources, reporting rather than toward real change. If talking about the necessity to provide funds for the prevention of addictions, so besides there are no tangible ways to measure, if the prevention happened or not, if money was spent properly or not. This probably is a question of administrative skills – grant givers should take more care about that (NGO representative, interview No. 14).

According to the respondents, more support is needed for disabled people, orphans, children from risk families, and young people in rural areas. Only one respondent stated that people should not be differentiated, except for disabled ones who need more attention.

3. Improvements needed to increase the effectiveness of educational policy in equalising the opportunities

All respondents agreed that it is crucial to improve efficacy of educational policy, first of all by setting *long-term goals* and implementing the measures seeking concrete results. In order to equalize the opportunities for all, an individual regardless of their social status, income, etc. should be of value for the state, its clerks and society.

Respondents pointed out a number of possible *reforms at all levels of educational system* in Lithuania. For instance, in stead of closing down rural schools and bringing children to city schools, one respondent suggested an opposite solution, i.e. bringing city children to rural schools, which may be more appropriate for certain children because of smaller class size, cleaner and safer environment. Improvement of teaching programs is also a must, as many children are suffering from health problems; they are studying in big classes, etc.

It is important to extend the functions of schools and pay more attention to *extracurricular activities*. Schools should provide children with a possibility to spend their free time, do sports, prepare their homework, and have dinner and even overnight, if necessary. Improvement of teachers' qualifications was also mentioned as one of the suggestions, as they shouldn't be only teachers, they also have to be educators. The role of extracurricular activities was illustrated by the Estonian example when children from problematic families were invited to the sport clubs and the municipality of Tallinn covered the fee. The crime rate decreased twice in the city of Tallinn. Such measures may be effective when dealing with the problems of drug abuse, drinking, smoking, and violence:

(...) I would pay attention to children's informal (education), children's extracurricular activities, establishment of day care centers, so that all children regardless social opportunities could participate. Usually it happens that extracurricular education is already paid, because the government does not provide funds for teachers, and families do not have financial opportunities, and a child cannot study. Art schools, which we have and are supported by the municipalities. Usually certain specialties – music or painting – are paid. Here, it is necessary to think state-wide, in order all extracurricular (education) was accessible to all regardless financial recourses (Parliament member, interview No. 13).

Vocational education and training policy needs more attention, in order to encourage more young people to study at vocational schools and provide them with better chances in the labour market. Since vocational schools have had a bad image since the Soviet times, it was suggested to reorganize these schools into technological gymnasiums. Also, it is crucial to analyze the demand of certain vocations in labour market, so that graduates would be able to integrate into labour market.

It is important to equalize the opportunities to acquire *higher education* for young people from underrepresented groups, i.e. children from poor families, rural areas, also disabled. Universities may have different missions. Some of them may be elite schools, others specializing in reducing social inequality provide education for socially disadvantaged people. Loan system also should be improved so that to encourage students to use the opportunity to acquire education. Moreover, it is important that the system is inefficient with lots of graduates who are unable to integrate into the labour market. Therefore, more collaboration between universities, employers, and trade unions is needed in order to correspond to the needs of the labour market.

Although a strategy of *life-long learning* was prepared and accepted to provide more opportunities to acquire education, there has been no monitoring of the system.

More initiatives should come from *NGOs and private sector*, which would increase competition, as well as the choice of educational services and improve quality of education. Efficacy of educational policy is impossible without competition. Moreover, paid education would encourage students to better consider their future opportunities. However, there was no common agreement with regard to private schools.

B. Labour market policy and its impact on IIoFI

1. Efficacy of the current labour market policy in improving opportunities on the labour market

Respondents were very critical about the impact of labour market policy on IIoFI. Most of them argued that people with lower education, less trained have less chances to enter labour market. Economic and NGO actors emphasized that it is impossible to expect that all may have equal opportunities in the labour market, since this depends on each individual, their education, motivation and other reasons. Therefore, it is the role of educational policy to provide people with better quality education and better start positions in the labour market. However, the problem is that there are no adaptation programmes for socially disadvantaged groups, which would allow certain groups of people to integrate into society.

