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SUBMISSION: women’s and girls’ human security in the context of poverty and inequality

The OHCHR and The Working Group on discrimination against women and girls has by e-mail on the 9th of September 2022 sought inputs from National Human Rights Institutions to inform on the various aspects of risks experienced by women and girls living in poverty and inequality in relation to the enjoyment and fulfilment of their human rights.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights hereby presents its relevant comments in relation to the situation in Denmark.

**Information on women’s and girls’ human security in the context of poverty and inequality**

***Information on relevant data***

1. *What are the general levels of poverty in your country/region and those specifically of women and girls?*

The general level of poverty in Denmark is measured in relative poverty terms. In 2020, there was 241.700 relatively poor persons in Denmark[[1]](#footnote-1). To be defined as such one’s income must be less than 50 percent of the median income. This does not pertain to students. Unfortunately, The Danish Institute for Human Rights does not have access to gender specific information on the levels of poverty for women and girls in Denmark.

1. *Which are the levels of economic inequality in your country/region? Could you present disaggregated data concerning women and girls?*

The levels of economic inequality can be measured by the dispersion of income as measured through the Gini coefficient, one of the most commonly used measures. In Denmark the Gini coefficient was 29,72[[2]](#footnote-2). The closer the coefficient is to 0 (depicted as a number between 0 and 100), the more equal the income distribution is. The Danish Institute for Human Rights does not have access to disaggregated data relating to women and girls.

1. *Also, please present if available, disaggregated data on the specific conditions of such women in poverty (e.g., whether they belong to an ethnic or religious minority, are indigenous, migrants, asylum-seekers, stateless or refugees).*

The Danish Institute for Human Rights does not have access to this information, as there is no disaggregated data available in a Danish context.

***Information on risks and structural barriers***

1. *In which way are girls and women living in poverty or experiencing a situation of economic and social marginalization/disadvantage exposed to threats or risks in your country/region? In particular, in terms of:*

* *having difficulty with accessing social security, health care, housing, water, food, education, employment;*
* *being in a situation of homelessness or experiencing social exclusion and economic ‘unfreedom’;*
* *facing violence or discrimination, or stigmatization due to living in poverty;*
* *lacking access to justice and reparations for violations of their rights;*
* *facing undue/disproportionate or excessive criminalization for different causes.*

Sex workers in Denmark, both street-based sex workers and those selling sex ‘inside’, are a group that can face some of these mentioned risks, especially the risk of violence, social exclusion and undue criminalization. It is of importance to note that not all women selling sex live in poverty. Furthermore, sex sellers are a very diverse group with diverging motivations and way into selling sex. Nonetheless, a mapping of sex sale in Denmark conducted by VIVE (The Danish Center for Social Science Research) in 2020 show that more sex sellers have experienced homelessness, have lower education levels and are more poorly connected to the labour market compared to their peers not selling sex[[3]](#footnote-3). Though not all women sex workers are socially vulnerable, many migrant street-based sex sellers face more risks of violence as well as disproportionate criminalization and lack rights. VIVE estimates that 4,500 persons sold sex in Denmark in 2020[[4]](#footnote-4).

Another group that experiences economic ‘unfreedom’ are the homeless women. In 2022, 1,288 female Danish citizens are homeless[[5]](#footnote-5). Homeless migrant women without permanent residence are an even more vulnerable group and may face excessive criminalization and cannot enjoy the same rights and access to health care or social help as Danish citizens due to their lack of residential status as well as economic ‘unfreedom’. Estimates suggest that there are 38 homeless women migrants without permanent residence[[6]](#footnote-6). Homeless Danish citizens have several rights, and the municipalities are responsible for offering social action plans to all homeless person. However, studies show that there are barriers and only one third of homeless people receive such a social action plan[[7]](#footnote-7).

In September 2015, Denmark introduced a new ‘integration benefit’. In a report from 2018, The Danish Institute for Human Rights delve into this benefit and consider the economic and social hardships experienced by families[[8]](#footnote-8). The benefit targeted people who have not lived in Denmark for at least seven or the past eight years, thus effectively making newly arrived refugees the primary recipients of this benefit. It is the lowest public benefit in Denmark. A single provider with one or more children receives DKK 12,364 per month in integration benefits, while married couple receives DKK 17,306. In comparison, a single provider over 30 years old with one or more children who receives normal welfare benefits in Denmark and are eligible for the full welfare benefit receives DKK 14,993 per month, and a married couple with one or more children receives DKK 29,986 per month. Providers who receive integration benefit gradually earn the right to child benefits, while providers who receive normal welfare benefits always have the right to child benefits.

The report from the Danish Institute for Human Rights shows that for those families remaining on the integration benefit they are severely affected. Some families report not having enough money at the end of the month to buy food and must skip meals, while they also struggle to afford bus tickets, winter clothes, school supplies and medicine. Their housing situations is also affected and several families live under cramped conditions or in temporary housing that have problems with rot, mould and drafts. Moreover, social hardships are a direct result from the financial situation these benefit place the families in. For example, some cannot afford after-school activities for their children.

1. *What is the legal and policy framework in your country/region to address such risks and prevent human rights violations affecting women and girls in poverty?*

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has no comments regarding this question.

1. *Are there any particular groups of women and girls most at risk or conditions that especially determine barriers for women and girls to access such rights and why (such as by living in poverty, working in the informal labor market, unpaid care work or domestic work, migrant, asylum-seeker, refugee or stateless status, race, ethnicity, religion, age, gender identity, sexual orientation).*

See the answer to question 1 above.

