How can the expertise of people with experience of poverty inform Swiss poverty policy in the long term and have an impact on it?

Foundations and concept for a permanent participation structure, which was developed on the basis of research conducted with people who have experience of poverty.

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA
Federal Social Insurance Office FSIO

General report

Imprint

The National Platform for Preventing and Combatting Poverty supports the implementation of the recommendations developed in the National Programme against Poverty 2014 - 2018. It facilitates dialogue between experts and provides a sound basis for selected key issues in the areas of educational opportunities, social and professional integration and general living conditions. The National Platform against Poverty is a six-year programme for a limited period (2019 - 2024). It is supported by the federal government, cantons, cities and municipalities as well as civil society organisations.
Further information: www.gegenarmut.ch

How can the expertise of people with experience of poverty inform Swiss poverty policy in the long term and have an impact on it?

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General report

Bern, 12 January 2024

Foreword

One of democracy's fundamental concerns is the inclusion of all citizens in (political) decision-making processes. Yet, time and again, either the pathway to participation proves long – if not unreachable – for some, or the structures that support such participation prove difficult to access. This experience is particularly common among people affected by poverty. Hence, the repeated calls from this section of the population and their representatives for their direct involvement in decisions that have a bearing on their lives.

The National Platform against Poverty (2019–24) therefore made this issue a priority theme of its work. It identified several participation models that could be deployed in the poverty prevention and eradication space as well as the factors which are decisive for implementation success. These findings were tested and further developed in a number of applied projects. They were also incorporated continually into the platform's work. A review of these efforts and processes found that the positive effects are most impactful when participation is ongoing rather than on ad hoc basis, which is already common practice in other policy areas like policy for people with disabilities and child and youth policy.

The platform's steering group therefore explored what form a national permanent participatory structure in the poverty prevention and eradication space could take and how it might function. This work led to the 'Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland' concept, which was developed through a participatory process between September 2022 and October 2023. Participants included over fifty people with experience of poverty and their organisations from different regions of Switzerland as well as professionals from different federal levels and different areas of poverty prevention and eradication. Using examples from other countries as a reference point, the objectives of the proposed structure were defined, and different operating models were examined and evaluated. The model set out in the concept takes account of the concerns of those affected and the relevant professionals, as well as the specificities of the Swiss context.

The steering group highly commends the process and the commitment of everyone who took part. It considers their proposal not only valuable but also innovative. A permanent participatory structure offers added value in a number of ways. First, it takes on board the experience of those affected by poverty and uses these insights to inform thinking on the design of a more effective poverty policy. Second, it would serve as a clear point of contact. Third, it would foster more sustained dialogue with people affected by poverty and their representatives. The key parameters contained in the concept constitute an important first step towards the realisation of such a structure.

A number of questions remain unanswered, however, such as the member selection process and the organisational integration of the structure. If it is to be transparent and effective, the future participatory structure will need to have the necessary resources at its disposal and offer open access to its processes so that the voices of those affected by poverty can be heard and therefore actively contribute to effect real change. Further steps will be taken as part of ongoing poverty prevention efforts to work with all concerned partners to further develop the proposal and to resolve outstanding issues during the implementation process.

On behalf of the Steering Group of the National Platform against Poverty

Astrid Wüthrich
Deputy Director and Head of the Family, Generations and Society Domain, FSIO

Avant-propos

La participation de tous aux processus de décision (notamment politiques) est une revendication démocratique loin d'être récente. Il n'est toutefois pas rare de constater que pour certaines personnes, le chemin à parcourir est long, voire trop long, ou que les structures permettant cette participation ne sont pas suffisamment accessibles. Si les personnes touchées par la pauvreté ne sont pas seules dans ce cas, elles sont particulièrement concernées par cette problématique. Or elles demandent depuis longtemps, aux côtés des organisations qui les soutiennent, d'être étroitement associées aux décisions qui les concernent.

Forte de ce constat, la Plateforme nationale contre la pauvreté (2019–2024) a fait de la participation l'un de ses thèmes prioritaires. Elle a donc, dans un premier temps, identifié plusieurs modèles de participation à la prévention et à la lutte contre la pauvreté ainsi que les facteurs propres à assurer le succès de ces modèles. Dans un second temps, elle a mis ces enseignements à l'épreuve et les a affinés dans le cadre de projets menés sur le terrain, pour s'en inspirer tout au long de ses travaux. Enfin, l'analyse de ces projets et des processus qui y sont liés a montré que la participation produit d'autant plus d'effets qu'elle n'est pas uniquement ponctuelle, mais permanente, à l'exemple de ce qui a pu être mis en place dans la politique de l'enfance et de la jeunesse ou la politique en faveur des personnes en situation de handicap.

Le groupe de pilotage de la Plateforme s'est donc tourné vers des spécialistes pour savoir quel visage et quel mode de fonctionnement pourrait avoir une structure de participation nationale permanente dans le domaine de la prévention et de la lutte contre la pauvreté. La présente proposition de *Conseil pour les questions de pauvreté en Suisse*, aboutissement de ces travaux, est le fruit d'un processus participatif mené de septembre 2022 à octobre 2023. Cette démarche a réuni des personnes provenant de diverses régions de Suisse : une cinquantaine de personnes ayant l'expérience de la pauvreté et leurs organisations de soutien ainsi que des professionnels des trois échelons fédéraux, actifs dans divers domaines de la prévention et de la lutte contre la pauvreté. S'inspirant d'exemples d'autres pays, les participants ont défini les objectifs que pourrait avoir une telle structure et évalué divers modes de fonctionnement. Le modèle proposé dans ce document tient compte tant du contexte suisse ainsi que des avis des personnes ayant un vécu de pauvreté et des professionnels.

Le groupe de pilotage, qui voit dans le projet retenu une proposition judicieuse et innovante, tient à saluer le processus réalisé ainsi que l'engagement dont ont fait preuve les personnes qui y ont été associées. Une structure de participation permanente présente en effet plusieurs avantages : elle permet d'intégrer l'expertise des personnes ayant l'expérience de la pauvreté dans les réflexions sur la politique à mener dans le domaine, fait office d'interlocutrice aisément identifiable et promeut un dialogue continu avec les personnes ayant l'expérience de la pauvreté et leurs représentants. Les axes définis dans la présente proposition constituent une première et importante étape dans ce sens.

Certains points restent néanmoins à préciser, notamment pour ce qui a trait au choix des membres ou du rattachement institutionnel. Par ailleurs, pour éviter que cette structure ne devienne une coquille vide, il est essentiel qu'elle dispose des ressources nécessaires et s'appuie sur des processus permettant à la voix des personnes concernées par la pauvreté d'amener de réels changements. Il s'agit maintenant, dans le cadre des efforts consentis pour prévenir la pauvreté, de préciser le projet avec les parties prenantes et, lors du passage à la réalisation, de trouver des réponses aux questions en suspens.

Au nom du groupe de pilotage de la Plateforme nationale contre la pauvreté,
Astrid Wüthrich, Vice-directrice et responsable du domaine Famille, générations et société

Premessa

La partecipazione di tutti ai processi decisionali (politici) è un'esigenza democratica primordiale. Tuttavia, spesso accade che per alcune persone la strada da percorrere sia lunga, talvolta troppo lunga, o che le strutture in cui è possibile partecipare si rivelino troppo poco accessibili. Questo vale non esclusivamente ma in particolare per le persone colpite dalla povertà. Il loro coinvolgimento diretto nelle decisioni che le riguardano è un'esigenza espressa ripetutamente dalle persone interessate e dai loro rappresentanti.

La Piattaforma nazionale contro la povertà (2019–2024), pertanto, ha lavorato su questo tema in modo prioritario. Ha identificato vari modelli di partecipazione nella prevenzione e nella lotta contro la povertà e ha messo in luce i fattori decisivi per un'attuazione ben riuscita. Questi dati sono stati testati e approfonditi nell'ambito di alcuni progetti pratici e sono stati costantemente integrati nei lavori della piattaforma. Un'analisi di questi lavori e processi ha rivelato che gli effetti della partecipazione possono essere particolarmente positivi quando questa avviene su base regolare e non solo sporadica, analogamente a quanto osservato in altri ambiti, come la politica dell'infanzia e della gioventù e la politica in favore delle persone disabili.

Il gruppo di gestione strategica della piattaforma ha quindi esaminato quali potrebbero essere la forma e il funzionamento di una struttura di partecipazione permanente a livello nazionale nell'ambito della prevenzione e della lotta contro la povertà. Il presente piano per un «Consiglio per le questioni relative alla povertà in Svizzera» è il risultato di queste riflessioni. È stato concepito tramite un processo di partecipazione che ha avuto luogo tra settembre 2022 e ottobre 2023. Hanno partecipato oltre 50 persone aventi esperienza di povertà con le relative organizzazioni provenienti da varie regioni della Svizzera, come pure professionisti attivi ai diversi livelli statali e in vari settori della prevenzione e lotta contro la povertà. Nel corso del processo, sono stati definiti gli obiettivi di una potenziale struttura sulla base di esempi di altri Paesi e sono state esaminate e valutate varie modalità di funzionamento. Il modello proposto tiene conto delle esigenze delle persone interessate e dei professionisti coinvolti, nonché del contesto svizzero.

Il gruppo di gestione strategica rende omaggio al processo e all'impegno delle persone coinvolte e ritiene che il risultato costituisca una proposta valida e innovativa. Una struttura di partecipazione permanente offre un valore aggiunto sotto diversi punti di vista: integra le esperienze delle persone coinvolte nelle riflessioni per una politica di lotta alla povertà efficace; costituisce un chiaro punto di contatto e promuove un dialogo costante con le persone aventi esperienza di povertà e i loro rappresentanti. I dati principali identificati nel piano rappresentano un primo importante passo in questa direzione.

Vi sono ancora questioni aperte, per esempio riguardo alla scelta dei membri o al collegamento organizzativo della struttura. Un presupposto essenziale affinché una struttura di partecipazione sia seria ed efficace, è essa possa dispore delle risorse necessarie e che i processi siano aperti in modo tale che la voce delle persone colpite dalla povertà possa anche produrre cambiamenti reali. Nell'ambito dei lavori in corso per la prevenzione della povertà sono necessari ulteriori passi, al fine di sviluppare ulteriormente la proposta con le persone coinvolte e di trovare risposte alle questioni aperte nel corso dell'attuazione pratica.

In nome del gruppo di gestione strategica della Piattaforma nazionale contro la povertà,
Astrid Wüthrich, Vicedirettrice e capo dell'Ambito Famiglia, generazioni e società

Vorwort

Die Partizipation aller Menschen an (politischen) Entscheidungsprozessen ist ein demokratisches Uranliegen. Immer wieder zeigt sich aber, dass die Wege zur Beteilgung für gewisse Menschen weit, bzw. zu weit sind, oder die Strukturen, in denen eine solche möglich ist, sich als zu wenig zugänglich erweisen. Das gilt nicht nur, aber wesentlich auch für Menschen, die armutsbetroffen sind. Ihre direkte Beteiligung an Entscheidungen, die sie betreffen, ist ein wiederholt formuliertes Anliegen der betroffenen Personen und ihrer Vertreterinnen und Vertreter.

Die Nationale Plattform gegen Armut (2019-24) bearbeitete die Thematik deshalb als Schwerpunktthema. Sie identifizierte verschiedene Modelle der Partizipation in der Armutsprävention und -bekämpfung und zeigte auf, welche Faktoren für eine erfolgreiche Umsetzung entscheidend sind. Diese Erkenntnisse wurden im Rahmen von ausgewählten Praxisprojekten erprobt und vertieft, und sie flossen fortlaufend in die Arbeiten der Plattform ein. Eine Auslegeordnung dieser Arbeiten und Prozesse zeigte, dass die positiven Wirkungen von Beteiligung besonders dann zum Tragen kommen können, wenn Beteiligung nicht nur punktuell, sondern auf einer kontinuierlichen Basis stattfindet, wie dies auch in anderen Bereichen wie der Kinder- und Jugendpolitik oder in der Behindertenpolitik geschieht.

Die Steuergruppe der Plattform liess darum prüfen, wie eine ständige Beteiligungsstruktur auf nationaler Ebene im Bereich der Armutsprävention und -bekämpfung aussehen und funktionieren könnte. Das vorliegende Konzept für einen «Rat für Armutsfragen in der Schweiz» ist das Ergebnis dieser Arbeiten. Es wurde in einem partizipativen Prozess zwischen September 2022 und Oktober 2023 erarbeitet. Über fünfzig armutserfahrene Menschen und ihre Organisationen aus verschiedenen Regionen der Schweiz sowie Fachpersonen der verschiedenen föderalen Ebenen und aus unterschiedlichen Bereichen der Armutsprävention und -bekämpfung haben sich daran beteiligt. Im Prozess wurden auf der Basis von Beispielen aus anderen Ländern die Ziele einer möglichen Struktur definiert und verschiedene Funktionsweisen geprüft und bewertet. Mit dem nun vorgeschlagenen Modell wird den Anliegen der Betroffenen und der involvierten Fachpersonen sowie dem Schweizerischen Kontext Rechnung getragen.

Die Steuergruppe zollt dem Prozess und dem Engagement der beteiligten Personen hohe Anerkennung und schätzt das Resultat als wertvollen und innovativen Vorschlag. Eine dauerhafte Beteiligungsstruktur bietet einen Mehrwert in unterschiedlicher Hinsicht: Sie integriert das Erfahrungswissen von Betroffenen in die Überlegungen zu einer wirkungsvollen Armutspolitik, bietet eine klare Ansprechstelle und fördert einen kontinuierlicheren Dialog mit armutserfahrenen Menschen und ihren Vertreterinnen und Vertretern. Die im Konzept erarbeiteten zentralen Eckwerte bilden einen ersten wichtigen Schritt in diese Richtung.

Nach wie vor bestehen offene Fragen, u.a. in Bezug auf die Auswahl der Mitglieder oder die organisatorische Anbindung der Struktur. Eine Voraussetzung, damit eine Beteiligungsstruktur ehrlich und wirksam sein kann, ist auch, dass ihr die notwendigen Ressourcen bereitgestellt und die Prozesse so geöffnet werden, dass die Stimme der armutsbetroffenen Menschen auch tatsächliche Veränderungen herbeiführen können. Im Rahmen der weiteren Arbeiten zur Armutsprävention sollen weitere Schritte folgen, um den Vorschlag mit den Beteiligten weiterzuentwickeln und im Zuge der praktischen Umsetzung Antworten auf die offenen Fragen zu finden.

Im Namen der Steuergruppe der Nationalen Plattform gegen Armut,
Astrid Wüthrich, Vizedirektorin und Leiterin des Geschäftsfeldes Familie, Generationen und Gesellschaft

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Summary

The concern of people with experience of poverty[1] and NGOs for increased continuity and more solid structures in participation processes is also shared by the National Platform for Preventing and Combating Poverty (2019-2024). The evaluation of its previous work and forms of participation showed that although there are projects and initiatives in Switzerland that promote the participation of people experiencing poverty in poverty policy, these are primarily one-off individual projects.[2] Through permanent participation structures, however, the positive effect of the participation of people experiencing poverty in social policy can also be realised in the long term. This includes the improvement of processes and structures in organisations, more targeted measures and interventions or better cooperation.

It is therefore necessary and sensible for Switzerland to establish a permanent structure in the near future, also in view of the proven and positive developments of permanent participation structures in other countries. Starting as early as 2000, permanent participation structures developed in other European countries, based on England, Sweden and Norway[3], and also in Canada. Permanent shareholding structures also developed in further European countries and Canada. They have different names and are organised in different ways.[4]

An interdisciplinary team from the Department of Social Work at the Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH) and the University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland Fribourg (HES-SO/FR) was commissioned by the National Platform against Poverty to develop a concept for establishing a permanent participation structure for people experiencing poverty and their organisations in Switzerland, with the involvement of the relevant stakeholders. It is undisputed in specialist discourse that people experiencing poverty and the organisations affected should be involved as a collective.[5]

In particular, the organisations of those affected play a central role, as they represent the interests and concerns of people experiencing poverty and support and promote people experiencing poverty in participation processes. This is a large population group in Switzerland in terms of numbers: 745,000 people experiencing poverty and 1,244,112 people at risk of poverty.[6]

A three-stage approach and several methodological approaches form the basis for the development of a proposal for a permanent participation structure adapted to the Swiss context:

1. Identifying and analysing existing permanent participation structures in other countries
As a first step, the research team drew on its own existing expertise and international networks and researched the Internet and literature databases systematically and based on criteria,

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[1] The term "people experiencing poverty" is used here to refer to people who are currently or were previously affected by poverty (see also the definition of poverty in Chapter 21 in the appendix).

[2] Cf. e.g. Müller & Chiapparini, 2022.

[3] These first projects are mentioned in the following publications, for example: Beresford, 2000; Chiapparini, 2016a.

[4] See Chapter 4.1, which addresses examples of permanent participation structures identified by the research team.

[5] See, for example, "collective involvement of service users" (Beresford & Boxall, 2012, pp. 164-165).

[6] See the latest figures from the Federal Statistical Office, FSO - Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SILC 2023 and FSO Risk of Poverty 2023.

various examples of functioning, permanent participation structures in an international context. In addition, specialised and research literature on the topic of participation processes and their potential impact in poverty policy was included. Six condensed and empirically substantiated basic elements (e.g. objectives, members or addressees) emerged from the subsequently analysed data material, which were used as orientation for the next step.

2. Implementation of a participatory process with the involvement of people with experience of poverty and relevant organisations as well as, in an advisory capacity, experts from various poverty-related areas of administration and social work

The basic elements for this proposal were developed in a multi-stage participatory development process with people experienced in poverty and experts from various poverty-related areas of administration and social work. The participation process comprised various working formats: a kick-off event, two consecutive workshops, an information event for specialists and four half-day sessions with a feedback group consisting of people with experience of poverty. The feedback group advised the research team on the implementation of the participation process and the writing of the report. In total, around 50 people with experience of poverty from French- and German-speaking Switzerland took part in the participation process and around 15 experts participated in an advisory capacity. This number of participants meant that over 50 organisations, NGOs and cantonal or national administrations were involved in the development process.

The process designed in this way enabled the people experiencing poverty to position themselves collectively, taking into account the feedback from the experts mentioned above, on the most important basic elements of a permanent participation structure in Switzerland.

3. Development of a well-founded and realisable proposal for a permanent participation structure in Switzerland: the "Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland"

On the basis of specialist and research literature,[7] the results of the participation process and the feedback from the feedback group, the research team drafted a concrete proposal for a permanent participation structure: the "Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland" (Council).

[7] See Amnyos Group, 2013; Asdo Studies, 2015; Frazer, 2014.

Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland

a) Voting members
(8 to 12 people with experience of poverty),
2–3 of whom also serve as points of contact

b) Advisory members
(5 professionals)

Poverty prevention specialists, public and media

Other stakeholders from political, public administration, social work, business and academic circles

Awareness-raising (Objective 5)

Workshop inputs (Objective 4)

Exchanges (Objective 4)

Issuing opinions and lobbying (Objectives 2 and 3)

Consultation (Objectives 1 and 3)

Decision-makers from political, public administration and civil society circles (federal level*)

* at the cantonal and communal levels also (phase two)

c) Permanent secretariat
Methodological, strategic and administrative support
(participatory work practices, administrative duties)

Workshop inputs (Objective)

Information, networking (Objective 4)

People with experience of poverty and the organisations that work with them

The feasibility and practicability of the proposal "Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland" is presented in this report on the basis of the six central basic elements of *objectives, members, addressees, functioning*, *resources* and *financing* for the Swiss context.

Goal

The Council pursues the fundamental goal of better integrating the numerically large population group of people affected by or at risk of poverty into Switzerland's poverty policy and allowing them to participate, which has not been done sufficiently to date.

Based on the differentiated knowledge of people with experience of poverty regarding their previous or current poverty situation (experience expertise[8]), to work on poverty policy issues in a targeted manner and to represent them credibly to federal, cantonal or communal authorities.

The following five objectives were validated in the workshops and take centre stage:

1. Decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society *consult* people with experience of poverty through the "Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland" for their work in the areas of poverty prevention and poverty reduction.

2. The members of the "Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland" submit *proposals to* decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society *for improving* poverty prevention and alleviation.

3. The members of the "Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland" *participate in* and *influence political decisions*.

4. The "Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland" *promotes* a dialogue between people experiencing poverty and other stakeholders (politicians, administrators, institutional managers, experts, etc.).

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[8] People experiencing poverty bring with them a differentiated knowledge of their past or present poverty situation, which is primarily characterised by experiences in their biography. This form of knowledge is referred to in specialist discourse as experience expertise (cf. POD Mi/SPP SI, (n.d.) or Hess, 2020).

5. Through the activities of the "Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland", the *public* is *made aware of* the issue of poverty *and mobilised* to change attitudes and prejudices towards poverty.

These objectives are processed at four interfaces (see Fig. 1 and Chapter 13)

Members

The Council consists of quorum members (people with experience of poverty), advisory members (experienced and well-connected experts in poverty policy) and a permanent secretariat consisting of people who provide methodological, strategic and administrative support (people with experience of poverty and experts from poverty policy and higher education).

Addressees

The advice is addressed to three target groups:
1. Decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society at national, cantonal and communal level;
2. People experiencing poverty and organisations of those affected;
3. Poverty policy experts, the public, media and other people from politics, administration, social work, business and science.

Functionality

The functioning of the Council is based in particular on the following five coordinated work processes:
1. Monthly, three-hour meetings between members with a quorum. The meetings are prepared, implemented and followed up by the permanent secretariat.
2. Meetings between the quorum members and the advisory members. The meetings take place several times a year as required and depending on the subject area in order to get to know each other, build trust and facilitate goal-oriented cooperation.
3. Supplementary and targeted meetings to obtain the necessary expertise from other external experts from different areas (politics, social work, business and science).
4. Annual events that bring together a broad group of people with experience of poverty and affected organisations, for example as part of one-day workshops. This enables the Council to act in a realistic and practical manner and receive impetus to organise its work in a targeted manner and ensure a certain degree of representativeness. In addition to this, further events with a broader audience (e.g. people with experience of poverty and organisations of those affected, experts, academics or civil society) are necessary so that the Council receives a variety of impulses and at the same time enables awareness-raising work.
5. The permanent secretariat is part of the Council and ensures the continuous framework conditions of the Council (preparations, implementation, appropriate participation methods or administration). The secretariat liaises with all members, in particular with the contact persons of the quorate members.

Resources and financing

The provision of the necessary financial, personnel, methodological, logistical, didactic and administrative resources is a key prerequisite for ensuring the continuity of the Council. In addition, this will maximise the potential impact of participation processes and ensure that there are no token exercises or negative consequences for people and professionals experiencing poverty. Researchers on this topic agree on this.[9] As mentioned above, it is necessary for the Council to have access to a permanent secretariat. This consists of competent people and is attached to a larger unit (such as the National Platform against Poverty). If necessary, Council members must be able to acquire the competences required for their function (e.g. skills and knowledge in the area of participation processes, the functioning of institutions or communication with the media). Their participation in the Council must be financially compensated.