Most respondents criticized the current labour market policy as inappropriate and incorrect because of growing hidden unemployment, lack of working people, increasing protectionism and low wages. Despite national employment policy and implementation system, the system does not correspond to the needs of different social groups, including people living in rural areas and working in agricultural sector, lonely mothers, national minorities, etc. For instance, in Vilnius region, unemployment rate among Russian and Polish population is significantly higher than among Lithuanians. Another problem with the labour market policy measures is that they are available only for those who are registered by the Labour Exchange. However, those who are not officially registered as unemployed and usually belong to the groups of social risk; they do not have the same rights and guarantees.

Labour market policy was also criticized for high taxes and plans to increase of minimal wages. Some of the respondents argued that labour market should be less controlled by the state, small and medium enterprises encouraged creating new job places, taxes reduced and more opportunities provided for investments.

2. Special programmes and their impact on improving employment opportunities of young people

Some respondents listed several measures aimed at improving employment opportunities for young people. For instance, youth employment centers have been established by the Labour Exchange in all major cities. There are special programmes for young people, including First Step in Labour Market Programme targeted at graduates of different schools and Local Employment Initiatives focused on young people employment, in general. Graduates of vocational schools, colleges and universities, also people from 16 to 25, if they enter the labour market for the first time in their lives, they are eligible for special programmes. However, those young people who have worked at least for a short time, they are not eligible for the programmes. Another shortage of the programme is its duration. It was argued that 3 months of training are usually not enough to acquire necessary skills and knowledge.

Disabled people, former prisoners, mothers with children fewer than 14, people under the pension age are provided with certain assistance. However, young people from remote regions, families with limited resources are not supported. Too little opportunities exist for middle-aged people, who are the most productive and whose contribution to the social assurance is the most important. Their opportunities for life-long learning are very limited.

Retraining programmes provided by the Labour Exchange are too general in order to make a difference. They usually provide people with computer skills, languages, and basic knowledge of business; however, they are not effective enough to empower individuals to better integrate into the labour market. There are no targeted programmes, which would train certain people to work in a particular company.

Despite different existing attempts, most programmes in labour market haven't been effective and were of more declarative character, in order to comply with the EU standards.

Despite existing measures in labour market, more chances to be employed have people with higher education and those who actively look for different opportunities, are optimists, while those with a narrow qualification and lack of initiative and motivation usually are less successful.

Programmes mentioned by the respondents included long-term and short-term unemployed, elderly people, women and mothers with children, remote regions, etc. However, most politicians and experts considered them as too general, too abstract and ineffective created for the sake of programme. Programmes for immigrants and refugees are usually also ineffective because most of those people look for the opportunities to leave for Western countries, rather than to stay and integrate into Lithuanian society.

Unfortunately, there is a lack of support for young people with lack of education. Another problem is that young people even having education, but living in remote regions, rural areas, have difficulties in finding a job even in a city, where they would need to solve living problems. Therefore, many people choose employment abroad rather than looking for a job in Lithuania.

Marginalized groups should be included into specific programmes. These people should feel more responsibility for their own lives. Therefore, the main task of these programmes should be empowerment of these people who would be able to acquire necessary skills and knowledge and help themselves.

3. Possible ways of increasing the effectiveness of the labour market policy in improving opportunities for young people

Most respondents emphasized the importance of *coordination* between educational system and labour market. More control and coordination is needed between labour market and educational policies in order to reach compliance between supply and demand in the labour market. Although the proposition of students at universities is among the highest in Europe, the problem of vocational students increases, as less and less young people are willing to acquire vocational qualifications.

There should be possibilities created for young people to assess their personality, opportunities, needs and skills, what kind of work they could and would like to do. On the other hand, practical experience gained during trainings or internships is also one of the conditions to have better chances to successfully compete in the labour market. Therefore, educational institutions, NGOs, trade unions and business organizations should be encouraged to closer cooperate by providing young people with the opportunities to gain practical experience before entering the labour market.