1. *Are there laws and/or practices in your country/region which differentiate between persons on the basis of sex or gender, i.e., between girls and boys to access education, ability for men and women, both inside and outside marriage, to enter into contracts, own/administer property, purchase land and/or housing, own/administer business, and gain access to credit? If so, what are they?*

The Danish Institute for Human Rights does not have any knowledge or experience about such laws or practices.

1. *How would you say that structural obstacles, and ongoing phenomena or threats in your country/region (such as the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, ongoing conflict, etc.) impact on risks for women and girls, particularly in the way women and girls access economic and social rights?*

The Institute for Human Rights has no comments concerning access to economic and social rights, though it must be pointed out that during the Covid-19 pandemic domestic violence aimed at women increased[[9]](#footnote-9).

1. *Are there any specific actors, such as business corporations, or macroeconomic norms or policies in your country/region -such as trade agreements, taxation, debt and redistribution measures- that create particular or disproportionate risks or concrete human rights violations for women and girls?*

The Danish Institute for Human Rights does not have any knowledge or experience about such specific actors.

1. *Is there any legal framework or policy, program or part of your work, that focuses on the role of men in preventing economic risks or vulnerabilities of women and girls and/or ensuring the human rights of women in the context of poverty and inequality? Is there any that makes visible or emphasizes the benefits for the whole of society of a gender-equal and inclusive economy?*

No.

***Information on promising practices***

1. *What are the concrete ways in which the State –at the executive, legislative or judicial branch- addresses the situation of women and girls’ structural disadvantage in relation to economic and social rights? Are there any particular issues and platforms in which the State protects them from the systemic threats they face due to poverty and inequality?*

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has no comments regarding this question.

1. *How does your institution/Government/organisation contribute to ensuring girls’ and women’s access to their basic economic and social rights in your national context? Are there particular issues, platforms or levels in which the State/your institution encourage their participation, inclusion and engagement and what role does it play?*

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has no comments regarding this question.

1. *Could you refer to legal norms and policies for eliminating poverty, as well as for reducing economic inequality, such as taxation, debt and redistribution measures, or specific economic or social policies, and could you specify if they adopt a gendered perspective and/or if there are any specifically directed to women and girls?*

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has no comments regarding this question.

1. *Could you refer to any good practice or innovative measure or initiative that has helped advance women’s and girls’ socioeconomic human security?*

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has no comments regarding this question.

1. *How can women and girls participate in decision-making in this area?*

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has no comments regarding this question.

***Information on recommendations/ the way forward***

1. *What concrete measures should States adopt and implement to eradicate poverty and tackle in particular the situation of women and girls living in poverty and the disproportionate impact poverty has on them?*

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has no comments regarding this question.

1. *What concrete measures should States adopt to address systemic gender-based/age-based/socioeconomic-based discrimination and challenges affecting women and girls living in situation of poverty?*

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has no comments regarding this question.

1. *What would be your main recommendation to advance women’s and girls’ socioeconomic human security?*

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has no comments regarding this question.

Yours sincerely,

Sinja Laursen

Senior Adviser

1. Statistics Denmark (2021), ’Nyt fra Danmarks Statistik’. Available in Danish at: [Indkomster for personer 2020 indkomstfordeling (dst.dk)](https://www.dst.dk/Site/Dst/Udgivelser/nyt/GetPdf.aspx?cid=33390) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Statistics Denmark (2021). Website accessed on 28-09-2022: [Indkomstulighed - Danmarks Statistik (dst.dk)](https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/emner/arbejde-og-indkomst/indkomst-og-loen/indkomstulighed) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. VIVE, The Danish Center for Social Science Research (2021), ‘Salg af sex i Danmark 2020 – En kortlægning’. Available in Danish at: [Salg af sex i Danmark 2020 – En kortlægning (vive.dk)](https://www.vive.dk/media/pure/16278/5840122) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. VIVE, The Danish Center for Social Science Research (2021), website accessed on 28-09-2022: [Salg af sex i Danmark 2020 - VIVE](https://www.vive.dk/da/udgivelser/salg-af-sex-i-danmark-2020-16278/) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. VIVE, The Danish Center for Social Science Research (2022), ‘Hjemløshed I Danmark 2022 – National Kortlægning’. Available in Danish at: [Hjemløshed i Danmark 2022 (vive.dk)](https://www.vive.dk/media/pure/18153/9732199) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The Danish Institute for Human Rights (2017), ‘Hjemløse borgeres rettigheder i kommunerne’. Available in Danish at: [HJEMLØSE BORGERES RETTIGHEDER I KOMMUNERNE (menneskeret.dk)](https://menneskeret.dk/sites/menneskeret.dk/files/media/dokumenter/udgivelser/hjemloeses_rettigheder_2017.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The Danish Institute for Human Rights (2018), ‘Familier på integrationsydelse – En analyse af økonomi, afsavn og social eksklusion i et menneskeretligt perspektiv’. Available in Danish at: [FAMILIER PÅ INTEGRATIONSYDELSE (menneskeret.dk)](https://menneskeret.dk/sites/menneskeret.dk/files/media/document/~%2019_02922-15%20integrationsydelse_web-ny_19.12%20-%20fd%20461988_1_1.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. DR, The Danish Broadcasting Corporation (2020), ‘Nedlukningen har givet rødglødende krisehotlines: Flere er fanget i corona-vold’. Accessed on 28-09-2022: [Nedlukningen har givet rødglødende krisehotlines: Flere er fanget i corona-vold (dr.dk)](https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/webfeature/corona-vold) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)