Due to the three-stage research-based and participatory development approach, the "Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland" has a high degree of legitimacy and a high potential for implementation and impact. The Council is designed to be compatible and realisable in the Swiss context of direct democracy and federal poverty policy. It can function at several federalist levels (national, regional, cantonal and communal level) and through pre- parliamentary processes.

As a first step, it is essential that the Council is structurally established at national level and linked to existing structures (e.g. the National Platform against Poverty).[10] The Council can also work together with cantonal and communal actors. One development potential of the Council lies in the fact that councils can also be created at cantonal and communal level in the future.

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[9] Cf. on participation in general (INET, 2016; CNLE, 2011; Ministère des affaires sociales et de la santé, n.d.; Jaeger, 2015) and on permanent structures (Amnyos groupe, 2013a; Frazer, 2014).

[10] See justification in Chapter 15.

Résumé

Pérenniser les processus de participation et les doter de structures solides constitue une revendication portée par plusieurs acteurs, tels que des personnes ayant l'expérience de la pauvreté (aussi appelées *personnes concernées* ci-après), des ONG et de la Plateforme nationale contre la pauvreté. Après avoir évalué ses propres travaux et les diverses formes de participation, la Plateforme nationale de prévention et de lutte contre la pauvreté 2019–2024 était parvenue à la même conclusion : en Suisse, seuls des projets isolés et ponctuels sont menés pour associer davantage les personnes ayant l'expérience de la pauvreté aux politiques les concernant.[11] Se doter d'une structure de participation permanente vise par conséquent essentiellement à rendre les effets de la participation plus pérennes en termes d'amélioration des processus et structures au sein des organisations, d'efficacité des mesures ou encore de qualité de la collaboration.

La Suisse a donc tout avantage à créer sans tarder une structure permanente, notamment en raison des expériences positives faites en la matière à l'étranger. Dès 2000, des pays se sont en effet dotés de structures de participation permanentes aux appellations et aux types d'organisation divers, à commencer par l'Angleterre, la Suède et la Norvège[12], suivies par d'autres pays européens et par le Canada.[13]

La Plateforme nationale de prévention et de lutte contre la pauvreté 2019–2024 a chargé une équipe interdisciplinaire du département Travail social de la Haute école spécialisée bernoise (BFH) et de la Haute école spécialisée de Suisse occidentale de Fribourg (HES-SO/FR) du mandat suivant: diriger un projet d'élaboration participative d'une proposition de structure permanente visant à impliquer les personnes ayant un vécu de pauvreté dans la prévention et la lutte contre ce phénomène. Les spécialistes s'accordent sur le fait que les personnes ayant l'expérience de la pauvreté et les organisations qui défendent leurs intérêts et les soutiennent lors de processus participatifs doivent être impliquées en tant que collectif.[14] Ces organisations jouent par conséquent un rôle central dans une telle démarche.

La présente proposition est le fruit d'un processus en trois temps, mené en recourant à plusieurs approches méthodologiques:

1. Identification et analyse d'exemples de structures permanentes dans d'autres pays

Dans un premier temps, l'équipe de recherche s'est fondée sur ses propres connaissances et sur ses réseaux internationaux. Afin d'identifier des exemples de structures de participation permanentes fonctionnelles dans d'autres pays, elle a mené une recherche systématique, à l'aide de critères définis, sur Internet et dans des bases de données scientifiques. Elle a aussi consulté les études et publications scientifiques abordant la question des processus de participation et de leur potentiel en matière de prévention et de lutte contre la pauvreté. L'analyse de ce matériel lui a permis de dégager, dans une démarche empirique et agrégative, six dimensions fondamentales liées à ce type de structure (objectifs, membres, fonctionnement, destinataires, ressources et financement) qui allaient servir de repères à l'étape suivante.

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[11] Cf. p. ex. Müller & Chiapparini, 2022.

[12] Ces premiers projets sont mentionnés notamment dans les publications suivantes : Beresford, 2000 ; Chiapparini, 2016a.

[13] Cf. point 4.1 pour des exemples déstructures de participation permanentes identifiés par l'équipe de recherche.

[14] Cf. p. ex. « collective involvement of service users » (Beresford & Boxall, 2012, p. 164 à 165).

2. Processus participatif impliquant des personnes ayant l'expérience de la pauvreté et les organisations qui les soutiennent ainsi que, dans un rôle consultatif, des professionnels de divers domaines de l'administration publique et du travail social.

Les éléments fondamentaux de la présente proposition ont été définis dans le cadre d'un processus participatif en plusieurs étapes, impliquant des personnes ayant l'expérience de la pauvreté et des professionnels du monde politique, du travail social et de l'économie. Les travaux se sont déroulés sur plusieurs modes : une rencontre de lancement, deux ateliers successifs, une séance d'information pour les professionnels et quatre réunions d'une demi-journée avec un groupe de feedback constitué de personnes ayant un vécu de pauvreté. Le groupe de feedback a conseillé l'équipe de recherche lors du pilotage du processus participatif et lors de la rédaction du rapport. Au total, une cinquantaine de personnes ayant l'expérience de la pauvreté, provenant de Suisse romande et de Suisse alémanique, ont pris part au processus, conseillées par une quinzaine de professionnels. La présente proposition est par conséquent le fruit du travail de plus de 50 entités, telles qu'organisations soutenant les personnes concernées, ONG et services des administrations cantonales ou fédérale issus du monde politique, du travail social et de l'économie.
Ce processus participatif a permis aux personnes ayant l'expérience de la pauvreté de prendre collectivement position sur les éléments fondamentaux d'une structure de participation permanente en Suisse, tout en tenant compte des retours des professionnels mentionnés.

3. Proposition de structure de participation permanente: le Conseil pour les questions de pauvreté en Suisse

Se fondant sur les études et publications scientifiques[15], sur les résultats du processus participatif ainsi que sur les retours du groupe de feedback, l'équipe de projet propose un modèle de structure de participation permanente fondé et réalisable: le Conseil pour les questions de pauvreté en Suisse (ci-après Conseil).

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[15] Cf. Amnyos Gruppe, 2013 ; Asdo Studien, 2015 ; Frazer, 2014.

Conseil pour les questions de pauvreté en Suisse
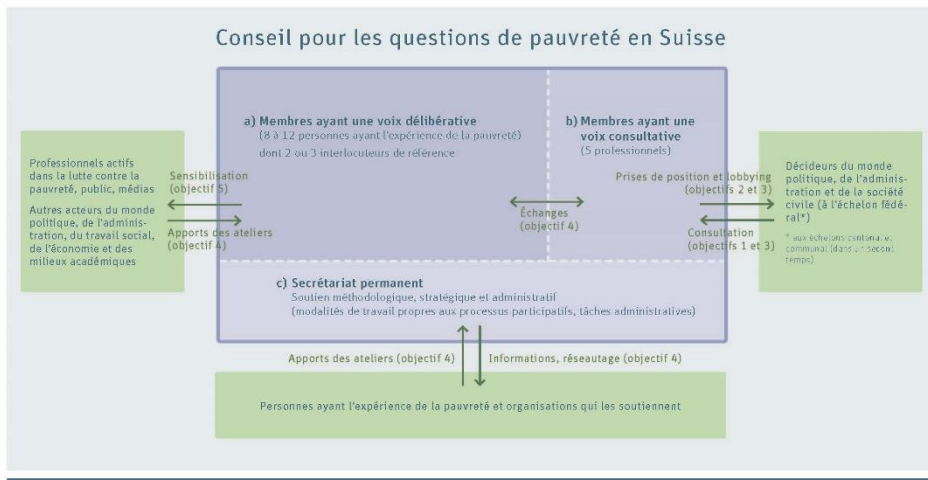
Nous étayons dans les points suivants la faisabilité de cette proposition en passant en revue ses six dimensions fondamentales: *objectifs, membres, destinataires, fonctionnement, ressources* et *financement*.

Objectifs

La finalité du Conseil est d'associer davantage dans la prévention et la lutte contre la pauvreté en Suisse un important groupe de population jusqu'ici trop peu consulté sur le sujet.

Se doter d'un Conseil permet de traiter des questions ciblées relevant de la prévention et de la lutte contre la pauvreté et de les relayer de manière crédible auprès des instances fédérales, cantonales et communales, sur la base des connaissances différenciées apportées par des personnes ayant connu la pauvreté ou qui sont encore précarisées (expertise par le vécu[16]).

Les cinq objectifs[17] validés suivants constituent, avec les quatre interfaces[18] entre le Conseil et les acteurs externes, les piliers de l'activité du Conseil:

1. En s'adressant au Conseil, les décideurs du monde politique, de l'administration publique et de la société civile *consultent* les personnes ayant l'expérience de la pauvreté dans les domaines de la prévention et de la lutte contre la pauvreté.

2. Les membres du Conseil adressent aux décideurs du monde politique, de l'administration publique et de la société civile *des propositions d'amélioration* en matière de prévention et de lutte contre la pauvreté.

3. Les membres du Conseil *participent à la prise de décisions politiques* et exercent leur influence dans les processus qui s'y rapportent.

4. La structure de participation permanente *favorise les échanges* entre les personnes ayant l'expérience de la pauvreté et les autres acteurs (monde politique, administration publique, responsables d'institutions, professionnels, etc.).

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[16] Les personnes ayant connu la pauvreté apportent une connaissance différenciée de leur situation passée ou présente, qui est principalement marquée par leur vécu. Cette forme de connaissance est appelée *expertise par le vécu* (ou *expertise de vécu*) et leurs détenteurs *experts par le vécu* (ou *experts du vécu*) : cf. POD Mi/SPP SI (s.d.) ou Hess (2020).

[17] Cf. le chapitre 13 pour une présentation des objectifs.

[18] Les interfaces avec les acteurs externes en internes sont indiquées par des flèches dans le graphique.

5. Par ses activités, le Conseil *sensibilise et mobilise le public* afin de changer les attitudes et de réduire les préjugés face à la pauvreté.

Membres

Le Conseil est constitué de membres ayant voix délibérative (personnes ayant l'expérience de la pauvreté), de membres consultatifs (professionnels bénéficiant d'une expérience et d'un réseau dans le domaine de la lutte contre la pauvreté) et d'un secrétariat permanent chargé d'apporter un soutien méthodologique, stratégique et administratif (personnes ayant l'expérience de la pauvreté e professionnels de la lutte contre la pauvreté).

Destinataires

Le Conseil s'adresse à trois groupes cibles : primo, les décideurs du monde politique, de l'administration publique et de la société civile, aux trois échelons (national, cantonal et communal) ; secundo, les personnes ayant l'expérience de la pauvreté et leurs organisations ; tertio, les professionnels de la lutte contre la pauvreté, le public, les médias ainsi que d'autres personnes du monde politique, de l'administration publique, du travail social, de l'économie et des milieux académiques.

Mode de fonctionnement

Le fonctionnement du Conseil s'articule en particulier autour des cinq processus suivants, qui sont coordonnés entre eux :

1. Les réunions des *membres ayant voix délibérative*. Ces rencontres d'une durée d'environ trois heures ont lieu une fois par mois. Le Secrétariat permanent les prépare, les anime et en assure le suivi.

2. Les réunions rassemblant *les membres ayant voix délibérative et les membres consultatifs*. Ces rencontres ont lieu plusieurs fois l'an, en fonction des besoins et des thématiques. Elles permettent de mieux se connaître, de construire une relation de confiance et d'apprendre à travailler ensemble.

3. Des rencontres complémentaires suite à des sollicitations ponctuelles, pour bénéficier de l'expertise de professionnels extérieurs au Conseil issus de divers domaines (monde politique, travail social, économie et milieux académiques).

4. Des manifestations annuelles rassemblant de nombreuses personnes ayant l'expérience de la pauvreté et leurs organisations. Ces manifestations, qui peuvent prendre la forme d'ateliers d'une journée, permettent au Conseil d'agir au plus près de la réalité et de la pratique et de recevoir des impulsions, afin d'axer correctement son travail et de garantir une certaine représentativité. Il s'agit également d'organiser des manifestations réunissant un plus large public (personnes ayant l'expérience de la pauvreté et leurs organisations, professionnels, scientifiques ou société civile), à la fois pour que le Conseil reste à l'écoute du terrain et pour qu'il puisse réaliser un travail de sensibilisation.

5. Le Secrétariat permanent : cet organe fait partie intégrante du Conseil, dont il assure le fonctionnement opérationnel (travaux en amont, mise en œuvre, modes de participation, administration). Il est en contact avec tous les membres, et en particulier avec les interlocuteurs nommés parmi les membres ayant voix délibérative.

Ressources et financement

Pour garantir la pérennité du Conseil, il est essentiel de lui donner les moyens nécessaires à l'accomplissement de sa mission (personnel ainsi que ressources financières, logistiques, méthodologiques, didactiques et administratives). De l'avis unanime des chercheurs[19], cette approche est propre à exploiter tout le potentiel des processus participatifs et permet d'éviter de créer une coquille vide ou de générer des effets indésirables pour les personnes concernées ou les professionnels. Le Conseil doit par ailleurs s'appuyer sur un secrétariat permanent, comme nous l'avons mentionné plus haut. Ce dernier, formé de personnes compétentes, est rattaché à une entité de plus grande taille (telle que la Plateforme nationale contre la pauvreté). De plus, les membres du Conseil doivent pouvoir acquérir les compétences indispensables pour exercer leur fonction (compétences et connaissances en matière de participation, de fonctionnement des institutions ou de communication avec les médias, par exemple). Enfin, leur participation au Conseil doit être rémunérée.

Le Conseil pour les questions de pauvreté en Suisse ayant été conçu dans une démarche participative en trois étapes, fondée sur des résultats de recherche, il jouit d'une grande légitimité et présente un grand potentiel. Il est pensé de manière à être compatible avec le contexte suisse, sa démocratie directe et le caractère fédéraliste de la politique de prévention et de lutte contre la pauvreté. Il peut intervenir à plusieurs échelons (fédéral, régional, cantonal et communal) ainsi qu'en amont des débats parlementaires.

Il est indispensable que le Conseil soit dans un premier temps créé sur un plan national et rattaché à une structure existante (telles que la Plateforme nationale contre la pauvreté)[20]. Il peut aussi collaborer avec des acteurs cantonaux et communaux. Le potentiel du Conseil réside notamment dans le fait qu'il peut déboucher sur la création de structures similaires aux échelons cantonaux et communaux.

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[19] Cf. sur la participation en général (INET, 2016 ; CNLE, 2011 ; Ministère des affaires sociales et de la santé, s.d.. ; Jaeger, 2015) et sur les structures permanentes (Amnyos groupe, 2013a ; Frazer, 2014).

[20] Argumentaire: cf. chapitre 15

Riassunto

Da più parti (p. es. persone aventi esperienza di povertà, ONG e Piattaforma nazionale contro la povertà) ribadiscono la necessità di promuovere maggiormente continuità e strutture più solide nei processi di partecipazione. Questo è emerso anche dall'analisi della Piattaforma nazionale di prevenzione e lotta contro la povertà 2019–2024 (Piattaforma nazionale contro la povertà) relativa al proprio lavoro e alle forme di partecipazione: in Svizzera esistono singoli progetti e iniziative che promuovono la partecipazione delle persone aventi esperienza di povertà nella politica di lotta alla povertà[21]. L'obiettivo centrale delle strutture di partecipazione permanenti è di garantire che l'impatto positivo di partecipazione delle persone aventi esperienza di povertà si faccia sentire alla politica sociale anche a lungo termine. Per questo sono importanti un miglioramento dei processi e delle strutture delle organizzazioni, misure e interventi più mirati o una migliore cooperazione.

È pertanto necessario e opportuno che la Svizzera crei una struttura permanente nel prossimo futuro, anche alla luce dei comprovati sviluppi positivi delle strutture di partecipazione permanenti in altri Paesi. Fin dal 2000, a partire da Inghilterra, Svezia e Norvegia[22], si sono sviluppate strutture di partecipazione permanenti in altri Paesi europei e in Canada, con denominazioni e modalità di organizzazione differenti[23].

Un gruppo interdisciplinare del Dipartimento per il lavoro sociale della Scuola Universitaria Professionale di Berna (BFH) e della Scuola Universitaria Professionale di Friburgo (HES-SO/FR), ha ricevuto il seguente incarico dalla Piattaforma nazionale contro la povertà 2019-2024: con il coinvolgimento di attori di rilievo, utilizzare un processo di partecipazione per sviluppare un piano su come creare in Svizzera una struttura di partecipazione permanente per le persone aventi esperienza di povertà e le loro organizzazioni. Tra gli specialisti è indiscusso che le persone aventi esperienza di povertà e le organizzazioni di diretti interessati devono essere coinvolte in quanto collettività[24]. Le organizzazioni di diretti interessati, in particolare, svolgono un ruolo centrale, poiché rappresentano gli interessi e le esigenze delle persone aventi esperienza di povertà e si occupano di sostenere e incoraggiare queste persone nei processi di partecipazione.

La presente proposta per una struttura di partecipazione permanente, adattata al contesto svizzero, è basata su un processo articolato in tre fasi e vari approcci metodologici:

1. Identificazione e analisi di strutture di partecipazione permanenti esistenti in altri Paesi

Nella prima fase, il gruppo di ricerca è partito dalle proprie conoscenze specialistiche e da reti internazionali per effettuare, secondo criteri ben precisi, su Internet e nelle banche dati bibliografiche, una rassegna sistematica delle strutture di partecipazione permanenti e funzionanti nel contesto internazionale. È stata inoltre inclusa la letteratura specialistica e scientifica sul tema dei processi di partecipazione e del loro potenziale impatto sulla politica di lotta alla povertà. Dai dati analizzati successivamente sono emersi sei elementi di base, sintetizzati e corroborati empiricamente (obiettivi, membri, destinatari, funzionamento, risorse e finanziamento), che sono stati utilizzati come orientamento per la fase successiva.

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[21] Cfr. p. es. Müller e Chiapparini 2022.

[22] Questi primi progetti sono menzionati ad esempio nelle seguenti pubblicazioni: Beresford 2000, Chiapparini 2016a.

[23] V. n. 4.1, che illustra alcuni esempi di strutture di partecipazione permanenti identificate dal gruppo di ricerca.

[24] Cfr. p. es. «collective involvement of service users» (Beresford e Boxall 2012, pagg. 164–165).

2. Svolgimento di un processo di partecipazione con la collaborazione di persone aventi esperienza di povertà e organizzazioni dei diretti interessati, nonché di professionisti di vari settori dell'amministrazione (rilevanti per la povertà) e del lavoro sociale con funzione consultiva
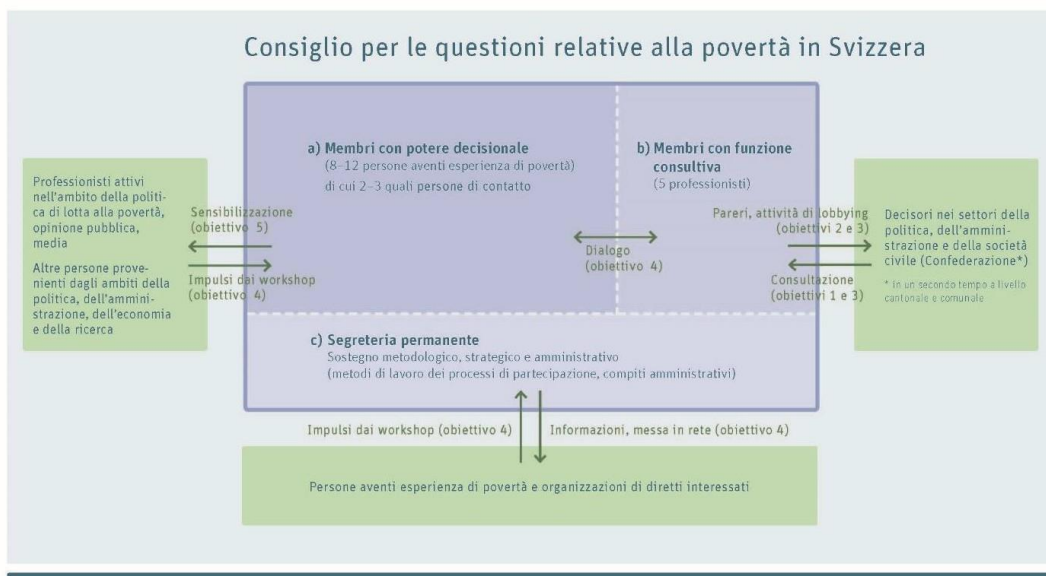
Gli elementi di base di questa proposta sono stati sviluppati tramite un processo di sviluppo partecipativo articolato in più fasi che ha coinvolto persone aventi esperienza di povertà e professionisti dei settori della politica, del lavoro sociale e dell'economia. Il processo di partecipazione includeva diverse modalità di lavoro: un incontro iniziale, due workshop correlati, un evento informativo per professionisti e quattro sedute di mezza giornata con un gruppo di feedback composto da persone aventi esperienza di povertà. Il gruppo di feedback ha fornito consulenza al gruppo di ricerca per lo svolgimento del processo di partecipazione e la stesura del rapporto. Complessivamente hanno preso parte al processo di partecipazione circa 50 persone aventi esperienza di povertà provenienti dalla Svizzera francese e tedesca e circa 15 professionisti con funzione consultiva. Con questo numero di partecipanti, sono state coinvolte nel processo di sviluppo oltre 50 organizzazioni di diretti interessati, ONG e amministrazioni cantonali o nazionali attive nei settori della politica, del lavoro sociale e dell'economia.

Il processo così concepito ha permesso alle persone aventi esperienza di povertà di prendere posizione collettivamente, tenendo conto dei riscontri dei professionisti summenzionati, sugli elementi di base più importanti di una struttura di partecipazione permanente in Svizzera.

3. Sviluppo di una proposta motivata e attuabile per la creazione di una struttura di partecipazione permanente in Svizzera: il «Consiglio per le questioni relative alla povertà»

Sulla base della letteratura specialistica e scientifica[25], dei risultati del processo di partecipazione e dei riscontri del gruppo di feedback, il gruppo di ricerca ha abbozzato una proposta concreta per una struttura di partecipazione permanente: il «Consiglio per le questioni relative alla povertà in Svizzera» (di seguito «Consiglio»).

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[25] Cfr. Amnyos groupe 2013, ASDO 2015, Frazer 2014.