There is a system, there are labour exchanges, but orientation of young people should not start after the graduation of higher education school or any other educational institution, but should start at the school desk. And more opportunities should appear for a young person to learn himself and assess his skills and where he could work, in which field. Maybe he does not need to graduate a higher education in order he could make a successful career. Maybe after graduation of some level of education, for instance a secondary school, he would need to travel somewhere or volunteer, work in some field, so that he would have time to learn himself, assess his skills. In Western Europe this often happens, because young people travel somewhere to see, whether he will be able to work in some field in a different country (NGO representative, interview No. 7).

New models of cooperation between social partners should be developed, aiming at *sustainable development of labour market*. Local government should also be encouraged in trying to solve unemployment issue. Universities and other institutions of higher education should be more involved in retraining programmes, especially for people with higher education, but lacking certain skills and knowledge.

Each municipality to provide information for employers and employees seeking for a job could establish business information centers. Employers should be encouraged to create more employment places by receiving certain benefits, including reduction of taxes. Particularly small and middle business enterprises should be encouraged. The role of municipalities is of importance, too. They have to show more initiative in facilitating the process of creation new employment places. Establishment of social enterprises could be one of the solutions to improve the integration of disabled people with mental disorders into labour market.

There was no common agreement regarding further development of labour market policy. Some of respondents argued that more *focus on individual* and their needs should be made, while encouraging more active *public participation* in shaping labour market policy. Another group of experts and politicians emphasized the importance of *liberalization of labour market* which would contribute to the better solution of unemployment problem.

C. Welfare policy and its impact on IIoff

1. Specific programmes and their impact on improving life opportunities

Welfare policy has also been critically assessed by the respondents, despite numerous laws and regulations issued by the parliament and adopted by the government, in order to help socially disadvantaged groups to integrate into the society:

I looked, how many laws have been developed. With the laws it is like this – (a law) for a table, then for one leg, another, third and fourth. Now we repair a law of the table's one leg by cutting this leg a little bit. Then it (table) turns skew-whiff, and then we quickly repair another, because we think that we will repair it and it (table) will stand again. No, we cut it again and it turns skew-whiff even more. This is a system. No one has time to sit, discuss, decide, because everything happens in a hurry, without reason... (Parliament member, interview No. 12).

There are 17 thousand problematic families raising 39 thousand children in Lithuania. Current welfare policy has not been effective by providing social benefits to these families, because they do not motivate individuals to look for solutions by themselves. Most respondents argued that social welfare system does not solve major problems. Existing measures are only partially effective, focused on the consequences, but not the causes. The whole social welfare system has not been adequate. Minimum standard of living estimated by the government does not reflect the reality. Although the level of social welfare depends on the financial opportunities of the state, it is also important what kind of priorities the government sets:

Another thing is total disregard of a human being. There is only one life given for a person, and if he is hungry, he is hungry today and he cannot wait. And it has to be the first priority for the state, that a person is hungry. Kings' Palace could also be renovated after tomorrow, but a person is hungry today and it is not declared as a priority. All the time it is mislaid somewhere. All the time it is averaged – I live better, you are hungry, but in average we all have eaten, although this is not true. Such a manipulation with averages is awful in the sense that it does not allow to raise the problem in all its severity. It is not important that a hundred (people) are not hungry, two are hungry and their problem is burning... (Parliament member, former economic actor, interview No. 4).

A problem with the law of patronage was mentioned, when a person who fosters a child receives more support than parents do. Foster benefit is of 500 LTL or 145 EUR, while a usual family receives only 50 LTL or 15 EUR per child up to 7 years old. Social welfare system is also lacking financial resources.

Almost 2000 Litas per month is provided for the sustenance of a child in the public care institutions. Some people stay that it would be better to pay this money to a family... But this money is spent for paying salaries to the staff, electricity, heating, and water, everything... In fact, all the institution, its staff, everything is kept for this money... (Parliament member, interview No. 12).

Many respondents critically assessed birth benefits, as they do not contribute to the overall increase in birth rate, but stimulate to abuse the system and give birth mainly because of the benefits. The system of special benefits is particularly inadequate and ineffective in order to reduce social differentiation. The number of special benefits, including state pensions is extremely high in comparison to other countries.

