

PRESS RELEASE

Launch of the Innocenti Insight:
**Children in Immigrant Families in Eight Affluent Countries:
Their family, national and international context**
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Social inclusion and integration of children and youth of immigrant families is of critical relevance for affluent societies in future years, according to a UNICEF study issued today

Geneva, 22 October 2009 – The Innocenti Insight presents for the first time, internationally comparable data addressing the number, share and family circumstances of immigrant children in eight industrialised countries: Australia, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. One of the key findings of this new study released today by the UNICEF Innocenti Research Center in Florence (Italy) is that many immigrant children and youth in the eight affluent countries are at disadvantage compared with the native children and youth.

“Despite their differences in cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds, children in immigrant families often are similar to their peers in native families in their family composition and parental employment, but they often experience educational and economic challenges and higher poverty rates”, says Professor Donald Hernandez, who authored the study and is an expert on social policies.

The *Innocenti Insight* ‘Children in Immigrant Families in Eight Affluent Countries’ also reports that the wellbeing of these children and youth, particularly those who come from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), remains critical in several areas including health, education, economic security, housing and work opportunities.

Children in immigrant families account for a large share of all children in the countries reviewed in the study. However, very little is known about the living conditions of these children.

Children of migrants are far from being a homogeneous population. In some cases their family profiles are not dissimilar from that of other children of the country of settlement. In many of the countries in the report, most of the children in immigrant families live with two parents, and are more likely than children in native-born families to live in households with two or more siblings. One child in ten has at least one parent who is a citizen of the country of settlement.

Many immigrant children of LMIC origin live with parents with limited educational achievement, but in some of the countries, children in immigrant families with LMIC origins are more likely than native children to live with university-educated parents. In half the countries the labour force participation of fathers of immigrant children is very similar to that of fathers of native children. In the remaining half they are less likely to be employed.

The report also finds that the immigrant youth's access to schooling, their risk of not being enrolled, educational and employment outcomes also depend on their country of origin, Children in immigrant families today will be increasingly prominent as workers, voters and parents in the coming years. Their integration and social inclusion will shape the future of the affluent host countries.

“Fostering civil integration and social inclusion can benefit not only children and parents in immigrant families” says David Parker, Deputy Director of UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre “but also the countries of settlement that the parents in immigrant families have adopted as their own”.

About UNICEF

UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

Note to Editors

Embargoed media materials and copies of the *Innocenti Insight* in English, as well as the sevenational reports for seven of the eight countries are available from the Centre's newsroom: <http://www.unicef-irc.org/presscentre/indexNewsroom.html>

For further information, please contact:

Patrizia Faustini, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence: (+39) 055 2033 253, pfaustini@unicef.org

Veronique Taveau, Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division, Geneva, (+41 22) 909 5716, vtaveau@unicef.org

Rebecca Fordham, UNICEF Media Section, New York, (+1 212) 326-7162, rfordham@unicef.org