Consiglio per le questioni relative alla povertà in Svizzera

Professionisti attivi nell'ambito della politica di lotta alla povertà, opinione pubblica, media

Altre persone provenienti dagli ambiti della politica, dell'amministrazione, dell'economia e della ricerca

Sensibilizzazione (obiettivo 5)

Impulsi dai workshop (obiettivo 4)

a) Membri con potere decisionale
(8–12 persone aventi esperienza di povertà)
di cui 2–3 quali persone di contatto

b) Membri con funzione consultiva
(5 professionisti)

Dialogo (obiettivo 4)

Pareri, attività di lobbying (obiettivi 2 e 3)

Consultazione (obiettivi 1 e 3)

Decisori nei settori della politica, dell'amministrazione e della società civile (Confederazione*)

* in un secondo tempo a livello cantonale e comunale

c) Segreteria permanente
Sostegno metodologico, strategico e amministrativo
(metodi di lavoro dei processi di partecipazione, compiti amministrativi)

Impulsi dai workshop (obiettivo 4) — Informazioni, messa in rete (obiettivo 4)

Persone aventi esperienza di povertà e organizzazioni di diretti interessati

La fattibilità e l'attuabilità della proposta «Consiglio per le questioni relative alla povertà in Svizzera» sono presentate in questo rapporto tramite sei elementi di base fondamentali: *obiettivi, membri, destinatari, funzionamento, risorse* e *finanziamento* nel contesto svizzero.

Obiettivo

Il Consiglio persegue l'obiettivo fondamentale di coinvolgere meglio un gruppo numericamente consistente della popolazione nella politica di lotta alla povertà della Svizzera e di consentirgli di partecipare, cosa che finora non è stata fatta a sufficienza.

Sulla base delle conoscenze differenziate delle persone aventi esperienza di povertà in merito alla loro situazione di povertà presente o passata (esperienza vissuta[26]), il Consiglio consente di affrontare in modo mirato le questioni di politica di lotta alla povertà e di rappresentarle in modo credibile presso le autorità federali, cantonali o comunali.

L'accento del Consiglio e nel trattamento delle questioni di politica di lotta alla povertà è posto sui seguenti cinque obiettivi validati e sulle relative quattro interfacce[27] del Consiglio con attori esterni[28]:

1. I decisori nei settori della politica, dell'amministrazione e della società civile che lavorano su temi legati alla prevenzione e alla lotta contro la povertà *consultano* le persone aventi esperienza di povertà tramite il Consiglio per le questioni relative alla povertà in Svizzera.

2. I membri del Consiglio per le questioni relative alla povertà in Svizzera sottopongono ai decisori nei settori della politica, dell'amministrazione e della società civile *proposte di miglioramento* nell'ambito della prevenzione e della lotta contro la povertà.

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[26] Le persone aventi esperienza di povertà dispongono di conoscenze differenziate in merito alla loro situazione di povertà presente o passata, che è caratterizzata principalmente dalle loro esperienze di vita. In ambito specialistico, questa forma di conoscenza viene indicata quale «esperienza vissuta» e le persone in questione vengono definite «esperti per esperienza» (cfr. POD Mi/SPP SI [s.a.] o Hess 2020).

[27] Si tratta dei dialoghi tra le diverse gruppi die persone interessate all'interno e all'esterno del Consiglio (indicate dalle frecce nel diagramma).

[28] V. obiettivi al capitolo 13.

3. I membri del Consiglio per le questioni relative alla povertà in Svizzera *partecipano alle decisioni politiche* e le influenzano.
4. La struttura di partecipazione permanente *promuove* il *dialogo* tra le persone aventi esperienza di povertà e altri attori (politica, amministrazione, responsabili di istituzioni, professionisti ecc.).
5. L'*opinione pubblica* viene *sensibilizzata e mobilitata* tramite le attività del Consiglio per le questioni relative alla povertà in Svizzera in merito al tema della povertà, al fine di cambiare l'atteggiamento e i pregiudizi nei confronti della povertà.

Membri

Il Consiglio è composto da membri con potere decisionale (persone aventi esperienza di povertà), membri con funzione consultiva (professionisti con esperienza e contatti nella politica di lotta alla povertà) e una segreteria permanente formata da persone che forniscono supporto metodologico, strategico e amministrativo (persone aventi esperienza di povertà e professionisti nell'ambito della politica di lotta alla povertà).

Destinatari

Il Consiglio si rivolge a tre gruppi target: 1) decisori nei settori della politica, dell'amministrazione e della società civile a livello nazionale, cantonale e comunale; 2) persone aventi esperienza di povertà e organizzazioni di diretti interessati; 3) professionisti attivi nell'ambito della politica di lotta alla povertà, opinione pubblica, media e altre persone provenienti dal mondo della politica, dell'amministrazione, del lavoro sociale, dell'economia e della ricerca.

Funzionamento

Il funzionamento del Consiglio si basa essenzialmente sui seguenti cinque processi di lavoro coordinati:

Incontri mensili della durata di circa tre ore *tra i membri con potere decisionale*, per i quali la segreteria permanente si occupa di svolgere i compiti necessari prima, durante e dopo.

Incontri tra i *membri con potere decisionale e i membri con funzione consultiva* che hanno luogo più volte all'anno, a seconda della necessità e dei temi, per favorire la conoscenza reciproca, la fiducia e la collaborazione mirata.

Incontri complementari e *ad hoc* per ottenere le competenze necessarie da altri professionisti esterni al Consiglio provenienti da diversi settori (politica, lavoro sociale, economia e ricerca).

Eventi annuali che coinvolgono un ampio gruppo di persone aventi esperienza di povertà e organizzazioni dei diretti interessati, ad esempio sotto forma di workshop di una giornata. In questo modo il Consiglio può agire in modo realistico e pratico e ricevere impulsi per organizzare il proprio lavoro in modo mirato e garantire una certa rappresentatività. Inoltre, sono necessari altri eventi con un pubblico più vasto (p. es. persone aventi esperienza di povertà e organizzazioni dei diretti interessati, professionisti, ricercatori o società civile), affinché il Consiglio riceva impulsi svariati e al tempo stesso per consentire un lavoro di sensibilizzazione.

La segreteria permanente fa parte del Consiglio e assicura la continuità delle sue condizioni quadro (preparazione, attuazione, metodi di partecipazione adeguati o amministrazione). La segreteria mantiene i contatti con tutti i membri, in particolare con le persone di contatto dei membri con potere decisionale.

Risorse e finanziamento

Garantire ovvero mettere a disposizione le necessarie risorse a livello finanziario, personale, metodologico, logistico, didattico e amministrativo è un requisito fondamentale per garantire la continuità del Consiglio. In questo modo si sfrutta appieno anche il potenziale dei processi di partecipazione e si garantisce che non si tratti soltanto di un palliativo o che non vi siano conseguenze negative per le persone aventi esperienza di povertà e i professionisti. Su questo tema i ricercatori sono unanimi[29]. Come già menzionato, occorre che il Consiglio possa fare affidamento su una segreteria permanente, composta da persone competenti e aggregata a un'unità più grande (p. es. la Piattaforma nazionale contro la povertà). Se necessario, i membri del Consiglio devono poter acquisire le competenze richieste per la loro funzione (p. es. abilità e conoscenze per quanto concerne i processi di partecipazione, il funzionamento delle istituzioni o la comunicazione con i media). Per la loro partecipazione al Consiglio devono ricevere una compensazione finanziaria.

Grazie all'approccio di sviluppo partecipativo e basato sulla ricerca in tre fasi, il Consiglio ha una grande legittimità e un elevato potenziale di attuazione e impatto. Il Consiglio è concepito per essere compatibile con il contesto svizzero di democrazia diretta e di politica federalistica di lotta alla povertà, e realizzabile in esso. Può funzionare a vari livelli statali (nazionale, regionale, cantonale e comunale) e attraverso processi preparlamentari.

Come primo passo, è indispensabile che il Consiglio sia istituito a livello nazionale e aggregato a una struttura esistente (p. es. la Piattaforma nazionale contro la povertà)[30]. Il Consiglio può inoltre collaborare con attori cantonali e comunali. Un potenziale di sviluppo del Consiglio consiste nella possibilità di creare in futuro strutture analoghe a livello cantonale e comunale.

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[29] Cfr., circa la partecipazione in generale (INET 2016, CNLE 2011, Ministère des Affaires sociales et de la Santé (s.a.), Jaeger 2015) e circa le strutture permanenti (Amnyos groupe 2013, Frazer 2014).

[30] V. spiegazione al capitolo 15.

Zusammenfassung

Das Anliegen von armutserfahrenen Personen[31] und NGOs nach vermehrter Kontinuität und festeren Strukturen in Beteiligungsprozessen wird auch von der Nationalen Plattform zur Prävention und Bekämpfung von Armut (2019-2024) geteilt. Bei der Auswertung ihrer bisherigen Arbeiten und Beteiligungsformen zeigte sich, dass in der Schweiz zwar Projekte und Initiativen bestehen, welche die Beteiligung von armutserfahrenen Personen in der Armutspolitik fördern, allerdings handelt es sich dabei primär um punktuelle Einzelprojekte.[32] Durch ständige Beteiligungsstrukturen kann aber die positive Wirkung der Beteiligung von armutserfahrenen Personen in der Sozialpolitik auch langfristig zum Tragen kommen. Dazu zählen u.a. die Verbesserung von Prozessen und Strukturen in Organisationen, zielgerichtetere Massnahmen und Interventionen oder eine bessere Zusammenarbeit.

Es ist daher notwendig und sinnvoll, dass die Schweiz zeitnah eine ständige Struktur errichtet, auch angesichts der bewährten und positiven Entwicklungen von ständigen Beteiligungs-strukturen in anderen Ländern. Bereits ab 2000 entwickelten sich, ausgehend von England, Schweden und Norwegen[33], ständige Beteiligungsstrukturen in weiteren europäischen Ländern oder auch in Kanada. Sie haben verschiedene Bezeichnungen und sind unterschiedlich organisiert.[34]

Ein interdisziplinäres Team des Departements Soziale Arbeit der Berner Fachhochschule (BFH) und der Fachhochschule Westschweiz Freiburg (HES-SO/FR) erhielt von der Nationalen Plattform gegen Armut folgenden Auftrag: Unter Einbezug der relevanten Akteur:innen soll mit einem Beteiligungsprozess ein Konzept dazu erarbeitet werden, wie eine ständige Beteiligungsstruktur von armutserfahrenen Menschen und ihren Organisationen in der Schweiz etabliert werden kann. Unbestritten ist im Fachdiskurs, dass armutserfahrene Personen und Betroffenenorganisationen als Kollektiv einzubeziehen sind.[35]

Insbesondere die Betroffenenorganisationen nehmen dabei eine zentrale Rolle ein, da diese die Interessen und Anliegen der armutserfahrenen Personen vertreten und armutserfahrene Personen in Beteiligungsprozessen unterstützen und fördern. Es handelt sich um eine zahlenmässig grosse Bevölkerungsgruppe in der Schweiz: 745'000 armutsbetroffene Personen sowie 1'244'112 armutsgefährdete Personen.[36]

Ein dreistufiges Vorgehen und mehrere methodische Ansätze bilden die Grundlage für die Entwicklung eines Vorschlags für eine ständige, an den Schweizer Kontext angepasste Beteiligungsstruktur:

1. Identifizierung und Analyse von bestehenden ständigen Beteiligungsstrukturen in anderen Ländern

In einem ersten Schritt ging das Forschungsteam vom eigenen bestehenden Fachwissen und von internationalen Netzwerken aus und recherchierte im Internet und in Literaturdatenbanken

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[31] Mit dem Begriff armutserfahrene Menschen sind hier Personen gemeint, die aktuell oder zu einem früheren Zeitpunkt in ihrem Leben von Armut betroffen sind bzw. waren (vgl. auch die Definition von Armut in Kap. 21 im Anhang).

[32] Vgl. z.B. Müller & Chiapparini, 2022.

[33] Diese ersten Projekte sind beispielsweise in folgenden Publikationen erwähnt: Beresford, 2000; Chiapparini, 2016a.

[34] Siehe Kapitel 4.1, das sich mit Beispielen von ständigen Beteiligungsstrukturen befasst, die das Forschungsteam identifiziert hat.

[35] Vgl. bspw. "collective involvement of service users" (Beresford & Boxall, 2012, S. 164–165).

[36] Vgl. die aktuellen Zahlen vom Bundesamt für Statistik, BFS – Erhebung über die Einkommen und Lebensbedingungen, SILC 2023 und BFS Armutsgefährdung 2023.

systematisch und kriteriengeleitet unterschiedliche Beispiele von funktionierenden, ständigen Beteiligungsstrukturen im internationalen Kontext. Zudem wurde Fach- und Forschungsliteratur zum Thema Beteiligungsprozesse und deren Wirkungsmöglichkeiten in der Armutspolitik einbezogen. Aus dem anschliessend analysierten Datenmaterial gingen sechs verdichtete und empirisch begründete Grundelemente (z.B. Ziele, Mitglieder oder Adressat:innen) hervor, die für den nächsten Arbeitsschritt als Orientierung verwendet wurden.

2. Durchführung eines partizipativen Prozesses unter Mitwirkung von armutserfahrenen Personen und Betroffenenorganisationen sowie, in beratender Funktion, von Fachleuten aus verschiedenen armutsrelevanten Bereichen der Verwaltung und aus der Sozialen Arbeit
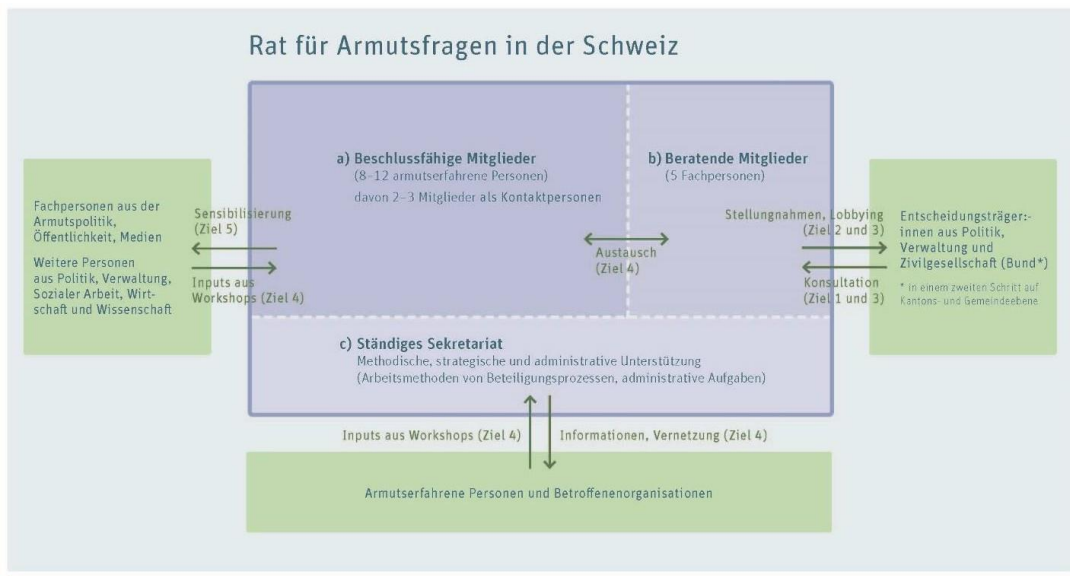In einem mehrstufigen partizipativen Entwicklungsprozess mit armutserfahrenen Personen und Fachpersonen aus verschiedenen armutsrelevanten Bereichen der Verwaltung und der Sozialen Arbeit wurden die Grundelemente für den vorliegenden Vorschlag erarbeitet. Der Beteiligungs-prozess umfasste unterschiedliche Arbeitsformate: eine Kickoff-Veranstaltung, zwei aufeinander aufbauende Workshops, eine Informationsveranstaltung für Fachpersonen und vier halbtägige Sitzungen mit einer Feedbackgruppe bestehend aus armutserfahrenen Personen. Die Feedbackgruppe hat das Forschungsteam bei der Durchführung des Beteiligungsprozesses und beim Verfassen des Berichtes beraten. Insgesamt wirkten am Beteiligungsprozess rund 50 armutserfahrene Personen aus der französisch- und deutschsprechenden Schweiz mit und rund 15 Fachpersonen beteiligten sich in einer beratenden Funktion. Durch diese Teilnehmendenzahl waren über 50 Betroffenenorganisationen, NGOs und kantonale oder nationale Verwaltungen am Entwicklungsprozess beteiligt.
Der so gestaltete Prozess ermöglichte den armutserfahrenen Personen, sich kollektiv und unter Berücksichtigung der Rückmeldungen der erwähnten Fachpersonen zu den wichtigsten Grundelementen einer ständigen Beteiligungsstruktur in der Schweiz zu positionieren.

3. Entwicklung eines begründeten und umsetzbaren Vorschlags für eine ständige Beteiligungsstruktur in der Schweiz: der «Rat für Armutsfragen in der Schweiz»
Auf der Grundlage von Fach- und Forschungsliteratur,[37] der Resultate aus dem Beteiligungsprozess und den Rückmeldungen der Feedbackgruppe entwarf das Forschungs-team einen konkreten Vorschlag einer ständigen Beteiligungsstruktur: der «Rat für Armutsfragen in der Schweiz» (Rat).

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[37] Vgl. Amnyos Gruppe, 2013; Asdo Studien, 2015; Frazer, 2014.

Rat für Armutsfragen in der Schweiz

Fachpersonen aus der Armutspolitik, Öffentlichkeit, Medien

Weitere Personen aus Politik, Verwaltung, Sozialer Arbeit, Wirtschaft und Wissenschaft

Sensibilisierung (Ziel 5)

Inputs aus Workshops (Ziel 4)

a) Beschlussfähige Mitglieder
(8–12 armutserfahrene Personen)
davon 2–3 Mitglieder als Kontaktpersonen

b) Beratende Mitglieder
(5 Fachpersonen)

Austausch (Ziel 4)

Stellungnahmen, Lobbying (Ziel 2 und 3)

Konsultation (Ziel 1 und 3)

Entscheidungsträger:innen aus Politik, Verwaltung und Zivilgesellschaft (Bund*)

* in einem zweiten Schritt auf Kantons- und Gemeindeebene

c) Ständiges Sekretariat
Methodische, strategische und administrative Unterstützung
(Arbeitsmethoden von Beteiligungsprozessen, administrative Aufgaben)

Inputs aus Workshops (Ziel 4)

Informationen, Vernetzung (Ziel 4)

Armutserfahrene Personen und Betroffenenorganisationen

Die Machbarkeit und Umsetzbarkeit des Vorschlags «Rat für Armutsfragen in der Schweiz» wird anhand der sechs zentralen Grundelemente *Ziele, Mitglieder, Adressat:innen, Funktionsweise* sowie *Ressourcen* und *Finanzierung* für den Kontext Schweiz im vorliegenden Bericht vorgestellt.

Ziel

Der Rat verfolgt das grundsätzliche Ziel, die zahlenmässig grosse Bevölkerungsgruppe der armutsbetroffenen bzw. -gefährdeten Menschen besser in die Armutspolitik der Schweiz einzubeziehen und mitwirken zu lassen, was bisher ungenügend geschehen ist.
Der Rat ermöglicht es, auf der Basis des differenzierten Wissens von armutserfahrenen Personen bezüglich ihrer bisherigen oder gegenwärtigen Armutssituation (Erfahrungsexpertise[38]), Fragen der Armutspolitik gezielt zu bearbeiten und gegenüber eidgenössischen, kantonalen oder kommunalen Instanzen glaubwürdig zu vertreten.
Folgende fünf Ziele wurden in den Workshops validiert und stehen im Zentrum:

1. Die Entscheidungsträger:innen in Politik, Verwaltung und Zivilgesellschaft *konsultieren* für ihre Arbeiten in den Themenbereichen der Armutsprävention und -bekämpfung armutserfahrene Personen mittels des «Rats für Armutsfragen in der Schweiz».
2. Die Mitglieder des «Rats für Armutsfragen in der Schweiz» unterbreiten Entscheidungsträger:innen in Politik, Verwaltung und Zivilgesellschaft *Vorschläge zur Verbesserung* der Armutsprävention und -bekämpfung.
3. Die Mitglieder des «Rats für Armutsfragen in der Schweiz» *wirken an politischen Entscheidungen mit* und nehmen Einfluss auf diese.
4. Mit dem «Rat für Armutsfragen in der Schweiz» wird der *Austausch* zwischen armutserfahrenen Menschen und anderen Akteur:innen (Politik, Verwaltung, Verantwortliche von Institutionen, Fachpersonen usw.) *gefördert*.

[38] Armutserfahrene Personen bringen ein differenziertes Wissen bezüglich ihrer vergangenen oder gegenwärtigen Armutssituation mit, die vorwiegend durch Erfahrungen in ihrer Biografie geprägt ist. Diese Wissensform wird im Fachdiskurs als Erfahrungsexpertise bezeichnet (vgl. vgl. POD Mi/SPP SI (o.J.) oder Hess 2020).

5. Die *Öffentlichkeit* wird durch die Aktivitäten des «Rats für Armutsfragen in der Schweiz» für das Thema Armut *sensibilisiert und mobilisiert*, um die Haltung und Vorurteile gegenüber Armut zu verändern.

Die Bearbeitung dieser Ziele geschieht an vier Schnittstellen (vgl. Abb. 1 sowie Kapitel 13)

Mitglieder

Der Rat besteht aus beschlussfähigen Mitgliedern (armutserfahrene Personen), aus beratenden Mitgliedern (erfahrene und vernetzte Fachpersonen in der Armutspolitik) und einem ständigen Sekretariat, bestehend aus methodisch, strategisch und administrativ unterstützenden Personen (armutserfahrene Personen und Fachpersonen aus der Armutspolitik und Hochschule).

Adressat:innen

Der Rat richtet sich an drei Zielgruppen:
1. Entscheidungsträger:innen in Politik, Verwaltung und Zivilgesellschaft auf nationaler, kantonaler und kommunaler Ebene;
2. Armutserfahrene Personen und Betroffenenorganisationen;
3. Fachpersonen aus der Armutspolitik, Öffentlichkeit, Medien und weitere Personen aus Politik, Verwaltung, Sozialer Arbeit, Wirtschaft und Wissenschaft.