There are specific programmes targeted at children from the families of social risk and living in poverty, drug abusers, former prisoners, Roma people, etc. Unfortunately, respondents mentioned that these programmes and strategies are being prepared just in order to comply with the standards of the EU or other international organizations.

2. Expected and unexpected outcomes of the programmes

One of the major problems, which make the whole system inefficient, is categorical social benefit, which depends on certain characteristics and multiplies social differentiation. *Stigmatization* is a serious problem, particularly among school children who try to avoid social benefits, including alimentation for free of charge because of the stigma. This causes problems of non-attendance and dropouts.

Social welfare policy is very fragmented, very overgrown – those benefits, support depending on different criteria. And then it is impossible to follow, how much is received according to one criterion, another. And one receives only one (benefit) and cannot survive. I think, it would be necessary to integrate all the benefits into one, do research to find out what is a real minimum standard of living, cancel all the categorical benefits and simply increase social benefit. Then we would know what is provided, how much is provided and that a person may survive somehow for such a benefit. Think, that what we have now is expensive and inaccurate, and no motivation is left, and nobody can follow (NGO representative, interview No. 15).

Dependency attitude among the target categories is also of particular importance, since those people who receive social benefits, often do not make any attempt to change the situation, to look for the job by them. Also, importance of a human factor was mentioned, i.e. efficacy of the programmes depends on each individual working in welfare system. If one is not willing to help, the system cannot be effective.

More attention and measures are needed for young people, also pensioners, families with more than 3 children, single parents, children raised in state foster homes, orphans.

3. Ways to improve the efficacy of welfare policy in equalising the life opportunities of needy people

Growing differentiation between rich and poor should be of primary importance for the state. Government has to apply all the measures in order to reduce poverty, social inequality, exclusion and Ilofi, especially that expenditure for social welfare is significantly lower in Lithuania than other countries of the EU, despite high taxes which surpass European level.

The main problem is that existing resource is spread widely, but the layer is thin. To my understanding, this exists in police, education, and social policy (NGO representative, interview No. 14).

Better chances and more guarantees for *young people and families* with children should be created so that to encourage them to work and care for themselves and their families. In general, benefit receivers should be encouraged to actively seek for the way-outs to better integrate into society. Young women with children should be also supported in order to stay in the labour market.

In order to improve the efficiency of welfare policy, the number of categorical benefits should be reduced, including alimentation at school, which causes stigmatization and social differentiation. Since almost 70 percent of rural pupils are receivers of this particular benefit, there should not be made any differentiation at all, so that all schoolchildren in rural areas would be able to receive alimentation for free.

Tax policy should be reformed. Income tax should be reduced for people and progressive tax system should be introduced. This will mean that families receive more social guarantees by receiving more income. It will be an important encouragement for people. On the other hand, certain solutions are required to encourage employment in the regions.

Quality of social services should be improved and more individual approach applied in social work. **Community role** was also emphasized when talking about the preventive measures in order to combat social problems like IIofl, to empower individuals to better adapt to changing situation, to encourage them to take care of themselves and their children. NGOs, Church should also play more active role in providing social services.

Last but not least a **holistic approach**, i.e. collaboration between all institutions is necessary in order to reduce IIofl. Social workers, education and health professionals have to work together after a thorough analysis of the situation. Therefore, more research should be done in order to receive detailed information about each institution involved in combating IIofl. Every institution should know about the measures implemented by the others and get recommendations on how to improve the collaboration. At the same time, more control is needed, so that to fairly assess the efficacy of the programmes. Finally, it is important to learn from the experience of other countries.

There are very strange things. On one hand, there is a deep specialization. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the work of elementary, secondary and higher education schools. The Ministry of Social Security deals with pensioners benefit receivers... The Ministry of Health deals with patients, disabled people. And there is another strategy, which is called harmonious development strategy and comprises everything. So, one of the powerful problems could be the harmonious development strategy. But this is a philosophical question between commonalities and diversities. Of course, it is easier when everything is clearly distributed, but maybe it is possible to work together and make so that no benefits would be needed, that a person would come, would borrow and study, and no support would be needed for the rest of life... So, this is harmoni-

ous development or intersectorial relationship, which also should not be in the last place (Government representative, interview No. 3).

APPENDIXES