Funktionsweise

Die Funktionsweise des Rats basiert insbesondere auf den folgenden fünf koordinierten Arbeitsprozessen:
1. Monatliche, dreistündige Treffen zwischen beschlussfähigen Mitgliedern. Die Treffen werden vom ständigen Sekretariat vorbereitet, durchgeführt und nachbearbeitet.
2. Treffen zwischen den beschlussfähigen Mitgliedern und den beratenden Mitgliedern. Die Treffen finden nach Bedarf und Themenfeld mehrmals pro Jahr statt, um gegenseitiges Kennenlernen sowie Aufbau von Vertrauen und zielführende Zusammenarbeit zu ermöglichen.
3. Ergänzende und gezielte Treffen, um benötigte Expertise punktuell von weiteren ratsexternen Fachpersonen aus unterschiedlichen Bereichen (Politik, Soziale Arbeit, Wirtschaft und Wissenschaft) einzuholen.
4. Jährliche Veranstaltungen, die eine breite Gruppe von armutserfahrenen Personen und Betroffenenorganisationen zusammenbringen, beispielsweise im Rahmen eintägiger Workshops. Damit kann der Rat realitäts- und praxisnah agieren und Impulse erhalten, um seine Arbeit zielführend auszurichten und eine gewisse Repräsentativität zu gewährleisten. Ergänzend dazu sind weitere Veranstaltungen mit einem breiteren Publikum (z.B. armutserfahrene Personen und Betroffenenorganisationen, Fachpersonen, Wissenschaftler:innen oder Zivilgesellschaft) nötig, damit der Rat vielfältige Impulse erhält und gleichzeitig Sensibilisierungsarbeit ermöglicht wird.
5. Das ständige Sekretariat ist Teil des Rats und sichert die kontinuierlichen Rahmenbedingungen des Rats (Vorbereitungen, Durchführungen, passende Beteiligungsmethoden oder Administration). Das Sekretariat steht mit allen Mitgliedern in Kontakt, insbesondere mit den Kontaktpersonen der beschlussfähigen Mitglieder.

Ressourcen und Finanzierung

Die Bereitstellung der notwendigen finanziellen, personellen, methodischen, logistischen, didaktischen und administrativen Ressourcen gilt als zentrale Voraussetzung für die Sicherstellung der Kontinuität des Rates. Zudem wird damit das Wirkungspotential von Beteiligungsprozessen ausgeschöpft und sichergestellt, dass keine Alibiübungen beziehungsweise negative Folgen für armutserfahrene Personen und Fachpersonen entstehen. Darüber sind sich die Forschenden zu diesem Thema einig.[39] Wie oben erwähnt ist es notwendig, dass der Rat auf ein ständiges Sekretariat zurückgreifen kann. Dieses besteht aus kompetenten Personen und ist an einer grösseren Einheit (wie der Nationalen Plattform gegen Armut) angegliedert. Bei Bedarf müssen die Ratsmitglieder die für ihre Funktion erforderlichen Kompetenzen (z.B. Fähigkeiten und Kenntnisse im Bereich Beteiligungsprozesse, Funktionsweise von Institutionen oder Kommunikation mit den Medien) erwerben können. Ihr Mitwirken im Rat muss finanziell abgegolten werden.

Aufgrund des dreistufigen forschungsbasierten und partizipativen Entwicklungsvorgehens hat der „Rat für Armutsfragen in der Schweiz" eine grosse Legitimität und ein hohes Umsetzungs- sowie Wirkungspotential. Der Rat ist so konzipiert, dass er im schweizerischen Kontext mit direkter Demokratie und föderalistischer Armutspolitik anschlussfähig und umsetzbar ist. Er kann auf mehreren föderalistischen Ebenen (nationale, regionale, kantonale und kommunale Ebene) und durch vorparlamentarische Prozesse funktionieren.

In einem ersten Schritt ist es unerlässlich, dass der Rat strukturell auf nationaler Ebene etabliert und an bestehenden Strukturen (z.B. die Nationale Plattform gegen Armut) angegliedert wird.[40] Der Rat kann ebenfalls mit kantonalen und kommunalen Akteur:innen zusammenarbeiten. Ein Entwicklungspotential des Rates liegt darin, dass in Zukunft auch Räte auf kantonaler und kommunaler Ebene geschaffen werden können.

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[39] Vgl. zu Partizipation im Allgemeinen (INET, 2016; CNLE, 2011; Ministère des affaires sociales et de la santé, o.J.; Jaeger, 2015) und zu dauerhaften Strukturen (Amnyos groupe, 2013a; Frazer, 2014).

[40] Vgl. Begründung in Kapitel 15.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND FOUNDATIONS

1 Initial situation of the project assignments

The National Platform for Preventing and Combatting Poverty 2019-2024 focused on participation. This included, for example, the research project on models of participation (Chiapparini et al., 2020), the practical guide (Müller & Chiapparini, 2021) derived from this and developed in a participatory manner, and a national conference on the topic of "Participation in Preventing and Combatting Poverty" in 2021, which was attended and discussed by people with experience of poverty. An evaluation of previous work and forms of participation revealed a need to promote greater continuity and more stable structures in the participation processes so that the positive impact of the participation of people with experience of poverty in social policy can also be realised in the long term.

To this end, in April 2022, the steering group of the National Platform against Poverty invited tenders for the project "Project management for the participatory development of a proposal for a permanent structure for the participation of people with experience of poverty in preventing and combatting poverty".

An interdisciplinary team from the Department of Social Work at Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH) and the University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland Fribourg (HES-SO/FR) was awarded the project mandate. The course of action and results of the project mandate are presented in this report.

Firstly, it seems useful to summarise our approach to the concepts of "poverty" and "participation" or "involvement", which are at the centre of the challenges discussed.

a) According to national and international research, *poverty* encompasses various dimensions and contexts at individual, community, institutional and state level (see further details in the appendix, Chapter 21).[41]

b) The term *participation approach* is used and explained differently depending on the field of action.[42] In the area of poverty, the definition that was developed in 2012 with those affected as part of the "European Partnership for Active Participation" project is as follows: Social and political participation recognises the equal contribution of all participants in decision-making processes. Individual experiences form the basis for building a collective voice and a joint project. Participants must be informed about the framework and the challenges of what they are involved in and then be informed about the substantiated results. Participation is an expression of democracy and an instrument for combatting marginalisation. It strengthens the social participation of all.[43] In our project, participation can be described in more detail as follows: "People with experience of poverty are actively involved in the search for and (further) development, implementation and evaluation of measures, projects or solutions. They contribute their knowledge and experience. Participation can be organised with varying degrees of intensity: Depending on the situation, people with experience of poverty can take a stand,

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[41] See Chiapparini et al, 2020; Bray et al, 2019.
[42] Bresson, 2014; Zask, 2011.
[43] HCTS, 2017, p. 9 Rapport_participation.pdf (solidarites.gouv.fr)

co-develop proposals or (co-)decide about them".[44] This definition emphasises a variety of goals that are achieved thanks to the participation of people with experience of poverty. The importance of experiential knowledge as well as other forms of knowledge and a range of opportunities for participation are also central components of participation processes. When implementing these components, it is crucial to articulate the specific objectives, the importance of experiential expertise and the specific form of participation and to communicate these to all participants in order to avoid any pretence or tokenistic exercises.[45]

2 Principles and relevance of the project

This project is based on findings from national and international research on participation processes in poverty policy. These show why it is very relevant for people with experience of poverty to be involved in poverty policy measures and processes.

Firstly, key findings on the impact potential of participation processes for various target groups and groups with a high level of poverty are summarised below (Chapter 2.1). Secondly, the empirically proven additional benefit of existing permanent participation structures is briefly presented (Chapter 2.2). Subsequently, the relevance of developing permanent participation structure in Switzerland is demonstrated (Chapter 2.3), including why this development process should be co-designed by people with experience of poverty (Chapter 2.4).

2.1 Relevance of participation in the area of poverty

The positive impact potential on professional organisations, administrations and politics from the research-based specialist literature can be summarised as follows[46]:

- direct access to knowledge, experiences and perspectives of people with experience of poverty and increased awareness of the issue of poverty;
- mutual understanding and clarification of misunderstandings between those affected and other people involved;
- visualising blind spots among experts from politics, social work and business;
- improved cooperation and communication between people with experience of poverty and the respective actors.

Positive effects for people with experience of poverty are as follows:
- access to information and acquisition of knowledge;
- building and utilising skills;
- experience of respect, understanding and belonging;

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[44] Based on Chiapparini et al., 2020, p. 10.

[45] See, for example, Müller & Chiapparini, 2021.

[46] For summaries of the current state of research on the impact potential of participation processes, see, for example,. Chiapparini et al, 2020; Müller & Chiapparini, 2021; Chiapparini, 2016b, 2021.

- assuming responsibility and utilising room for manoeuvre;

- strengthening self-esteem and self-efficacy (empowerment);

- improvement of social integration;

- better understanding of the options for action available to professionals in politics, social work and business.

Positive effects on society are as follows:

- improved effectiveness in poverty reduction and prevention;

- dismantling prejudices;

- strengthening social cohesion.

2.2 Relevance of permanent participation structures in the area of poverty

Permanent participation structures have existed for some time in various countries, such as Belgium, Germany, France, Canada and Austria, but also at European level. They have different names and are organised differently.[47]

In addition, pioneers of participation processes in social policy in England, Sweden and Norway emphasised the central importance of continuous structures as early as 2000.[48]

Scientific evaluations of established permanent participation structures point in particular to two potential effects:

- processing of collectively formulated statements by people with experience of poverty themselves and for decision-makers in politics, social work and business;

- empowering and strengthening the participation skills and interdisciplinary competencies of people who have experience of poverty as well as experts from politics, social work and business.

The Belgian Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, for example, enables a dialogue between various interest groups of political decision-makers with NGOs and people with experience of poverty. The evaluation of this platform (2013) shows predominantly positive results, particularly with regard to enabling people to stay informed about current processes and measures to combat poverty. The platform also succeeds in bringing together different interest groups and working together on important social policy issues.[49] Bringing together the various stakeholders in poverty policy is particularly effective if a permanent participation structure with established methods of participation processes[50] and if this platform promotes the inclusion of other relevant stakeholders in poverty policy.

In addition, the evaluation of the 5ème (pronounced cinquième) Collège of the CNLE confirms individual positive effects on the skills development of those affected. This was demonstrated, for example, by an

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[47] See Chapter 4.1, which addresses examples of permanent participation structures identified by the research team.

[48] This pioneering work is mentioned, for example, in the following publications: Beresford, 2000 or Chiapparini, 2016a.

[49] European Commission, 2013, p. 27, cited in European Commission, 2014, p. 9. The Belgian Platform against Poverty and social Exclusion EU 2020 - Publications Office of the EU (europa.eu)

[50] See, for example, Müller & Chiapparini, 2021; Guerry & Reynaud, 2021 or ATD Quart Monde, 2021.

increase in self-confidence and improved self-image, through the feeling of being useful, of being a full citizen, as well as through building a network or developing a better understanding of the institutional environment.[51] Studies on participation processes also show an increase in competence on the part of professionals from politics, social work and business, as the brief insight into the impact potential of basic participation processes in poverty policy shows (see Chapter 2.1).

2.3 Relevance of the development of a permanent participation structure in the area of poverty in Switzerland

In Switzerland, projects and initiatives exist to promote the participation of people with experience of poverty in poverty policy.[52] However, these are isolated individual projects. For this reason, various parties (e.g., people with experience of poverty, NGOs and the National Platform against Poverty) and in particular the loose network of 26 relevant organisations or grassroots NGOs called "Exchange Poverty"[53] pointed out that a permanent structure that promotes participation processes for people with experience of poverty is needed. This will ensure greater continuity in the diverse but still sporadic initiatives for participation processes of people with experience of poverty in Switzerland's social policy. Due to the positive effects of such a structure, as discussed above, it seems necessary and sensible for Switzerland to establish a permanent structure in the near future.

2.4 Relevance of developing a structure with the involvement of stakeholders

With regard to the establishment, development and continuation of a permanent participation structure, it is undisputed in the specialist discourse that organisations representing those affected, NGOs and people with experience of poverty should be involved as a collective.[54] The stakeholder organisations in particular play a central role, as they represent the interests and concerns of people with experience of poverty and support and develop people with experience of poverty in participation processes.

3 Objective

The main objective of this project is to develop a realistic proposal for a permanent participation structure for the Federal Council on a scientific basis and based on a participation process involving experts and people with experience of poverty. The proposal for a permanent participation structure for Switzerland is presented with proven, promising and realisable implementation criteria. In accordance with the FSIO mandate, particular attention has been paid to the objectives, participants, addressees, modes of operation, resources and financing of the proposed permanent participation structure. The project worked on these dimensions and specific content on these dimensions was collected and analysed in order to present a concrete proposal.

[51] CNLE, 2011

[52] Cf. for example, Müller & Chiapparini, 2022.

[53] The loose network "Exchange Poverty" comprises 26 organisations and grassroots NGOs from German-speaking and French-speaking Switzerland and has been in existence since 2020.

[54] See, for example, "collective involvement of service users" (Beresford & Boxall, 2012, pp. 164-165).

In order to achieve this main objective and to develop a proposal for a permanent participation structure for Switzerland, the project team has defined the following project phases:

1. Identifying and analysing existing permanent participation structures in other countries.
2. Implementing a participation process with the involvement of people with experience of poverty and relevant organisations, as well as experts from politics, social work and business.
3. Developing a concrete concept proposal for a permanent participation structure based on the first two project phases.

4 Methodological approach

Several methodological approaches form the basis for the development of a proposal for a permanent participation structure adapted to the Swiss context. The various approaches developed by the research team are described in more detail below with regard to the three project phases.

4.1 Identifying and analysing existing permanent participation structures in other countries

In the first stage, the research team started from its own existing expertise and international networks and systematically researched various examples of permanent participation structures in an international context on the Internet and in literature databases, guided by certain criteria.

The starting point was the three selection criteria, which were developed in consultation with representatives of a loose network group of 26 organisations and grassroots NGOs called "Exchange Poverty"[55] and were defined by the client in the invitation to tender:

1. The model is primarily supported by organisations and NGOs and co-financed by the state.
2. Interests (regional, national and international) are represented.
3. Exchange platforms for people with experience of poverty, including annual conferences, are planned.

Based on its expertise, the research team narrowed down these selection criteria to the following three criteria in order to find existing examples of permanent participation structures:

- People with experience of poverty are at the centre of the permanent participation structure and shape it.
- The permanent participation structure has a certain size (international, national or at least a large region).
- The permanent participation structure is linked to politics, including, for example, members of parliament and representatives from the public administration. These are not exclusively self-help or networking structures, but rather permanent participation structures that pursue the goal of influencing poverty reduction and prevention policy (see Chapter 3).

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[55] The loose network "Exchange Poverty" comprises 26 organisations and grassroots NGOs from German-speaking and French-speaking Switzerland and has been in existence since 2020.

This enabled 15 participation structures to be identified, for example in countries such as France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Sweden, England, Norway and Canada (Quebec) (see Appendix, Chapter 20.1). For the purpose of comparison, these were analysed on the basis of certain categories (see Appendix, Chapter 20.2)[56]. The aim was to identify contrasting models as far as possible and not to present a complete literature review. The advantages and disadvantages of each type of structure were also to be analysed. However, the literature search revealed that only a few structures have been scientifically evaluated, which limited the analysis to the respective strengths and weaknesses as well as the (potential) effects.

The results of the analysis of the individual structures are summarised at the beginning of each chapter in Part 2 (see Sub-chapters 7.1 to 12.1). The analysis also crystallised six main questions that arise in connection with the implementation of a permanent participation structure:

1. What is the aim of a permanent participation structure?
2. Who participates in the permanent participation structure?
3. Who does the work of the permanent participation structure address?
4. How does a permanent participation structure work?
5. What resources are needed for a permanent participation structure?
6. Who finances the permanent participation structure?

These questions formed the basis for the work with the people who have experience of poverty and with the experts (project phase 2). The findings from the participatory development of the proposal for a permanent participation structure in Part 2 of this report are structured according to these main questions in six chapters (from Chapter 7 to Chapter 12). The six questions provide a structure for the third part of the report, which contains a concrete proposal for a permanent participation structure for Switzerland.

4.2 Participatory thought process for a concept of a permanent structure

Based on the FSIO project mandate for the participatory development of a proposal for a permanent structure, the project team involved three groups of people in the process:

- A feedback group of eight people with experience of poverty, were recruited during the kick-off event and had to fulfil the following criteria: experience of participation processes; membership of an organisation that supports the permanent participation structure and guarantees its continuity and passive language skills in German and French. Specifically, the group's task was to support the project team in the development of the workshops (particularly with regard to moderation and implementation) and in the preparation of the report. The members of the feedback group also took part in the workshops. They were the direct contact people for the other people with experience of poverty, welcoming them or providing support in the event of any ambiguities in the course of the workshop.

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[56] The selected categories included the following: name, country, founding year, participants, mode of operation/organisation, competencies, addressees, funding, resources, strengths, weaknesses, evaluations/studies (see Chapter 20.2. Anchor example for categorisation in the appendix).

- A total of 50 people with experience of poverty took part in the workshops. Around 37 people with experience of poverty took part in two to three events (a kick-off event and two workshops). Participants came from various cantons in French-speaking and German-speaking Switzerland (namely Aargau, Basel-Landschaft, Basel-Stadt, Bern, Fribourg, Geneva, Jura, Lucerne, Neuchâtel, Schwyz, Vaud, Valais and Zurich). Some of them belonged to an organisation and were already involved in projects with participation processes, such as the working groups of the National Platform against Poverty. Others were taking p a r t in a project with participation processes for the first time. The group's task was to express their opinion on what form the permanent structure for Switzerland should take, based on their experience with poverty and participatory processes (for some of them).[57]

- Around fifteen experts were involved, representing their organisations from the political, social and economic sectors. These people took part in the second workshop and in a meeting prior to the workshop. The experts included representatives from public administration at all levels (federal government, cantons, cities/municipalities) and from various sectors (social affairs, education, integration and business). Representatives from private organisations also took part. The function of this group was to express their views on what form the permanent structure should take, based on their knowledge of politics and administration. The purpose of their involvement in the project was to be able to benefit from advice, particularly with regard to the feasibility of aligning the concept with existing structures of direct democracy, social policy and social work in Switzerland, as well as the support possibilities offered by these same structures. Their involvement was crucial, as experts from the aforementioned areas will also be contact people for the permanent participation structure. This group acted as a sounding board and had no decision-making function (the decisions were made by the people with experience of poverty).

People with experience of poverty and/or experts from the following organisations were represented:

Charitable organisations and NGOs:

Association Construire Demain (ACD), Association des Familles du Quart Monde (AFQM), Association de lutte contre les injustices sociales et la précarité (ALCIP), Association JeunesParents, Association Sociale POUR Neuchâtel, ATD Vierte Welt, Avenir 50plus, Botschafterinnen Lesen und Schreiben Bern Mittelland, Caritas Schweiz, Caritas Tessin, Centre social protestant CSP Vaud, Internetcafé Planet13, Kirchliche Gassenarbeit Luzern, Kontaktstelle für Arbeitslose Basel, Liste 13 gegen Armut und Ausgrenzung, Maison de la diaconie et de la solidarité du Valais, Projet RI-retraite Vaud, Schweizerisches Rotes Kreuz (SRK), Travail Suisse, Treffpunkt Vogelsang Winterthur, Verein Surprise, Volkshochschule Bern, Winterhilfe, Workfair 50+

Professional associations of social welfare and social work:

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[57] Contrary to what was envisaged in the project tender, individual models were not selected from the literature research (see Section 2.1) in order to then further develop them for implementation in Switzerland with people with experience of poverty. Instead, six main dimensions were articulated and elaborated based on existing examples. The three main reasons for this change of approach were that it was not possible to directly adopt an existing example as such for the context in Switzerland. Secondly, the concerns and expertise of the people with experience of poverty were to take centre stage, so that the focus was on bringing together their arguments and views on the individual dimensions of a permanent participation structure, on the basis of which a proposal was developed. Finally, the approach chosen aims to be open-ended with regard to the context in Switzerland.

Association romande et tessinoise des institutions d'action sociale (Artias), Avenir Social, Swiss Conference for Social Assistance (SKOS)

State representations national level:

Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH), Federal Statistical Office (FSO), Federal Office for Housing (FHO), National Centre for Interinstitutional Cooperation (IIZ), State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

State representations at cantonal and communal level:

Regional Social Services Municipality of Wohlen (BE), Regional Social Services Canton of Jura, City Initiative for Social Policy (Swiss Association of Cities SSV), Social Welfare Office of the City of Bern

In order to ensure the continuity of the permanent participation structure, it is important that stakeholder organisations as well as NGOs and other private and governmental organisations are present in the development and implementation process of the permanent participation structure and continue to support it in the future.

The above-mentioned groups were present at the following events:

- A half-day kick-off event.[58] The aim of this meeting was to inform potentially interested people (people with experience of poverty and professionals) about the project and the possibilities for project participation (workshops and/or feedback group), to gather initial reactions and concerns regarding a permanent structure and to obtain their opinions on the most important aspects to be addressed in the workshops.

- A first one-day workshop[59] with people who have experience of poverty, which was held in French in Fribourg and in German in Bern. The workshop focused on specific topics that made it possible to make progress in answering some of the main questions, namely the objectives and composition of the structure mixed or non-mixed[60], the form of the structure more of a consultative commission or more of a conference, and the factors favouring the participation of people with experience of poverty.

- A two-hour information meeting[61] with experts and representatives from the fields of politics, social work and business. The aim of this meeting was to prepare those present for participation in the second workshop by providing information about the process to date, clarifying their role as a sounding board at the second workshop and finding out their opinions on the permanent structure.

- A second one-day workshop[62] in Biel, which was held in the morning together with the above-mentioned experts and in the afternoon with the people who had experience of poverty by themselves. In the morning, an exchange of views took place between people with experience of poverty and the experts. The focus was on the question of the composition of the structure (mixed or non-mixed) as well as a discussion about the prerequisites for gaining the support of decision-makers in politics, administration and

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[58] See the programme of the kick-off event in the appendix (Section 23.1).

[59] See the programme of Workshop 1 in the appendix (Section 23.2).

[60] The time and financial framework of the project did not allow all the main questions and sub-questions to be addressed in a participatory process. Some issues were therefore prioritised on the basis of the feedback from those present during the kick-off event, with the help of the feedback groups and the existing findings from the literature research.

[61] See programme of the information meeting in the appendix (Section 23.4).

[62] See programme of Workshop 2 in the appendix (Section 23.3).

civil society. In the afternoon, the people with experience of poverty had the opportunity to validate the most important objectives of the structure, make a decision regarding the composition of the structure and identify the factors that will enable the structure to function in the long term.

- Four half-day feedback group sessions. The first two sessions were used to gather the opinions of those present on each workshop programme (timing, topics to be covered, facilitation methods, etc.). The other two sessions were used to gather their opinions on the report, especially on Part 3 (concept proposal). These sessions were very helpful in adapting the events and the concept for a permanent participation structure for Switzerland (see Part 3) for people with experience of poverty based on their feedback.

People with experience of poverty were recruited and invited to participate,[63] using the active networks of the National Platform against Poverty and the research team with people with experience of poverty and charitable organisations. These networks have expanded over the years with various participation projects in practice and research projects as well as in university undergraduate and postgraduate education and continuing education. Individuals were also approached directly (word-of-mouth approach) or the researchers invited interested people personally? to ongoing events with participation processes. The National Platform against Poverty invited the member organisations of the steering group and the platform's support group, as well as other specialists who have been involved in projects with participation processes in various forms in recent years or who have expressed an interest in developments.

The participation methods used - in the events (kick-off event, two workshops) and in the preparation with the feedback group - ensured that the participants were aware of the objectives of the tasks, that everyone was on the same page in the development work process and that everyone was aware of the objective of the current and upcoming work.

The methods for participation processes are based on the specialist literature[64] and on the research team's experience in using these methods. At the same time, the research team was aware of potential risks among those who had experienced poverty (e.g., the danger of devaluation, a feeling of incompetence or of being manipulated) and the prerequisites for risk avoidance.

Safeguarding in relation to the following criteria was therefore ensured as far as possible: time, a slow pace, the importance of the framework to strengthen trust and ensure confidentiality, translation of the content of concerns,[65] not formulating too much in writing and making sure that more reserved people could express themselves.

During the preparations and moderation, we paid particular attention to the morning of the second workshop, when the experts were present. For example, before the workshop, the

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[63] See factsheet in the appendix (Chapter 26).

[64] See, for example, Müller & Chiapparini, 2021.

[65] For example, a risk was identified by individual participants, some of whom were in precarious life situations, who expressed the desire for a direct improvement in their situation and spoke of their experiences.
The participants derived corresponding arguments, concerns and reflections for a future programme. The "translation work" by the moderator was successful in that the objectives of the joint cooperation were pointed out in each case. The aim was to achieve a long-term improvement in the life situation of the individuals with experience of poverty. For example, the expressed concern of one person present, who called for the possibility of free further training (including reimbursement of expenses) for people with experience of poverty, was translated in such a way that participation in a future permanent participation structure would be compensated in any case and that active participation in the participation structure should also be understood as an opportunity for individual further training. In addition, one topic to be addressed for a permanent participation structure could be free further training programmes.

people with experience of poverty were given the list of professionals present or care was taken to ensure that there were fewer professionals present than people with experience of poverty. In addition, the role of the experts was emphasised at the beginning of the workshop, as they provided feedback and advice from the perspective of their institutional function but did not take on a decision-making role.

In addition, the individual events were organised in a variety of ways: smaller and larger group work (groups of three to ten), working in plenary, discussing and recording the advantages and disadvantages of an aspect or weighting positions by giving points, as well as adopting decisions with a veto right (with consent procedure[66]).[67]

4.3 Development of a concrete concept proposal for a permanent participation structure

The FSIO's mandate was to develop a concrete proposal for a permanent participation structure adapted to the Swiss context. Based on the results of the workshops and the literature research carried out, the project team aimed to provide a concrete answer to each of the main questions and sub-questions. At two meetings, the feedback group was asked for its opinion of the concept (Part 3 of the report) and of the report as a whole (Parts 1 and 2). We also involved an expert from the field of social policy and the steering group of the National Platform against Poverty in the refinement of the proposal.

5 Project team

The project was carried out by a research team from the Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH) and the Fribourg School of Social Work (HES-SO/FR).

The team combines many years of experience in managing and implementing projects on participation processes with people who had experience of poverty in practice, higher education and research .[68] Members of the project team also took part in a national conference on the topic of "Participation of affected persons in preventing and combatting poverty" (2 September 2021) in Bern's Wankdorf stadium, where people who were affected helped to shape and discuss the event. They contributed design ideas in advance and got involved in tandem contributions together with people with experience of poverty or took part in participatory workshops.

The project team also has many years of solid experience in the participatory development of conceptual foundations for the practice of preventing and combatting poverty as well as in numerous implementation projects with people who had experience of poverty. As a result, the team has developed a language and organisational approach tailored to the target group as well as experience in moderating participatory working groups. It also has solid knowledge of the structures and actors in Swiss social policy. In particular, the team is characterised by a broad and active network of

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[66] Consent describes a group format for decision-making. In contrast to consensus, it is also possible to allow contradictions to remain in the process and decisions can still be made. This happens as soon as there are no more serious and justified objections (Grüttler& Bruse, 2022).

[67] The methods are documented in more detail in the respective programmes in the appendix, as well as in the sub-chapters "Brief information on the implementation of the methodological approach of the workshops" (see Sections 7.2, 8.2, 9.2, 10.2, 11.2 and 12.2).

[68] See, for example, the research project on models of participation (Chiapparini et al., 2020) or the practical guide in German, French and Italian (Müller & Chiapparini, 2021) derived from this and developed with participation processes.

people with experience of poverty, experts and people from relevant organisations, NGOs, administration and politics in German-speaking Switzerland, French- speaking Switzerland and abroad.

The project team was aware of the requirements, risks and limitations in the implementation of this project and brought the necessary proactive solution-orientation, flexibility and adaptability to the project development.

6 Structure of the report

The first part of the final report has explained the initial situation, the objectives, the specific questions and the methodological approach, and has presented the principles for participation processes and introduced the project team.

The second part of the report describes the multi-stage participation process for developing a proposal for a permanent participation structure in Switzerland and the findings obtained. The rich and detailed results from the participation process are available for further work in the appendix.[69]

Based on the findings from established permanent participation structures in the international context and the intensive multi-stage participation process to develop a concept (see Part 2), this report includes a proposal for a concrete and realisable permanent participation structure for Switzerland: "The Poverty Council in Switzerland" (Part 3). In addition, the prerequisites and next steps for the implementation of the proposal "The Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland" are presented and explained.

[69] Cf. Chapter 25.

PART 2: DEVELOPMENT OF A CONCEPT FOR A PERMANENT PARTICIPATION STRUCTURE FOR SWITZERLAND

In this second part of the report, the results of the literature review are summarised together with key findings from the development and participation process described in Part 1.[70] Accordingly, the individual chapters are divided into the following four parts:

- findings from the literature;
- brief notes on the implementation of the methodological approach in the workshops;
- findings from the workshops;
- statement from the research team.

7 What are the objectives of the permanent participation structure?

7.1 Findings from the literature

The literature review reveals two central objectives of existing permanent participation structures:

1. The objective of the poverty policy assessment

The assessment of poverty policy activities is mandated by political decision-makers[71]. The following permanent participation structures in particular pursue this goal: Conseil national de lutte contre l'exclusion (hereinafter CNLE), of which the 5ème Collège des personnes concernées (hereinafter 5ème Collège) is a member, the Conseil consultatif des personnes accueillies et accompagnées (hereinafter CCPA) in France and the Comité consultatif de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale (hereinafter Comité consultatif) in Quebec.

2. The aim of bringing together all those involved in the field of poverty and engaging in dialogue on poverty-related issues.

All those involved in the field of poverty are brought together to engage in dialogue on poverty-related issues. The following permanent participation structures are more strongly focused on this goal: The European Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty (which are organised by the European Anti-Poverty Network (hereinafter EAPN) and the national networks), the Poverty Conference in Austria and the National Poverty Conference in Germany.

The Belgian Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (hereinafter: Belgian Platform) combines these two objectives, although the evaluation mandate is formulated rather vaguely and in general terms: "To monitor developments in the areas of poverty and social exclusion

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[70] See methodological approach (Chapter 4) and participants (Chapter 4.2). The comprehensive and detailed results from the four events can be viewed in the appendix (see Chapter 24). These are available for in-depth studies or further work.

[71] In the following, the term "political decision-makers" refers to people holding political office and the term "political administration" refers to people in the political administration who prepare political business. This includes, for example, ministers, members of parliament or representatives of the various federal offices.

and bring together all relevant stakeholders".[72] By combining both objectives, cooperation among people with experience of poverty, experts and other stakeholders in poverty policy is strengthened. This in turn has a positive effect on the legitimacy of the position statements of people with experience of poverty, because the issues addressed correspond to the interests of a broad group and because bringing together different interest groups in poverty policy also strengthens the representativeness of and identification with the position statements and thus enables mobilisation for the call to implement them.

Other objectives or competencies from the various existing examples of permanent participation structures can be summarised as follows (although in some cases the mandate has been clearly and explicitly defined and in other cases the mandate is less clear and open to interpretation):

- expressing opinions on the priorities in the assessment of poverty policy; helping to understand the concrete challenges in the implementation of the policy; defining common positions as a contribution to the debates with other actors (5ème Collège);
- having a political supervisory role and advising the authorities (Comité consultatif québecois);
- being part of a committee; exchanging content and information; making proposals; analysing specific issues; proposing measures and priorities (Belgian platform);
- specific issues (Austrian Conference, Belgian Platform).

An important issue that emerges from the analysis of the existing permanent participation structures is their scope for action and organisation. Indeed, when describing the examples, it is not always easy to understand to what extent the permanent participation structure is merely called upon to respond to requests on poverty policy issues submitted to it by the political decision-makers, and to what extent it can itself, for example, draw up statements on poverty policy issues and propose them for discussion, or place items on the agenda of a meeting or make recommendations on social policy matters.

7.2 Brief notes on the implementation of the methodological approach in the workshops

The question of the objectives of a permanent participation structure was prioritised in the two workshops held. Based on a list of objectives from the literature review and objectives mentioned by participants at the kick-off event, a summary of possible objectives was presented in the first workshop. The participants were asked to complete this list and then position themselves on the objectives that they considered to be the most or least important. Based on this work, the group was able to agree on five primary objectives. These five objectives were presented again in the second workshop in order to validate them on the basis of a rational of consent.[73] and were finally validated on this basis. This procedure made it possible to jointly clarify or change the formulation of some objectives.

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[72] Courtesy translation from: European Commission, 2013, p. 27, cited in European Commission, 2014, p. 9. The Belgian Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion EU 2020 - Publications Office of the EU (europa.eu).

[73] Cf. method of consensus finding (Robertson, 2015).

7.3 Findings from the workshops

From the very beginning of the working process, there was consensus among the participants that the following four concerns should be taken into account in the development process of the proposal[74]:

1. The objectives of the permanent participation structure are clearly defined and communicated.

2. Priority goals should be defined.

3. The permanent participation structure must bring direct benefits to people with experience of poverty by allowing them to contribute their own expertise and concerns[75].

4. The focus of the work is on holistic considerations and arguments (at a societal level). Individual experiences can serve as a starting point for further and general considerations.

During the development process, all those with experience of poverty worked on, prioritised and confirmed the following five central objectives, which should be pursued by a permanent participation structure.

The aim of the permanent participation structure is ...

1. that it *is consulted* by political decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society on issues relating to preventing and combatting poverty.

2. that the actors in the permanent participation structure submit *proposals to* decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society *for improving* poverty prevention and alleviation.

3. that the actors in the permanent participation structure participate in political *decisions* and exert influence.

4. that the permanent participation structure promotes *dialogue between people* with experience of *poverty and other stakeholders* (politicians, administrators, institutional managers, experts, etc.).

5. that the *public* is made *aware of* the issue of poverty and *mobilised* to change attitudes and existing prejudices against poverty.

In the course of the participation process, the following prerequisites for achieving the aforementioned objectives were elaborated and prioritised as follows:

- **Have a clear profile**: Clearly define what the structure is and what its tasks are.

- **Defend the added value of the structure**. This added value consists of: 1. becoming more creative and inventive in the fight against poverty by taking into account the points of view, skills and resources of people with experience of poverty. 2. developing more effective solutions that bring economic benefits (e.g., solutions that enable people with experience of poverty to be weaned off welfare more effectively). 3. making achievements visible, i.e., bringing changes to the public eye that would not have been possible without the input of? people who have experience of poverty.

- **Organise face-to-face meetings between representatives of the participation structure and decision-makers** (promote real and human contact, personal

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[74] These points were formulated and recorded by the participants at the kick-off event.

[75] There is no provision for individual counselling or financial support for people with experience of poverty in their at times precarious living situations.

contact and direct connection to the decision-makers.

- **Speak with one voice**: Coming to decision-makers with a collective (co- constructed)[76] position and a clear and well-prepared goal that each individual can stand by.

- Develop **proposals for improvement** that are concrete and feasible.

- **Be proactive** (and do not just wait for the structure to be utilised) through various means (e.g., monitoring, liaising with the media, responding to consultations, etc.).

- Promote the **recognition of poverty as a structural and social challenge** (and not as individual guilt).

7.4 Statement of the research team

The participatory process used made it possible to set clear and explicit goals that were confirmed by all participants. This added value achieved through participatory processes emphasises the strong will of people with experience of poverty to proactively engage in order to be heard by policy makers. They clearly want to go beyond a purely consultative approach (consultation). In our opinion, the objectives defined in the participation process seem to correspond to the findings from the literature review in that they address the two main objectives identified (1. assessing the business of poverty policy and 2. dialogue among all actors involved in poverty policy). In addition, the people with experience of poverty clarified the mandate as far as possible (avoiding ambiguity) and secured a certain amount of justified autonomy (e.g. room for manoeuvre or being able to make suggestions).

The extent to which people with experience of poverty experience stigmatisation also came to light once again. Objective 5, which relates to raising public awareness of the need to reduce prejudice, reminds us that effective measures are urgently needed at this level.

8 Who is a member of the permanent participation structure?

8.1 Findings from the literature

The findings from the literature review show a wide range in terms of the composition of permanent participation structures. Certain permanent participation structures enable people with experience of poverty to work together without other actors (in so-called "non-mixed models") before entering into dialogue with other actors (e.g. 5ème Collège, which initially provides for work among people with experience of poverty before a dialogue with other CNLE actors, and enables the preparation of people with experience of poverty at national level for the European meetings).

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[76] When people with experience of poverty work in partnership with responsible people, this is referred to as co-construction (Müller & Chiapparini, 2021, 17). The following definition of co-construction serves this purpose: "The participants cooperate with other actors who have / have more power (political or institutional authorities, experts, etc.). Co-construction usually aims to develop of a project, but it can also be limited to the joint development of a statement on a topic. It enables a degree of power sharing. The people at risk of and affected by poverty are not the initiators of co-construction and are not the decision-makers." (Chiapparini et al., 2020, p. 135).

In numerous examples of permanent participation structures (so-called "mixed models"), people with experience of poverty are in direct dialogue with other actors (e.g. CCPA, Belgian Platform, Quebec Advisory Committee, Poverty Conference in Germany and Austria). In these models, it is difficult to recognise how the perspective of people with experience of poverty is constructed and developed as a collective position, and how they adopt positions in an exchange of views with other actors.

The findings from the literature review also make it possible to draw up a list of actors with whom people with experience of poverty can enter into a dialogue:

- decision-makers from politics and administration (e.g ministers, members of parliament or representatives of public administration);
- professionals in the social sector (public or private institutions, e.g. social services or NGOs);
- other social partners (e.g. business circles);
- scientific experts.

In some examples of permanent participation structures, people with experience of poverty participate exclusively as elected representatives of local or regional associations. They are appointed on the basis of certain selection criteria[77] by the associations or stakeholder organisations to participate in the national permanent participation structure (e.g. 5ème Collège des CNLE). In other similar examples, the people with experience of poverty are not affiliated to associations or stakeholder organisations; or this is not mentioned (e.g., CCPA, European meetings, German conference). In some permanent participation structures, both options (with or without affiliation to an association or stakeholder organisation) seem to be possible (e.g. Belgian Platform or Quebec Consultative Committee). In other examples, the participation of people with experience of poverty appears to take place primarily through the representative presence of associations or stakeholder organisations that support them (e.g. Poverty Conference in Austria).

The number of participants in the various examples identified varies between around 15 and 150 people. There is a tendency for the number of participants in permanent participation structures in which only people with experience of poverty are represented to be rather low (e.g. 32 people at the 5ème Collège), while structures in which both people with experience of poverty and other actors are represented tend to have a high number of participants (e.g. 65 members at the CNLE, 150 at the German Poverty Conference or the EAPN). However, there are also isolated forms that bring together people with experience of poverty with other actors where the number of members is manageable: 17 members for the Advisory Committee in Québec and 40 members for the Belgian Platform.

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[77] People with experience of poverty are selected on the basis of their previous involvement in a project of the citizen participation via a local collective. These people with experience of poverty are intensively supported by the organisation that commissions them to participate in the permanent participation structure.

8.2 Brief notes on the implementation of the methodological approach in the workshops

The question of the composition of the structure was discussed in both workshops and focused primarily on whether it should be a mixed structure or not.

The advantages and disadvantages of the two options were presented during the first workshop:

- a "mixed" option (people with experience of poverty and other stakeholders working together);
- a "non-mixed" option (only people with experience of poverty work together).

There was consensus that people with experience of poverty must be given time both to work among themselves and to reflect together with other actors. This emerges from the advantages and disadvantages of both options.

On this basis, two more detailed models were presented for discussion in the second workshop:

- Model 1: A structure consisting exclusively of people with experience of poverty who make decisions among themselves but can occasionally consult other people (external to the structure).
- Model 2: A mixed structure in which decisions are made between people with experiencing of poverty and other actors who are also members of the structure.

The advantages and disadvantages of both options were identified, as were the indispensable prerequisites for each of the two models.

In a final step (in the second workshop), a voting process was proposed in which each person with experience of poverty could identify their preferred model. The discussions that took place during this voting process led to the identification of a third model proposed by a number of people with experience of poverty. This comprises a mixed structure in which people with experience of poverty have a quorum and the other people involved in the structure have a consultative voice.

The voting results were as follows:

- Model 1: 10 votes
- Model 2: 14 votes
- Model 3: 6 votes.

It should be noted that this third model only emerged in the course of the voting process and therefore could not be discussed in terms of advantages and disadvantages; the voting result is therefore only partially representative.

Accordingly, no model could be clearly prioritised, but with regard to the findings from the development process, the following two tendencies emerged:

> Cooperation with experts from politics, social work, business and other stakeholders (e.g., academia, media or civil society) is seen as necessary and desirable. It remains to be clarified which of the experts and other stakeholders should be direct members of the permanent participation structure and who is involved selectively and with regard to specific issues and objectives (e.g. awareness raising, exchange of views, etc.).

- It is important for people with experience of poverty to have a quorum in order to formulate a clear collective statement that is perceived as such from the outside. It is still unclear whether the quorum only applies to people with experience of poverty or whether it should be shared with other stakeholders (if professionals are involved in the structure as members).

8.3 Findings from the workshops

The workshops have revealed a number of advantages with regard to both main models. These are explained in more detail below, along with the prerequisites that are necessary for their effective, constructive and long-term functioning.

Advantages and prerequisites of the non-mixed main model (decisions are made exclusively by the people with experience of poverty)

Advantages:
- The expertise of people with experience of poverty takes centre stage (e.g., high visibility, greatest possible identification with the permanent participation structure).
- The statements issued are focused on the interests of people with experience of poverty (e.g. independence, direct spokesperson for the collective voice of people with experience of poverty, lobbying); more radical positions can also be represented.
- This main model offers a protected framework and a freer space to speak (e.g., lower risk of stigmatisation, easier to speak, opportunity to establish their own culture of conversation, greater accessibility for people with experience of poverty).
- The perspective of people with experience of poverty is 100% present in the final product, which leads to a high level of credibility of the statements and to a stronger recognition of the permanent participation structure by the general public and the media.
- People with experience of poverty are considered equal to professionals and other actors.
- Conflicts of interest on the part of professionals (e.g. between their personal stance and the representative stance of their own organisation) are avoided.
- There is greater scope for professionals to contribute their opinion to the discussion (e.g. less risk of being "restricted" by their role if the final decision is not their own).

Prerequisites:
- As far as possible, consensus-based decision-making should be encouraged within the group of people with experience of poverty.
- Consultation or dialogue should be sought and maintained with a fixed group of experts from politics, social work and business (e.g. with regard to the necessary resources: network, knowledge of the strategy and language of political decision-makers, timing of political interventions...).

- The diversity of backgrounds/profiles of all participants should be ensured.
- A common attitude towards cooperation and communication should be agreed on (e.g. willingness to learn, openness, transparency and respect).
- A "neutral" moderator should be available.
- A core group of people with experience of poverty must be formed in order to be able to introduce new participants to the group.

Advantages and prerequisites for the mixed model (decisions are made jointly by people with experience of poverty and other stakeholders)

Advantages:

- The proposals have greater relevance (e.g. broader opinion) and greater social and political impact through the inclusion of several parties (e.g. realities and knowledge from different perspectives).
- A common position can be developed through co-construction by taking contradictory opinions as a starting point and discussing the various arguments.
- Differences of opinion or sources of conflict with regard to points of view can be identified directly and resolved jointly (e.g. through dialogue or mediation).
- There is a mutual learning process about coordinating one's own views with those of the other actors.
- The work can be driven forward more quickly by available and committed specialists.
- The utilisation of mutual networks is possible (easier access to institutional resources as well as to empirical knowledge for decision-making).
- Access to resources is greater (e.g. requests are better publicised, possible advice on financial resources, available spatial resources).

Prerequisites:

- A quota provision should be drawn up to ensure balanced representation for each "category" of participants. It is essential to ensure that people with experience of poverty are sufficiently represented.
- Clear conditions for cooperation must be created (e.g. rules of operation or decision-making processes) that do not disadvantage any party; external moderation is needed to address power relations and stigmatisation or tokenistic participation (for marketing purposes).
- Language that is understandable to all must be used.
- Sufficient time must be planned to allow room for co-operation and the creation of a common culture.
- The majority of people with experience of poverty and other stakeholders should already have experience of participation processes.
- People with experience of poverty should be given the opportunity to prepare themselves before or during their work together.
- Roles, interests and ideas (in particular of experts from politics, social work and business, but also of people with experience of poverty) must be clarified.

- As far as possible, experts should be asked to speak as representatives of an organisation and not from their own experience.
- Conditions must be created that promote a degree of freedom of speech for the professionals (e.g. modes of working must be reflected in a way that minimises conflicts of interest between the personal opinion of the professionals and the opinion of the organisation to which they belong).
- A degree of diversity of profiles of all actors must be ensured.
- A shared attitude towards cooperation and communication must be promoted among all participants (e.g. willingness to learn and change perspectives, openness, empathy, transparency and respect).
- All participants must be prepared and trained with regard to participation processes.

8.4 Statement of the research team

Both the literature review and the workshops highlight the need to place the voices and expertise of people with experience of poverty at the centre of the permanent participation structure. It is also important to give them sufficient space and time to develop a collective voice before a dialogue with other actors takes place.

The advantages of basic cooperation with other actors become clear in terms of the legitimacy and credibility of the voice of people with experience of poverty (e.g. these actors can act as supporters or even advocates). In addition, familiarity is promoted in their cooperation as well as the systematic linking of the statements and further activities of the structure to different target groups, such as decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society.

In this sense, regardless of the different models discussed, the aim is to allocate the main decision-making power (in terms of content/strategies/output of the structure) to the people with experience of poverty and at the same time to mobilise the other actors in support of the issues under consideration. It remains open as to what extent which other actors should be members of the structure or outside the structure. One way to fulfil this requirement is to combine different degrees of participation and assign different responsibilities to the people with experience of poverty and other actors.

In addition, the research team recommends prioritising systematic cooperation with experts from politics, social work and business for the time being, rather than entering into cooperation with other stakeholders. These experts should be located at the organisational level of the permanent participation structure within this structure and given an advisory function. The other stakeholders should be located outside of the structure and assigned the function of exchange of views.

According to the research team, in the context of Swiss social policy, which attaches great importance to the diversity of the population and political participation, it is worth locating the decision-making authority over the participation structure primarily with people who have experience of poverty; because people with experience of poverty have until now had little or no voice in social policy in Switzerland.

9. Who does the work of the permanent participation structure address?

9.1 Findings from the literature

The findings from the literature review show that decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society[78] are the main addressees of permanent participation structures. A central question that emerges is the greater or lesser proximity of the participation structure to the authorities that make decisions related to poverty reduction.

However, it is also evident that the proximity to these actors varies depending on the type of permanent participation structure.

Some examples of permanent participation structures show a very close proximity to political decision-makers. In France, for example, the CNLE prepares written statements that are forwarded to a committee for the evaluation of national poverty policy (the work of the 5ème Collège, for example, is incorporated into this evaluation work). This evaluation committee is consulted directly by the person responsible for the topic in the ministerial office. Similarly, the Quebec Advisory Committee advises the person responsible for the implementation of the law in the Minister's Office on the development, implementation and evaluation of measures within the framework of the national poverty policy strategy. The Belgian Platform names both the political decision-makers and other stakeholders.

On the other hand, the addressees of the work developed in other permanent participation structures (such as the CCPA, German or Austrian National Conference or EAPN) are not recognisable. In these examples, there is clearly less proximity to the political decision-makers.

Some scientific evaluations of existing structures explicitly emphasise the risk that the work carried out does not reach the actual target people. This is associated with the risk that the opinions of people with experience of poverty are neither heard nor taken into account by political decision-makers.[79]

Finally, it should be noted that the Quebec advisory committee is the only permanent participation structure that explicitly mentions researchers on poverty and exclusion (literally: Centre for the Study of Poverty and Exclusion) as an addressee alongside policy makers. The example from Quebec thus also emphasises the importance of the permanent participation structure for researchers.

9.2 Brief notes on the methodological approach

The question of the addressees of the work that emerges from the permanent participation structures was not a direct subject of the workshop programmes, especially since key findings from the literature research had already been identified. However, findings on this topic can be derived from the answers to two different questions posed during the workshops: "What does it take to make a permanent participation structure actually function in the long term?" and "What prerequisites are needed to make oneself heard by decision-makers?". The work on these

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[78] This refers to large NGOs or aid organisations and their leaders and presidents or leaders from business, trade unions or the arts and culture.

[79] Amnyos groupe, 2013; Asdo studies, 2015; Frazer, 2014.

questions was conducted in a mixed group consisting of people with experience of poverty and experts from politics, social work and business.

It should be noted, however, that during the first French-language workshop, the question of the addressees of the work of permanent participation structures was taken up and addressed ad hoc and spontaneously by the participants in response to specific requests from individual people with experience of poverty.

9.3 Findings from the workshops

The results of the workshops (in close connection with the question of the objectives of the permanent participation structure) identified the following key addressees for the structure: The political decision-makers were formulated as addressees (e.g. Objective 2: statements developed are addressed to decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society). In contrast, other objectives (e.g. Objective 5: Raising public awareness) are addressed to a broader group or society as a whole.

In addition, the results from the workshops emphasise that political decision-makers (politicians, heads of institutions, administrative employees, etc.) should be addressed as a priority. Other addressees are also considered important and are emphasised as a specific group of people: Young people (as policy makers of the future), donors (in the public and private sectors) and the media, as well as the entire population (in all age groups and social classes) who votes on laws to prevent and combat poverty. Some people also emphasise the importance of the permanent participation structure directly addressing people with experience of poverty (with the aim of empowering and supporting them).

9.4 Statement of the research team

Based on the results of the literature review and the workshops, the research team emphasises the importance of ensuring proximity between the permanent participation structure and the political decision-makers.

In this sense, it would be ideal if, as a first step, the permanent participation structure was integrated into an existing decision-making organisation chart at federal level. The main aim is to ensure that the decisions taken at this level automatically submitted to a consultation process with the future permanent participation structure.

As there is no legal basis for this in Switzerland, there is a need for a permanent participation structure that establishes such participation processes in political, administrative and civil society institutions and provides even more targeted support for people with experience of poverty in their efforts to influence decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society. In addition, courses of action and processes could be identified to increase proximity to decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society. In Switzerland, for example, the permanent participation structure could be included in the list of organisations to which political offices send consultations.

In addition, the permanent participation structure must be categorised within Switzerland's federalist social system,[80] which has different decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society:

Social insurance is allocated to the federal level, while social welfare and the implementation of federal decisions are allocated to the cantonal and communal levels. The SKOS has a coordinating function for the individual cantons with regard to the SKOS guidelines, but not in other social policy matters. The guidelines are by no means implemented in the same way in all cantons, nor are they enshrined in law and therefore binding in every canton.

Against this socio-political background, the central and potential addressees for the permanent participation structure are located at these three political levels. Individual examples are given below (a preliminary list can be found in Chapter 15):

- at the federal level: e.g. the responsible: federal councillor or the Federal Office for Social Insurance;
- at the cantonal level: e.g. the cantonal government councillors for the social welfare directorate, SODK or SKOS;
- at the municipal level: e.g. municipal and city governments.

Even in centralised systems, it has proven useful to create regional structures (e.g. in France). This is particularly important in a federalist system such as Switzerland. It is therefore worthwhile (as in Canada, for example) to first focus on the addressees at federal level in order to then address the connections with cantons and local activities, which have different regulations, offers and possibilities and at the same time define social policy laws and measures at cantonal or municipal level.

In the medium term, it is therefore advisable to dovetail the permanent participation structures at cantonal and federal level, in particular as poverty policy is shaped at cantonal level. Furthermore, in cantons where participation activities with people who have experience of poverty are already well advanced, it makes sense to build on existing structures and experience with participation processes on the part of people with experience of poverty and experts from politics, social work and business. In addition, other effective addressees such as the media or interest organisations, e.g. AvenirSocial, NGOs and organisations of those affected (for political lobbying), should be targeted centrally and with great effort, especially in the constitutive phase up to the implementation of the permanent participation structure., Their commitment is central to the successful introduction and continuation of the participation structure.

10 How does the permanent participation structure work?

10.1 Findings from the literature

The literature review reveals a variety of formats of permanent participation structures that function differently due to the articulation of their objectives (Chapter 7), their addressees (Chapter 9) and their modes of working (in particular the frequency of meetings). Two contrasting formats can be identified:

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[80] Linder, 2009.

A first format can be described as an "**advisory commission, committee or council**". The CNLE (with the 5ème Collège) and the "Consultative Committee to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion" in Quebec, for example, are organised in this way. The main objective of this participation structure is to be involved in the evaluation of poverty policy measures. This format is characterised by direct exchange of views (in close proximity) with the political decision- makers and by very regular meetings of the members of the permanent participation structure (once a month). It should be noted that the composition of the members (Chapter 8) of this format is variable in terms of the number and type of actors and that the structure is mostly at the national level (except in Québec at the regional level).

The counterpart to the "consultative commission, committee or council" format is the format known as "**conference, meeting or network**", such as the conferences in Germany or Austria and the European Assembly of People Experiencing Poverty (EAPN and its national networks). The aim of these permanent participation structures is more general and consists more in organising moments of exchange of views and joint reflection (over one or more days) on specific issues (e.g. housing, consumption, health or education) in the context of poverty. This format is characterised by a less direct link to policy makers (or the addressees are more diverse) and by far fewer regular meetings (e.g. once a year). In terms of composition, this structural format usually brings together a large number of actors (up to 150) from different backgrounds and is usually organised on a national or European level.

Some other examples of permanent participation structures can be located between these two formats, such as the Belgian Platform, which aims to both consult on public policy and to organise meetings or conferences. The meetings take place three to four times a year and a certain degree of proximity to the political decision-makers is apparently pursued. The group consists of 40 people from different backgrounds and operates on a national level. The CCPA and its regional offshoots (CCRPA) are also a hybrid: one-day plenary meetings are held several times a year, attended by up to 80 people, to exchange views on a specific topic, while parallel activities are planned for closer cooperation with institutional (in particular, political) bodies in the form of consultations or representations.

More generally, it is interesting to note the different names used to designate the structures: colleges, councils, platforms, commissions, working groups, conferences, meetings, committees, networks, to name but a few.

It can also be seen that most structures are located at national (or regional) level. However, some are more regional.[81] The aim is to make the participation structure closer and more accessible and to bring people with experience of poverty closer to the national level.

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[81] This applies, for example, to the Conseil consultatif régional des personnes accueillies et accompagnées (CCRPA), which operates at regional level.

10.2 Brief notes on the methodological approach

The first workshop explored the functioning of the permanent participation structure by focusing on the two contrasting formats of permanent participation structures mentioned above (consultative committee and conference). People with experience of poverty were asked to list the advantages and disadvantages of these two formats. In the course of the process, the groups of people with experience of poverty also identified conditions for implementation that are favourable to one form or the other.

10.3 Findings from the workshops

Discussing the advantages and disadvantages of these two contrasting formats has led to the following main findings:

Committee/council/commission

Advantages:
- Recognition and the impact of the voice of people with experience of poverty is strong, in particular if decisions have to go through this body (e.g. a committee, council or commission) (e.g. when obtaining the status of an expert committee/council or expert commission, or in the case of important lobbying work).
- Political decision-makers have direct access to a collective of people with experience of poverty and their experiences.
- There is greater motivation to participate among people with experience of poverty and experts from politics, social work and business if they can have a real influence on decisions.
- Regular and frequent meetings give people with experience of poverty insight into the business of political decision-makers, a better position to observe of what is happening on the ground, a high level of responsiveness to current developments and concrete handling of challenges.
- Regular and frequent meetings enable the training of people with experience of poverty and experts from politics, social work and business in terms of specialist knowledge and in connection with the participation processes.
- There is possible dovetailing of the national and cantonal levels (e.g. when forming a cantonal commission, with a delegation of people from each canton).

Prerequisites:
- the need to find people with experience of poverty who can make enough time for regular meetings (as there is a risk in terms of availability if, for example, the workload is too great);
- the importance of regulating the decision-making process, as such a body often has to make decisions, e.g. in relation to draft legislation;
- ensuring a diverse range of participants and favourable dynamics in terms of teamwork and collaboration (e.g. when quick reactions must be guaranteed).

Conference, meeting or networking format

Advantages:

- Enables a dialogue to be established among a large number of actors from different backgrounds.
- Facilitates the presentation and articulation of different points of view.
- Promotes the goal of raising society's awareness of the issue of poverty.
- Allows a great deal of freedom and room for manoeuvre when selecting the actors invited or involved, the issues and areas to be covered and the format of the conferences or meetings.
- Performs preparatory work for an advisory body (e.g. committee, council or commission) by examining a specific important topic or area in depth at a conference.
- Is less burdensome for all parties involved in terms of financial and time costs.

Prerequisites:

- Awareness must be raised among political decision-makers so that the in-depth issues and the considerations and findings from the conference have a real influence on political decisions. It is necessary to ensure that the in-depth issues are subsequently taken into account by the political decision-makers.
- There is a need to focus on issues that relate to the national level.

10.4 Statement of the research team

The various formats of the permanent participation structure presented (see Chapter 10.1) are fundamentally effective instruments for enabling the participation of people with experience of poverty as long as the aforementioned conditions are met.

Despite their different modes of operation, both formats provide spaces for dialogue between people with experience of poverty and decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society.

The "committee/council/commission" format is certainly more effective due to the direct contact with the decision-makers. This allows people with experience of poverty and expertise in poverty to be consulted directly on measures and developments in poverty policy and to initiate initiatives (which requires, for example, a high level of responsiveness and immediate feedback from people with experience of poverty). This format thus achieves a greater and more direct influence on political decisions in poverty policy. However, this service can only be guaranteed if the necessary resources are secured (see Chapter 11). These resources can vary, depending on the composition (only people with experience of poverty or "mixed" with experts) and the number of members and can thus be controlled: e.g. large labour input for all participants.

The "conference, meeting or network" format has a greater distance from the decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society, so that the concerns and work of the conferences have a longer and more indirect path to the political decision-makers. At the same time, this format seems to be particularly conducive to the goal of raising awareness of the issue of poverty (see Chapter 7).

The implementation of this format is straightforward, but more effort is needed to ensure that the opinions and issues of people with experience of poverty actually reach the decision-makers and are heard by them.

From our perspective, the implementation of both formats, which are already established in other countries, is possible in the Swiss context, provided that the listed prerequisites for implementation are actually taken into account.

A combination of both formats would be ideal in order to bundle the advantages of both and minimise the challenges (see the proposal in Part 3).

11 What resources are needed for the permanent participation structure?

11.1 Findings from the literature

The findings from the literature review emphasise the great importance of resources in any participation process[82] and in the implementation of this type of permanent participation structure.[83] They show that a lack of resources favours tokenistic participation[84] participation, for example, by having processes and content too rigidly framed by the administration, or by promoting unfavourable working conditions that do not allow the views of people with experience of poverty to be taken into account. This entails major risks with regard to the instrumentalisation or manipulation of people with experience of poverty. In addition, unfavourable resource situations in participation processes can also have negative effects that run counter to their intended objectives (e.g. feelings of discomfort or even devaluation of people with experience of poverty who are involved in processes that are insufficiently prepared and managed in terms of methodology and didactics).[85]

The analysed examples of permanent participation structures also emphasise the great importance of resources. However, they are generally not very precise with regard to the concrete form of the resources. One exception is the example of the 5ème Collège des CNLE in France, which explicitly addresses the importance of this aspect and specifically lists the various resources required, including those for the preparation and drafting of statements, for the preparation, training and information of people with experience of poverty and, finally, for the logistical, methodological, didactic and administrative aspects associated with the operation of the permanent participation structure.

With regard to compensation for people with experience of poverty, the 2013 evaluation of the French "Collège"[86] emphasises the importance of reimbursing all costs. This includes both expenses[87] as well as participation allowances. The process of financial compensation should be kept flexible (e.g. advance and subsequent payment) in order to do justice to the situations of the individual participants.

[82] INET, 2016; CNLE, 2011; Ministère des affaires sociales et de la santé, S.D; Jaeger, 2015.

[83] See the evaluations carried out on some permanent participation structures: in particular Frazer, 2014; Amnyos groupe, 2013a.

[84] Beresford, 2002; Bresson, 2014; Carrel, 2013, Etienne, 2018.

[85] Ducrettet, 2016; Mehauden, 2017.

[86] Amnyos groupe, 2013.

[87] cf. e.g. BSV, 2019.

11.2 Brief notes on the methodological approach

The question of resources was already covered by the literature research. In Workshop 2, the people with experience of poverty were also encouraged to think in subgroups about the following question: "What would the permanent participation structure need in order to function in the long term?". In this way, a list of conditions and resources was drawn up that were considered essential for a permanent participation structure.

11.3 Findings from the workshops

In line with the literature findings, the results of the workshops also emphasise the crucial role of the resource dimension in ensuring the implementation and sustainability of the permanent participation structure. However, the results are not limited to financial or material resources, but rather refer to the conditions required for the sustainable functioning of such a structure.

The following key points were emphasised in connection with resources:

- Ensure sufficient **financial resources** to: compensate the people with experience of poverty and reimburse their costs (e.g. childcare, transport); train them; provide them with a job (or several jobs); compile documentation; obtain administrative material; finance the opinion of specialists; make the existence of the permanent participation structure permanently visible via various channels (website; local, permanent and low-threshold contact point); provide access to information (newspaper subscriptions, etc.); ensure that the results achieved are visible (publication of summaries, regular communications in the media) and lastly, hire neutral moderators to lead meetings.
- Ensure sufficient **human resources** to: promote long-term retention of members with different profiles; have a permanent secretariat to ensure support in project follow-up and communication; reach out to hard-to-reach people; reach out to the general public; be able to obtain advice from legal specialists.
- Set up a **support group** (made up of people with different skills, particularly methodological and pedagogical skills) that is open to participation processes and the concerns of people with experience of poverty in order to accompany them and the professionals involved from politics, social work and business in order to promote the fulfilment of certain tasks (information, networking, preparation of meetings/workshops, administrative, logistical and methodological aspects, internal and external communication, etc.).
- Ensure **resources and skills to support lobbying networks** so that the permanent participation structure and its activities are recognised and supported by the state (become an official body funded by the state).
- Ensure the **credibility** of the permanent participation structure (which depends in particular on its composition and on the position statements that have been worked out and are effective).
- The **mandate and specifications** of the permanent participation structure must be clearly defined. At the same time, a certain degree of room for manoeuvre must be maintained (neither too

non-binding nor too rigid a framework); there should be clear rules for internal functioning (e.g. statutes as with associations).

- Create **trust** within the structure (e.g. a charter, confidentiality rules, collegiality, team culture).
- Enable **further training for participants** in the permanent participation structure (e.g. media skills, political processes or conflict management).
- Creation of **real, physical and low-threshold meeting places** that make regular meetings possible.

11.4 Statement of the research team

As the findings from the literature review show, it is crucial not to underestimate the resources to be deployed in order to avoid various risks associated with participation processes.

In addition to logistical and financial resources, the implementation of such a permanent participation structure requires the long-term support of a permanent secretariat with various competencies. This should ensure the continuity of the structure by performing a range of tasks:

- strategic support (e.g. prioritisation of activities and timetable);
- methodological and didactic support (e.g. neutral moderation, preparation and management of meetings with methods for participation processes, the time frame and clear information on what is involved)
- preparation, information and training of all participants (people with experience of poverty and other actors);
- support in the development of position papers;
- logistical, financial and administrative management.

It is essential to ensure compensation for the costs and participation (hours attended) of people with experience of poverty. After all, their experience and commitment are just as relevant as professional or scientific knowledge for the further development of poverty policy. These should therefore be valued accordingly. Ideally, an agreement on the specific modes of compensation and the introduction of a possible advance on costs should be discussed and negotiated with the people involved who have experience of poverty.

12 Who finances the permanent participation structure?

12.1 Findings from the literature

The results of the literature review show that the financing of permanent participation structures is mostly covered by public funding at European or national level: The European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty (EAPN) receives a grant from the European Commission covering 80% of its operating costs; the National Council for Combatting Exclusion (CNLE) in France receives fully public funding based on its anchoring in the 1988 law; the Consultative Committee of Persons Assisted and Accompanied (CCPA) in France benefits from a funding agreement signed with the Directorate General for Social Cohesion (DGCS). Finally, the Austrian Poverty Conference receives an

annual grant from the Ministry of Social Affairs. Sometimes additional funds are linked to this public funding: e.g. membership fees or sponsoring of memberships, donations, event-related funding or grants for specific projects (EAPN; Austrian Poverty Conference).

In some structures, funding is shared between private organisations (via clubs/associations) and the state (at local or national level) (e.g. the 5ème Collège" of the CNLE).

It should be noted that in most of the identified examples of permanent participation structures, the information related to financing remains largely unclear beyond the points mentioned above.

12.2 Brief notes on the methodological approach

The question of funding was not directly and specifically addressed in the two organised workshops due to the findings from the literature review. However, some thoughts on this topic were spontaneously raised by some participants during the project kick-off event and in Workshop 2 in connection with the question "What would the permanent participation structure need to function in the long term?".

12.3 Findings from the workshops

The elements highlighted by the participants make it clear that the financial support of the participation structure influences its credibility, legitimacy, importance, continuity and independence. Participants have visualised the advantages of private funding in terms of independence (as their experiences with state service providers have sometimes been negative), without denying the risks that such an option entails in terms of the continuity of the structure. For example, the participants find it particularly difficult and uncertain to find private organisations that are willing to finance a structure and at the same time are committed to the situation of people with experience of poverty.

On the other hand, financing by the federal government (and, depending on developments, also by the cantons in the medium to long term) is seen as favourable in terms of sustainability and legitimacy.

The majority of people with experience poverty are of the opinion that they should be compensated for their participation and have their expenses reimbursed, although some participants emphasise the advantages of free participation in terms of independence.

12.4 Statement of the research team

Ideally, the main funding for the permanent participation structure should be provided by the state. This is because past experience with projects for the participation of people with experience of poverty shows that public funding guarantees the continuity of the public and varied activities of the permanent participation structure.[88] In addition to continuity, public funding also ensures greater credibility and legitimacy and has an impact on the work that emerges from the permanent participation structure and which aims to optimise poverty policy and raise public awareness.

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[88] Cf. references in 12.1. and in Chapter 4.

However, financing by the state can give rise to fears that the structure will lose its independence. A mandate (e.g. from the Federal Social Insurance Office) is useful to this end in order to guarantee a degree of "neutrality". As soon as the state has taken over the financing and mandated the project, the services to be provided must also be clarified and state-independent decision-making spaces for the organisation of people with experience of poverty must be ensured.

PART 3: COUNCIL FOR POVERTY ISSUES IN SWITZERLAND (Armutsrat.ch)

The third part of the final report presents a well-founded and achievable proposal for a permanent participation structure: the "Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland" (Council). The basic elements for the present proposal were developed in a multi-stage participatory development process with people with experience of poverty and experts from the fields of politics, social work and business.[89] The process was based on a systematic analysis of various operating formats of functioning, permanent participation structures in other countries[90] and took into account the specialist and research literature on the topic of participation processes and their potential impact on poverty policy.[91] This approach gives the Council a high degree of legitimacy and great potential for implementation and impact. In addition, the Council is designed in such a way that it is a compatible and achievable goal in the Swiss context of direct democracy and federal poverty policy. The Council can therefore function at several federalist levels and in pre-parliamentary processes.

As a first step, the Council should be structurally established at a national level and linked to existing structures (e.g. the National Platform against Poverty).[92] The Council can also work together with cantonal and communal stakeholders. It also makes sense for councils to be created at cantonal and communal level in the future.

Figure 1: "Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland"

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[89] Around 50 people with experience of poverty from French- and German-speaking Switzerland and around 15 experts were involved in the multi-stage methodological development process for the proposal (see Chapter 4). The number of participants meant that a total of more than 50 organisations, NGOs and cantonal or national administrations from the fields of politics, social work and business were represented (cf. Chapter 4.2).

[90] Amnyos groupe, 2013; Asdo Studies, 2015; Frazer, 2014.

[91] Cf. e.g. Avenel 2017; Beresford & Carr, 2012; Chiapparini 2016; Chiapparini et al. 2020; CNLE 2011, Ducrettet 2016; HCTS 2017.

[92] See justification in Chapter 15.

Drawing on the detailed knowledge of people with experience of poverty regarding their previous or current poverty situation (expertise through experience[93]), the Council is able take a focused approach to addressing issues of poverty policy and to discussing them convincingly with federal, cantonal or communal authorities.

Poverty policy issues are addressed at four interfaces[94] where central objectives of the Council are implemented:[95]

1. The exchange of views between people with experience of poverty and specialists is promoted (Objective 4).
2. Decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society are consulted by the Council. The Council addresses collective statements or proposals to the decision-makers (objectives 1 to 3).
3. The Council informs and connects people and organisations affected by poverty. These in turn provide input on issues? that the Council addresses (objective 4).
4. Through various activities, the Council raises awareness among the public, experts in poverty policy, the media and other people from politics, administration, social work, business and academia. These in turn provide input that is followed up by the Council (objectives 4 and 5).

The format of a council is characterised by a flexible working method that allows room for manoeuvre (e.g. in the composition of members or in the convening of workshops to work on relevant issues).

In the following five chapters, the feasibility and achievability of this permanent participation structure for the Swiss context are presented, based on the main features of the Council (objectives, members, addressees, mode of operation, resources and funding) (Chapters 13-17).

Each chapter has the same structure: Firstly, the most important results of the process to date are presented, followed by the prerequisites for implementation and the next steps.

The contents of the individual chapters are basic principles that must be further specified and operationalised during a constitutive phase prior to the actual implementation of the Council with a provisional support group of people and experts with experience of poverty (cf. the "next steps" indicated for each chapter). Part 3 concludes the report with a summary (Chapter 18).

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[93] People with experience of poverty bring with them detailed knowledge of their past or present poverty situation, which is primarily characterised by experiences in their biography. This form of knowledge is referred to in specialist discourse as expertise based on experience and the people are referred to as "experts by experience" (cf. POD Mi/SPP SI (n.d.) or Hess 2020).

[94] The interfaces with external and internal stakeholders are indicated by arrows in the diagram.

[95] Cf. the objectives in Chapter 13.

13 Basic and specific objectives

The Council pursues the basic objective of better involving 745,000 people affected by poverty and 1,244,112 people at risk of poverty,[96] a numerically large population group, to include and involve them better in Switzerland's poverty policy, a goal which has not yet been fully achieved. These objectives, summarised in Chapter 13.1, are based on a systematic literature review, the findings of the intensive development process of people with experience of poverty and feedback from experts.[97] Within this multi-stage development process, five core objectives of the Council were articulated, summarised and adopted by consent.[98] These specific objectives are explained in Chapter 13.2.

13.1 Basic objectives[99]

The Council focuses primarily on the *expertise* of people with experience of poverty, who make up a significant proportion of the population in Switzerland. *Accordingly, they want to* be *recognised as a resource in poverty policy, in social work and in society through their experiential knowledge* and not be seen as a danger, a threat or merely as a result of their deficits. Through the Council, their *dignity, quality of life and autonomy* are taken seriously and their *social, cultural, political and economic concerns'* are given a platform. As a result, their interests are recognised and respected.

In addition to the support and involvement of people with experience of poverty, the Council enables cooperation with experts from politics, social work and business and promotes the exchange of knowledge between them. By directly bringing together experience and expertise, *concrete suggestions for improvement and solutions* and the *development of poverty reduction and prevention* can be addressed in a proactive and resource-orientated manner.[100] This is documented in the specialised literature. One person in the workshop put it aptly: "Only those who have experience of poverty and know what it feels like to live in poverty can develop and propose effective solutions for those affected."[101] The Council therefore endeavours to include the experience of people who have experienced poverty as ONE voice, for example by means of statements and in the *preparation of political decisions*. The Council explicitly enables people with experience of poverty to be *consulted collectively, easily and quickly by* decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society. With other activities (e.g. press releases or workshops), the Council enables and promotes the *participation* of people with experience of poverty *in society*.

As the Council is a flexible format, *a broad group* of people with experience of poverty can ultimately be included. Thanks to the diversity of the profiles of the

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[96] See the current figures from the Federal Statistical Office, FSO - Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SILC 2023 and from the Federal Statistical Office, FSO Risk of Poverty 2023.

[97] Cf. Part 2.

[98] Consent describes a group format for decision-making. Unlike consensus, consent also allows contradictions to remain in the process and decisions to be made as soon as there are no more serious and justified objections (Grüttler & Bruse, 2022).

[99] The words in italics refer to key aspects that are based on the literature research and were declared as objectives in the participatory process of concept development.

[100] See Bherer, 2011; Carrel, 2017; HCTS, 2017; INET, 2016.

[101] See written findings in Chapter 24.

participants, their different life situations, interests and political situations are taken into account, which ensures *a certain degree of representativeness*. This productive collaboration between people with experience of poverty *also* allows *them to network with each other.*

At the same time, *regular dialogue with experts* is desired. This is considered necessary in order to ensure the political, professional and social connectivity of the statements and further activities developed. The Council also aims to *change* the *overly widespread and stigmatising public images of this population group*. The aim is to *remove the taboo* surrounding the topic of poverty and to highlight the *implicit, complex and structural connections* that lead to precarious living situations. In addition, the Council enables people with experience of poverty to position themselves *in the social discourse.* In the medium term, this will strengthen social cohesion and enable the further development of an *anti-poverty and socially acceptable social safety net* for the entire population.

13.2 Specific goals

As mentioned above, the people with experience of poverty developed the following five specific and central objectives as a basis for the Council in a multi-stage process and adopted them by consent:

1. Decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society *consult* people with experience of poverty through the "Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland" for their work in the areas of poverty prevention and poverty reduction.

2. The members of the "Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland" submit *proposals to* decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society *to improve* poverty prevention and alleviation.

3. The members of the "Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland" *participate in* and influence *political decisions*.

4. The permanent participation structure *promotes dialogue* between people with experience of poverty and other stakeholders (politicians, administrators, institutional managers, experts, etc.).

5. Through the activities of the "Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland", the public is made aware of the issue of poverty and mobilised to change attitudes and prejudices towards poverty.

Prerequisites:

There must be involvement from decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society who are interested and willing to work with the Council. These people must be convinced that it makes sense to take the opinions of people with experience of poverty into account in order to improve measures to prevent and combat poverty. It is essential to recognise the need and develop a sensitivity to including the views of people with experience of poverty and therefore to approach the Council. Consultation with the Council should become a matter of course in the development and revision of measures to prevent and combat poverty.

The members of the Council need opportunities to organise themselves and a supporting framework, for which the appropriate resources must be made available (see Chapter 17).

Next steps:

The Council and its functions should be publicised to decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society as well as the general public as a first step (e.g. in a constitution phase).

In the constitution phase of the work of the Council, a provisional support group (consisting of people with experience of poverty and experts) is constituted on the basis of the participatory process to date. Taking into account the specific context of poverty prevention and alleviation (current political events, emerging problems, ongoing consultations, concerns from outside/external parties, etc.), the monitoring group prioritises the specific activities required to implement the five objectives. The prioritisation of activities can take place, for example, in the context of workshops in which a broad base of people and experts with experience of poverty participate (see keyword "workshop" in Figure 1 on page 32). Some objectives could be prioritised as a result.

14 Members

The Council consists of people with experience of poverty (a) and advisory experts who are experienced in poverty policy and well-connected with decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society (b). They have organisational support from a permanent secretariat (c).

a) **Quorate members:** Around eight to twelve people with experience of poverty form the core of the Council and decide on the Council's strategy and its implementation. Regular member meetings are held for this purpose. The group is characterised by the greatest possible heterogeneity in order to represent the diversity of life situations and concerns of people with experience of poverty. The following are represented:

- different cantons and regions of Switzerland;
- a range of experience of poverty in different life contexts (e.g. poverty due to single parenthood, unemployment, illness, lack of a social network, lack of education, wages that do not secure a livelihood (working poor or old age);
- at least two language regions (French-speaking and German-speaking Switzerland);
- different cultural and social backgrounds;
- different levels of education (from no education to university degree)
- different genders;
- some members who belong to an organisation for those affected;
- members with and without experience in participation processes.

Two to three people represent the Council and act as *contact people* within the Council. They ensure the smooth running of Council operations and are responsible for coordination with the advisory members and the permanent secretariat. They ensure the implementation of the

strategy. At the same time, they are also contact people for people outside the Council, for example for decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society, for organisations affected by poverty, people with experience of poverty and other stakeholders in poverty policy.

b) **Advisory members:** Around five experienced and well-connected experts from various areas of poverty policy (administration, NGOs, academia) act as advisory members. The experts contribute their specific expertise and competencies, which are incorporated into the Council's deliberations and opinions. They meet at the request of those with experience of poverty and only have an advisory vote on decisions.

These professionals are particularly committed to making the voices of people with experience of poverty heard when it comes to preventing and combatting poverty. In this sense, they can be seen as allies. The formation of a stable group of consulting experts enables them to get to know each other, build trust and work together in a goal-oriented manner, both with each other and with the members who have experience of poverty (see recommendations for participation processes with people with experience of poverty and experts, Chapter 4.2.).

Like the quorum members, the advisory members are also selected with a view to the criterion of diversity:

- expertise from various areas (social affairs, education, integration, politics and business);
- from the administration at various levels (confederation, cantons, regions, cities, municipalities);
- from different (public and private) organisational affiliations;
- from at least two language regions of Switzerland;
- preferably with experience in participative processes.

c) **Permanent secretariat**: The Council is supported by a permanent secretariat, which is responsible for ensuring that everything runs smoothly. The permanent secretariat works closely with the contact people to ensure the operational running of the Council, particularly at a methodological level (in particular the moderation of participatory processes) and administrative level (see Chapter 16).

The permanent secretariat consists of people who have the necessary expertise and experience. If they have the necessary knowledge and experience, suitable people with experience of poverty from within (or outside) the Council are preferred for this role.

Prerequisites:

The *legitimacy of the Council*: Efforts must be made to ensure that members with experience of poverty are perceived as legitimate representatives of the broadest possible base of people with experience of poverty, including following the criteria of diversity (see above), by means of the close involvement of the organisations concerned in the constitution of the Council, and by means of an exchange of views with a broader base of people with experience of poverty (see Chapter 16).

The *representativeness of* the *recruitment process* should not be overly standardised in order to ensure low-threshold access to people who have experience of poverty and to reach new people with experience of poverty. With this goal in mind, the

organisations and NGOs have a central role to play in supporting poverty policy.

The search for suitable people who meet the criteria and are interested in joining the Council: The network of people and specialists with experience of poverty who were involved in the concept development process can be utilised for this purpose and is constantly being expanded through projects of the National Platform against Poverty, the Bern University of Applied Sciences and the Fribourg University of Applied Sciences.

The overall size of the Council and the permanent secretariat, as well as the requirement *for* the Council *to be at least bilingual*, depends on the available and secured human and financial resources. However, it is essential to ensure that the number of members is sufficient to cope with the tasks that arise and to be able to cover any absences.

Challenges in connection with the mixed composition of the Council: In order for a mixed structure to function smoothly, a framework is needed as well as suitable working methods and instruments for participatory processes (including being ensured by the permanent secretariat).

The framework conditions for the members' work must be clarified, e.g. what rights and obligations exist, particularly with regard to financial compensation. The council members must be clearly informed about the framework of their participation (e.g. what they can and cannot comment on, what happens to their opinions or what they can expect from the results of the council).

The next stage:

During the constitution phase, a provisional support group (consisting of people with experience of poverty and experts from politics, social work and business) determines how the members of the council are to be recruited and implements this recruitment on the basis of the criteria set out above, e.g. by means of a kick-off event and together with the members from the administration (e.g. the National Platform against Poverty*),* the organisations affected and the people with experience of poverty. The members of the council and the permanent secretariat are thus constituted.

15 Addressees

The Council's work aims to reach a variety of addressees, which are shown in Figure 1. In this illustration of the Council, it is particularly emphasised that communication goes in both directions: the Council can both reach the addressees (suggestions, awareness-raising, lobbying, input) and be approached by them for support (consultations, answers to specific questions, advice, etc.).

In the context of this two-way communication, the role of the government? administration should not be underestimated,[102] as it has an important position in the promotion of participation opportunities for people with experience of poverty by preparing and drafting many issues for decisions by the Federal Council and Parliament in working groups. In this way, the administration can create various opportunities so that

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[102] The two decision-making structures of the parliamentary and pre-parliamentary processes are considered particularly relevant in the specialised literature (cf. e.g. Linder, 2009, pp. 17-19). The focus is therefore placed on these two processes.

people with experience of poverty can participate in the working groups (e.g. in the development of draft legislation, strategies or scientific principles).

In this way, the opinions and concerns of people with experience of poverty can be heard and incorporated into poverty policy at various levels of politics and social work in a focused way. The addressees are listed and described in more detail below:

At federal level, policy makers in the field of poverty prevention and alleviation include the following bodies:
- the federal councillor responsible and in particular the following departments: the Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA), the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER), the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP) and the Federal Department of Finance (FDF);
- in particular the following offices: the Federal Social Insurance Office, the State Secretariat for Migration, the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation, the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, the Federal Office for Housing;
- Parliament, in particular: sectoral commissions: the Committees for Social Security and Health, the Committees for Science, Education and Culture.

At cantonal level, political decision-makers include the following bodies:

- cantonal councillors of the social welfare directorates;
- policy commissions;
- the Social Directors' Conference SODK and other intercantonal conferences (education, integration...);
- the Swiss Conference for Social Assistance SKOS (coordinating function);
- cantonal heads of office for social security/social affairs;
- cantonal administrations.

Other important stakeholders/addressees include the following bodies, organisations and groups of people:
- municipal and city governments;
- regional associations of social institutions: e.g. Artias;
- the Swiss Association of Cities (incl. city initiative on social policy, city initiative on education);
- the Swiss Association of Municipalities;
- managers of municipal/municipal social services, municipal/municipal administrations;
- political parties, trade unions and the Swiss Employers' Association (SAV);
- stakeholder organisations;
- NGOs and aid organisations,
- existing participation structures from other areas (e.g. youth commission in the

Canton Waadt[103] or the client conference in the canton of Basel-Stadt[104]);
- experts from poverty policy, social work, business and science;
- the media;
- the public.

The Council also aims to support *people with experience of poverty*. The Council should contribute to better networking and exchanging information with them and make it easier for them to participate. In addition to this, the crucial role of the organisations of those affected should be pointed out. The support and connection between the Council and *organisations of those affected* appears to be of crucial importance, especially with regard to the sustainability and legitimacy of the structure (e.g. with regard to the recruitment of people with experience of poverty, networks for workshops or informal meetings).

The Council has access to the formal and informal channels and processes available in the Swiss system[105] to represent its interests. These include

- the Federal Council: annual meetings with the responsible Federal Councillor should be organised from the outset in order to be able to address substantive concerns and issues at this level.
- Parliament: hearings in committees, access to the Federal Parliament (by means of parliamentary badges), submission of motions via parliamentarians, defined right of petition (as a future formalised channel that associations or NGOs, for example, are seeking), the SDG2030 parliamentary group.[106] A parliamentary group on poverty could also be proposed.
- the administration: participation in working groups in the development of draft legislation, strategies, working papers, scientific principles, etc., participation in consultations,
  e.g. by including the Council in the list of organisations to which consultations are sent.
- general channels: launching petitions, referendums, initiatives, media work, a newsletter, a website, awareness-raising campaigns in collaboration with other stakeholders, etc.
- universities of applied sciences and universities: organisation of study days, colloquia, contributions by the Council to university teaching, etc.

Prerequisites:

The Council must have the knowledge and resources to make its voice heard at a political level (focused investment in lobbying). In this sense, the advisory function of the experts is of crucial importance. The same applies to the permanent secretariat.

As a first step, the Council must have the means to make a name for itself,
e.g. by means of focused and solid networking (e.g. meetings with the above-mentioned decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society), by means of elaborated

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[103] Cf. youth commission in the canton of Vaud: https://cdj-vaud.ch/.

[104] See Chiapparini et al, 2020, p. 85 and p. 138.

[105] Direct democracy and the federalist organisation of social work in Switzerland offer ideal target groups for the "Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland" and thus in favour of this format of the permanent participation structure (see Chapter 16 for details).

[106] Cf. https://www.parlament.ch/centers/documents/de/gruppen-der-bundesversammlung.pdf.

statements and other visible activities (e.g. a conference or press release). The aim is to be recognised by the various possible stakeholder groups in the medium and long term.

Next steps:

The Council is to be implemented at national level for the time being for three key reasons,

- to utilise the room for manoeuvre at national level;
- to pool the resources of people with experience of poverty and their organisations;
- to create a national body that speaks with one voice, enables direct networking and avoids the formation of many individual, independent cantonal bodies.

The first step is therefore to focus on the addressees and objectives at the federal level and the scope for action in this regard.

However, as a large part of the political scope for shaping poverty policy is at cantonal and communal level, the Council will also work with cantonal actors and express its views on cantonal issues. In order to be effective in terms of social policy, the Council's structures will also be expanded at cantonal and communal level in the medium term by forming regional, cantonal and communal councils.[107] These councils could be part of the national participation structure (e.g. through a delegate system), which would create a link to the national council. The national level of the council makes it possible to address cross-cutting issues from the various cantons and maintain proximity to federal policy.

Ideally, it should be clear from the outset what financial resources are available at these two levels so that any future expansion of the council system has a better chance of success.

16 Functionality

The functioning of the Council is based in particular on the following coordinated work processes:

1. Meetings between the *quorum members*. The meetings are prepared, held and followed up by the permanent secretariat (see Section 14). The meetings take place at least once a month for around three hours at a central location. Between the on-site meetings, the members can also exchange information without meeting in person (e.g. by e-mail, letter, telephone, text message or video conference).

2. Meeting between the *quorum members and the advisory members*. Depending on the task and issue, the quorum members consult the advisory members in a focused manner. Depending on requirements and the subject area, this consultation takes place in the form of joint group meetings with all members or direct contact with individual experts (without group meetings). The joint group meetings with all members take place several times a year if

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[107] Cf. the national council CCPA in France with its regional councils CCRPA.

possible (e.g. two to three times) and should enable the two groups to get to know each other, build mutual trust and work together in a goal-oriented manner. Between the on-site meetings, the two groups can also exchange information without meeting in person (e.g. by email, letter, text message, video call or telephone).

3. In addition, ***depending on the expertise required, other specialists from different areas*** are brought in: selective contact (by e-mail, telephone, invitation to a meeting, etc.) takes place with specialists from outside the Council from different areas (politics, social work, business and science).

4. Events that bring together a broad group ***of people with experience of poverty and relevant organisations***, for example in the form of one-day workshops. This type of event is organised at least once a year so that the Council can take a realistic and practical approach and receive impetus to focus its work in a goal-oriented manner (especially when choosing the main issues) and ensure a certain degree of representativeness.

In addition to this, further events with a broader audience (people with experience of poverty and supporting organisations, experts, scientists, the general public, etc.) are needed so that the Council can receive a range of input and at the same time enable awareness-raising work.

5. The ***permanent secretariat*** occupies premises that also serve as the Council's headquarters. It ensures the continuous framework conditions of the Council and liaises with all members, in particular with the contact people of the quorate members. It performs the following tasks:

- logistical, financial and administrative management (e.g. payroll and expense accounting as well as bookkeeping);
- internal communication (e.g. coordination and preparation of programmes, minutes, etc.) and support for contact people and other Council members in external communication;
- organisation, including moderation, preparation and follow-up of the council meetings (with people who have experience of poverty among themselves and with people who have experience of poverty together with experts);
- running workshops/meetings with people who have experience of poverty, including moderation as well as preparation and follow-up.
- supporting the contact people and other Council members in maintaining contact and providing information between the Council and its addressees;
- providing support (e.g. individual preparation and follow-up of council meetings with individual members) and skills development (e.g. by organising further training) for people with experience of poverty (if desired);
- supporting the networking of people with experience of poverty among themselves and with relevant organisations;
- creating and maintaining the Council's website.

Prerequisites:

In order to ensure the continued existence of the Council and its functioning, as described above and its, it is advisable to link it to an existing structure (e.g. the National Platform against Poverty) that enjoys a high level of acceptance in poverty policy as well as among relevant organisations and people with experience of poverty. At the same time, a degree of distance from an institutional rationale should be demonstrated. Particular attention should be paid to *the balance and dialogue between the administrative structures of poverty policy and the work of the Council, which is as independent as possible,* so that the concerns and opinions of people with experience of poverty are heard. On the one hand, the Council's connection to *administrative structures* enables it to gain legitimacy and visibility and to guarantee its functioning. On the other hand, the *independence* of the Council must be protected, as administrative structures can dictate the functioning, organisation and modes of working (e.g. exchange of views or content) too strongly, as shown by evaluations of existing permanent participation structures.[108]

In the multi-stage development process for this proposal, it ultimately became apparent that the National Platform against Poverty (FSIO) has enjoyed broad legitimacy in Swiss poverty policy since 2019 resp. 2014 (National Programme against Poverty) and has been able to carry out and expand participation processes with people who have experience of poverty. Another advantage of the FSIO is its very solid knowledge of how administrations function within poverty policy, which would increase the Council's power to act.

Next steps:

The existing structure to which the Council is to be affiliated must be clarified. In addition, the framework for the working methods (specifications, charter, etc.) of the two groups (a and b) and the secretariat must be defined, as well as the framework for cooperation between them.

17 Resources and financing

In order for the potential impact of participation processes to be fully utilised and to avoid tokenistic exercises or negative consequences for people and professionals with experience of poverty, securing the necessary resources is a key prerequisite. Researchers on this topic agree on this.[109] A further challenge in which resources are also crucial is ensuring the continuity of the participation structure, which should form a fixed, permanent organisation.

As described in the previous chapters, the Council must be able to rely on a permanent secretariat consisting of competent people and be affiliated to a larger entity (such as the National Platform against Poverty). If necessary, Council members must be able to acquire the competences required for their function (skills and knowledge in the area of participation, functioning of institutions, communication with the media, etc.) and their participation in the Council must be financially compensated.

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[108] Cf. e.g. Avenel, 2017; Beresford & Carr, 2012; Chiapparini, 2016; Chiapparini et al, 2020; CNLE, 2011; Ducrettet, 2016; HCTS, 2017; Bherer, 2011.

[109] Cf. on participation in general (INET, 2016; CNLE, 2011; Ministère des affaires sociales et de la santé S.D; Jaeger, 2015) and on permanent structures (Amnyos groupe, 2013a; Frazer, 2014).

The above criteria require funding that covers the following services in particular:

- compensation and expenses of the quorate members;
- remuneration of contact people and the permanent secretariat;
- operating costs of the permanent secretariat (premises, materials, etc.);
- communication costs (website, social networks, etc.);
- costs for the organisation and implementation of events (annual workshops), including expenses for people with experience of poverty;
- costs for training courses for people with experience of poverty and specialists.

State funding of permanent participation structures has proven its worth in various countries and contexts (see Chapter 12).

Prerequisites:
- The rough budget, which includes the upper items, is taken over by the federal government.
- It is necessary to ensure that compensation can be organised flexibly (e.g. by ensuring that participation in the Council and attendance fees do not have a negative impact on the individual's precarious living situation and social welfare benefits).

Next steps:
- Create a precise operating budget for the Council.
- Clarify remuneration/compensation of members so that this information can be provided during recruitment.
- Clarify the extent to which specialists require compensation and expenses.

18 Conclusion

The proposal for a "Council for Poverty Issues in Switzerland" is based on basic elements of permanent participation structures in poverty policy that have proven their worth in other countries and are documented in the specialised literature.[110] There is evidence of greater potential for impact in those poverty policies that enable people with experience of poverty to participate and whose expertise and collective opinions are taken seriously. The present proposal was developed specifically for implementation in the context of Switzerland in a multi-stage, participatory development process together with people who have experience of poverty and experts from the field of poverty policy.[111]

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[110] See Amnyos groupe, 2013; Asdo Studies, 2015; Frazer, 2014.

[111] See Part 2 of the final report.

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APPENDIX

20 Literature research

20.1 Examples of established permanent participation structures

1) **College of people experiencing poverty (called "5ème Collège" of the CNLE)** in France (pilot project from 2012 and continued from 2019)

2) **National Council for Combatting Exclusion (CNLE)** in France (created in 1993 (provided for in Law No. 88-1088 of 1 December 1998 on the minimum integration income))

3) **Le Conseil consultatif des personnes accueillies et accompagnées (CCPA), et ses déclinaisons régionales (CCRPA)** in France (founded in 2010 with regional versions (CCRPA) set up in 2011 in ten regions)

4) **Belgian Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion EU 2020** in Belgium (from 2011)

5) **National Poverty Conference (NAK)** in Germany (from 1991)

6) **Austrian Poverty Conference (incl. platform "becoming visible")** in Austria (since 1995)

7) **The European Experiencing Poverty Meetings (EAPN)** with 31 networks, e.g. in Luxembourg, Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands (since 1990 (the annual reports of the WEB of the individual countries refer to 2016))

8) **Luxembourg Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN-Lëtzebuerg)** in Luxembourg (since 1990, currently 13 associations)

9) **EAPN.DK - Danish network against exclusion** in Denmark (since 1990)

10) **EAPN Finland** in Finland (from 1994)

11) **EAPN Iceland** in Iceland (from 1994)

12) **European Anti-Poverty Network Nederland (EAPN Netherlands)** in the Netherlands

13) **Velferdsalliansen (The Welfare Alliance / EAPN Norway)** in Norway (from 1998)

14) **EAPN Sverige (EAPN Sweden) - EAPN** in Sweden (from 1998)

15) **Québec, Comité consultatif de lutte contre la pauvretré et l'exclusion sociale** in Canada (from 2005/06)

20.2 Anchor example for categorisation

Name, country, year of foundation	Participants	Functionalities / organisational matters	Expertise	Addressee	Financing	Operating resources	Strengths	Weaknesses	Evaluation
	A. Full name B. Non-mixed (Details) C. Mixed (details, list of categories, number of people by category)	A. Description B. Frequency of meetings C. Venue of the meetings			A. General B. The involvement of the people concerned	Classification according to resource types: A. Methodological and pedagogical support B. Training of the people concerned C. Logistics D. Administration E. Other	In black: What comes out of the documentation In red: What comes out of a scientific evaluation Classification by type of effect: A. Improving public policy B. Developing the skills of those affected C. Dissemination/promotion of the participatory approach D: Other	In black: What comes from the documentation In red: What comes from a scientific evaluation Classification by type of limit values: A. Too much of an institutional framework B. Barriers to participation C. Limited or negative effects D. Other	B. Clarification to assess the strength of the results
Example 1: College of people affected by poverty **(called "5ème Collège" of the CNLE)** **France** **- 2012 (Pilot project,**	A. Full name Since 2019: 32 members from 16 resource structures, selected after a call with 2 members each Before 2019: 8 members B. Non-mixed - consisting of people in poverty situations, accompanied by associations - "from a group of people who live in	A. Description - This college is a substructure of the National Council for Combatting Exclusion (CNLE) (see below) - The people concerned actively participate in the work of the Council in plenary sessions a n d	Evaluation mission: "Information on the evaluation of the national strategy to prevent and combat poverty" - Set out their views on what should be prioritised in the poverty strategy to highlight the questioning of the assessment - Support for the	Other colleges of the CNLE (see description of this structure in the table) Directorate-General for Social Cohesion (I8GCS) -Minister - Evaluation Committee of the National	B. - Participation of the data subjects on a voluntary and unpaid basis - Reimbursement by sponsoring organisations (transport, accommodation, meals, etc.)	A. Methodological and pedagogical support 1) National level : by members of the public administration (National Agencies for Active Solidarity, ANSA) to prepare and draft the opinion for the evaluation committee - Participation of the	A. Improving public policy - Ensuring complementarity of views on poverty policy evaluation (in addition to the evaluation committee and a citizens' panel) so that appropriate recommendations are made. - Enabling the development of public policy	A. Too much of an institutional framework - The college had to adapt to the CNLE more than the CNLE had to adapt to the college - Despite the establishment of the College of Concerned Persons, the CNLE has changed little in its practice. B. Barriers to participation	A. Date: In 2013, after an 18-month pilot project when this body consisted of only 8 members B. Clarification: Evaluation by an external and very thorough service provider

2019 continued)	poverty and are involved in a civic participation process through a local collective, e.g. a spokesperson group" - privileged criterion: being able to testify to an experience of civic participation (but not mandatory)	e in the working groups. B. Frequency: Regular meetings (no details) C. Location Paris	Evaluation Committee in understanding the sometimes very specific challenges involved in implementing poverty reduction measures. - Establish common positions responsible for representing the diversity of poverty situations and contribute to the deliberations of the CNLE. -Upstream results on all issues of general application related to the fight against poverty and social exclusion	Poverty Reduction Policy (the work of the College feeds into the evaluation work, completing the view of the Evaluation Committee)		Members of this college met for "2 days to prepare their written contribution to the first work of the evaluation committee". 2) Local level from the resource organisations (information on the tasks of the CNLE and their working methods, on the missions in the creation of the CNLE) College, on the obligations expected of members and the conditions for exercising the mandate; on the rights of members to their rights; appointment of a "resource person" ensuring logistical and methodological support; coordination with the national service provider; organisation of support group meetings on a regular basis and before each plenary session of the CNLE in the most important countries. Issues discussed at the meeting	(especially in the process of developing recommendations) by comparing the points of view of the people concerned - Better knowledge of the phenomena of poverty and social exclusion by involving the people concerned - Proven effects of enriching the debates held at the CNLE B. Development of the skills of the people concerned - Development of the skills, valorisation and assertiveness of the people concerned during the preparation and support of the people concerned - Individual positive effects on those affected confirmed (many contributions on a personal level: self-confidence, (re)enhancement of self-image, personal dynamism combined with the feeling of being useful, new knowledge and skills, Structure of a	- Working arrangements not always favourable to participation because: too limited exchange of views and working frameworks; space for debate in plenary is too limited (agenda too dense); working materials too difficult to grasp; access to resources remains unbalanced, which is unfavourable to the members of the College and limits their ability to contribute fully in certain configurations (in particular call for contributions, contribution to the drafting of opinions, etc.). C. Limited or negative effects - for partner organisations (positive impact difficult to measure) - Individual situations that remain difficult, even worrying (uncertainty) (in particular no

| | | | | | | | to be placed on the agenda

B. Training
- Training related to methods for evaluating public policies and their problems (by whom not clear)
- Detailed presentation of poverty reduction measures and evaluation tools (by scientists)

C. Logistics
- By the associations: provision of resources for members (mobile phones, computer equipment, printers and paper, Internet access, office equipment)

D. Administrative
- by the General Secretariat of the CNLE | Network, better understanding of the institutional and legislative environment, feeling like a full citizen...
- Positive development of certain personal and/or professional careers without, however, establishing a direct link with the dynamics of participation

C. Distribution/sales promotion
- A spin-off of the participation practices of users of public , especially people in situations of poverty or precarity, seems to be on the right track to be achieved.
- "Increasing requests from members of the college by actors outside the experiment indicate a capillary spread of the missions and levers of participation." | way out of precarity)
- Stagnation or deterioration of certain individual situations (suffering)
- Destabilising effects on some people (resignation at the beginning of the mandate)
- Risk of over-mobilisation of those affected by the support associations (mortgaging their chances of escaping precariousness) | |

21 Definition of poverty

In everyday life, the *understanding of poverty* is often limited to a financial dimension. The Swiss Conference for Social Assistance (SKOS) proposes the following guidelines, which most cantons follow: The SKOS guidelines assume a "social subsistence minimum". This means that the person's income is so low that they are unable to purchase all the goods and services necessary for a socially (and therefore also socially and culturally) integrated life. The Federal Statistical Office (FSO) calculates the official poverty rates. According to this, 745,000 people were affected by income poverty in 2021. If the other dimensions (such as health impairment, lack of or insufficient education or lack of social contacts) are also taken into account, the complexity of measuring, numbering, identifying and reaching people experiencing and at risk of poverty increases. At the same time, these people often experience social exclusion, a reduction in self-efficacy or a heightened sense of shame.

This is described in specialist discourse as a lack of opportunities for realisation (see Amartya Sen's capability approach). Based on human rights and civil liberties, the focus is on the view that people should be given the opportunity to decide freely and with good reason in favour of a lifestyle and that their self-respect is not called into question.

This position is being strengthened in the current specialist discourse with similar approaches and, for some years now in Switzerland too, has opened up a new direction in preventing and combatting poverty by structurally promoting the participation of people experiencing poverty to a greater extent. In this context, the role of organisations of those affected plays a central role, as they can continuously and collectively address the concerns of people at risk of and affected by poverty and work with them to achieve this.

22 Project schedule and milestones

Wo befinden wir uns im Gesamtprojekt?

September 2022 → Dezember 2023

1. Schritt
13.9.2022
KICK-OFF

Feedback-runde
19.1.2023

2. Schritt
23.2.2023
1.3.2023

1. WORKSHOP nur mit armutserfahrenen Menschen

14.3.2023
Informations-sitzung Fachpersonen

Feedback-runde
3.4.2023

3. Schritt
11.5.2023

2. WORKSHOP: armutserfahrene Menschen und Fachpersonen

4. Schritt
Juni–November

Erarbeitung des BERICHTS

Feedback-runde
28.8.2023

Feedback-runde
23.10.2023

ABSCHLUSS

Bericht an den Bundesrat

(Anfang 2024)

23 Workshop programme and methods of concept development

23.1 Invitation and programme kick-off event

> **How should people with experience of poverty be able to play a part in preventing and combatting poverty in the future?**
> **13 September 2022, 13:45 - 16:45**
> **Federal Social Insurance Office FSIO, Effingerstrasse 20, Berne**

The National Platform against Poverty invites organisations and people experiencing poverty to work with experts to develop **a proposal for a permanent participation structure at national level**.

This project was initiated by the desire for more sustained participation on the part of organisations and people experiencing poverty who have been involved in the work of the National Platform against Poverty to date. Based on the work until now, we share the conviction that the ongoing involvement of people experiencing poverty and their organisations in preventing and combatting poverty is important.

Such a structure can only be developed jointly. The National Platform against Poverty has therefore commissioned a research team from the Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH) and the HES-SO School of Social Work Fribourg to carry out a participatory process, to which we would like to invite you.

Who?
All relevant organisations and people with experience of poverty who are interested in finding out more or participating in the development of this proposal are invited to the kick-off event.

Programme

13.45 *Start*	
	- **Greetings**
	- **Procedure and aim of the kick-off event**
	- **Round of introductions**
	- **Key points of the project, project status and queries**
Break	
	- **Brief presentation of examples of permanent participation structures abroad**
	- **Discussion and considerations on the implementation of such structures (Questions,**
	important information, challenges, wishes, concerns, etc.), in groups
Short break	
	- **Presenting the opportunities for participation in the development of the proposal (planned workshops) and further course of action**
	- **Discussion of the opportunities for participation (concerns and expectations),** in groups
	- **Conclusion**
16.45 Conclusion and farewell	

23.2 Programme Workshop 1

GENERAL PROGRAMME

8.30-9.00 a.m.	**Welcome:** (coffee/tea, croissants)
9.00-9.30 a.m.	Introduction: Reminder of the project, objectives of the day and programme.
9.30-10.00 a.m.	Mutual introductions (with photolanguage)
10.00-11.00 a.m.	1st working phase: Question 1 (objectives of the organisation).
11.00-11.25 a.m.	Break: coffee/tea, biscuits/fruit
11:25-12:30	2nd working phase: Question 2 (composition of the structure).
12.30-13.45	**Break**: Lunch
13:45-14:45	3rd working phase: Question 3 (form of the structure)
14.45-15.05	**Break**: coffee/tea, biscuits/fruit
15.05-16.15	4th working phase: Question 4 (promoting the participation of those affected).
16:15-16:45	**Feedback and conclusion** (information on the next steps)

23.3 Programme Workshop 2

GENERAL PROGRAMME

8.30-9.00 a.m.	**Welcome:** (coffee/tea, croissants)
9.00-9.30 a.m.	**Introduction**: **Aims of the day and programme**
9.30-10.00 a.m.	**General introduction of the participants and confirmation of the principles of cooperation**
10.00-11.00 a.m.	Block I: **Question 1** Mixed conferring or mixed decision-making?
11.00-11.25 a.m.	**Break**: coffee/tea, biscuits/fruit
11:25-12:30	Block 2: **Question 2** What conditions should be met in order to be heard by decision-makers?
12.30-13.45	**Break**: Lunch
13:45-14:55	Block 3: **Validation/prioritisation:** **1. Goals** **2. Mixed group: mixed conferring or mixed decision-making**
14.55-15.15	**Break**: coffee/tea, biscuits/fruit
15.15-16.10	Block 4: **Question 3** What would the structure need to function permanently?
16:10-16:45	**Feedback and conclusion** (information on the next steps)

23.4 Programme meeting of experts

Agenda

1   Welcome and introduction

2.   Presentation of the project and the work to date
   - Procedure
   - Results to date
   - Enquiries

3.   Discussion
   - Objectives, mode of operation, contributors

4   Conclusion and outlook

   - Next date: joint workshop with people experiencing poverty and
   experts
   11.5.23 in Biel/Bienne

24 Detailed findings

24.1 Findings from the kick-off event

Key results
Based on the documentation "Kick-off.saisie.Group3" and "Kick-off_Results_Group1and2" (Emanuela, Matthias, Kevin) 26.10.2022

What is important for permanent participation structures?

A clear definition of tasks (avoid tokenistic exercises): enable genuine participation, raising public awareness

Proactively addressing poverty issues: (not only responding to requests, working less on individual challenges and more on structural issues)

The BSV must stand behind the structure in order to ensure **legitimisation** and political and social recognition.

Access must be ensured **for all** people experiencing poverty (including those who are poorly connected and difficult to reach).

Integration of the structure into the political decision-making process and defining a clear division of responsibilities

Integration of existing participation structures
(client conference in Basel, poverty conferences, etc.)

People with experience of poverty (with different experiences of participation) should **have a direct say** and be involved.

Where do you see challenges?

Lack of prioritisation of the issue of poverty in **society and politics**

Lack of legitimisation of the opinions and views of people experiencing poverty in society and politics

Poverty is perceived and addressed as an individual problem and not as a structural problem.

Results/products from the participation structure are not perceived or recognised in politics and society (tokenistic participation); tension between useful products (developed from the participation structure) and political concerns/priorities and institutional framework conditions.

Insufficient human and financial resources for setting up and operating the investment structure

Contributions and decision-making power primarily with the **institutions** and not with the people experiencing poverty. Which people experiencing poverty are represented by the participation structure?

Lack of communication between the levels (cantons, national) makes it difficult to support the participation structure.

Tension between everyday problems at local and regional level and the national participation structure; tension between urgent practical and personal issues
challenges and the handling of rather abstract, overall social issues in the
participation structure

Access and working methods as barriers to collaboration (digital gap, literacy, language, mobility, childcare, travelling, time, location, etc.)

Danger that the topic will only be addressed in the social sphere. On the other hand, it is urgently necessary to address this in the business sector (also important for representation in the participation structure, e.g. trade unions and companies).

Risk that people experiencing poverty do not dare/do not have the courage to get involved (shame and lack of confidence in their own self-efficacy).

Danger that poverty is reduced to personal, individual experiences. Lack of knowledge about what it means to live in poverty. -> Reduce **prejudices** not only through reports of experiences, but also through historical, political, social ... localisation.

Risk that poverty will be partially addressed (individual experience of poverty); how can individual experiences of poverty be generalised?

Lack of prioritisation and unclear division of labour in the participation structure (enable efficient and effective participation structure - how and doing what).

Which dimensions are important for them and their organisation and should be discussed in the workshop?

All dimensions relevant (DE) ; Dimension A-D relevant (FR)

Dimension A: who is involved?
- In the first stage, only people with experience of poverty and in the second stage, a mixture (people with experience of poverty - experts from politics, social services and business)
- Clarification of the representativeness of the participants (people with experience of poverty - experts from politics, social services and business)
- Accessibility (see question 2)

Dimension B: How does it work?
- Clarification of the size and mode of operation of the participation structure (e.g. honeycomb)
- Clarification of cooperation at national and regional level (different needs and framework conditions)

Dimension C: What is the goal?
- To identify what motivates participation and support for all participants (people experiencing poverty, NGOs, business, politics, etc.)?
- Clearly communicated objectives and working methods
- Providing your own impetus/ setting the agenda and not just reacting to requests
- Developing effective products that are implemented

Dimension D: Who does the work address?
- Authorities, administrations and social institutions/NGOs, business, but above all politics and the public
- Clear communication of the addressees to whom the developed products and results of the participation structure are directed
- Coordinating the objectives with the target group

Dimension E: Who provides financing? Independent financing vs. secured financing (federal, cantonal, municipal); due to bad experiences with state service providers
- Whoever provides financing influences credibility and legitimacy.
- Financing method influences the significance of the investment structure.
- Compensation for participation; voluntary vs. paid work

Dimension F: What resources are needed?
- Recognised as important without specification of content (to be developed further)

24.2 Findings from Workshop 1

WORK ON QUESTION 1: THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STRUCTURE

The following table lists the identified objectives in order of priority, with the following information provided for each objective: clarification provided by the participants, arguments for voting in favour or against and the number of votes (in favour and against).

Goals	Clarifications	Arguments	Number of votes
1. Making proposals to improve the policy of preventing and combatting poverty to the decision-making authorities. *Suggestion from the kick-off event*	Important to extend to other areas of public policy (e.g. asylum policy) Important to promote access to services Importance of prevention (1x in the French-language workshop and 1x in the German- language workshop) Important to make suggestions to support the path out of poverty (1x in the French-language workshop and 1x in the German-language workshop) Important to concretise participation at a political level Important to follow up on the suggestions made and to provide feedback to those affected Importance of evaluating policy and performance	**For:** - Promoting access to justice and benefits, low thresholds and fairness - because there are real gaps and a real need - because it is the best way to improve conditions across the board - so that society can get out of poverty as quickly as possible - to listen better to the various stakeholders, including participation in decision-making - to promote gradual improvement in the face of change (e.g. digitalisation) - important to be able to participate in the search for solutions (laws) - because those affected are directly confronted with the difficulties of the system - because the work done must be audible to parliamentarians - Evaluation of the status of the proposals **Against**: - The consultation (Objective 1) automatically enables suggestions and suggestions for improvement.	**TOTAL:** - **18 FOR** - **3 AGAINST**[1] Workshop EN: - 15 for - 0 against Workshop DE: - 3 for - 3 against
2. Raising public awareness of the issue of poverty with the aim of changing attitudes and prejudice *Suggestion from the kick-off event*	Particularly important to explain the mechanisms that cause poverty (especially the importance of structural factors). Important that the structure can be a point of contact for the media	**For:** - Because when we join forces, we are more likely to be heard - Because it is the only way to change the policy A weed (poverty) is best eradicated by uprooting.	**TOTAL:** - **17 FOR** - **0 AGAINST?** Workshop DE: - 8 for - 0 against Workshop DE: - 9 for

	The importance of awareness raising as a basis for participation Important to take the path of further training for society and institutions Important to raise awareness among professionals through further training	- To change the image of poverty and the poor - To emphasise the difficulties (life situation) of those affected - To raise awareness among young people in particular, because older people are sometimes already too convinced and comfortable in their ideas - To inform society about existing poverty - because there is a complete lack of respect and goodwill in the view and judgement of others - because the information must also be channelled through the media (TV, newspapers, online) - The media should not always rely on negative news - because hostilities must stop in order to stop loneliness - because someone who doesn't know about poverty can't understand it - because specialists (doctors, universities, social work) must be informed	- 0 against
3. Promoting dialogue between those affected and other stakeholders (politicians, administration, institution managers, experts, specialists, etc.) *Suggestion from the kick-off event*	Important to integrate business representatives into the structure Important that the exchange of views takes place among equals with the aim of dialogue and mutual understanding Cooperation must be binding Important to bridge the gap between politics and social work The structure must be able to be consulted, but also to be proactive The exchange of information must be transparent	**For:** - People affected by poverty need to be supported by the economy, as the economy also demands a lot from them. For example, they need computers, etc. in order to participate, use services, etc. - Reduce ignorance in order to impart knowledge to as many people as possible - Make suggestions, developing together - Promote exchange of views between social classes without exception - Promote poverty prevention by providing more tools and guidance - The exchange of experience and expertise promotes mutual understanding **Against:** - No involvement of the economy	**TOTAL:** - **14 FOR** - **1 CONTRACT** Workshop DE: - 4 for - 0 against Workshop DE: - 10 for - 1 against

4. Making political decisions, have real weight *Proposal of the French-language workshop*	-	**For**: - Deciding our future without poverty with politicians - We can really take action - have a real impact, make a difference - because politicians have different or even conflicting interests than poor people - because it is necessary that my voice counts and contributes to change - Being together with decision makers - fFrom being a "sheep" to becoming an actor in our lives - e.g. at the level of tax revision or the subsistence minimum	**TOTAL** - **11 FOR** - **0 AGAINST** Workshop EN: - 11 for - 0 against
5. Being consulted on preventing and combatting poverty (requests from the authorities who make decisions) *Suggestion from the kick-off event*	More effective prevention /countermeasures must be developed Participation is only possible if an exchange of views takes place among equals The aim is not just to answer questions, but to be able to work together	**For:** - Because we are a source of knowledge about the problem of poverty and to inform policy. influence - Politicians must listen to us - Poverty can be avoided through prevention, which is why participation is so important. - The parties concerned and the authorities should decide together	**TOTAL** - **8 FOR** - **0 AGAINST** Workshop FR: - 2 for - 0 against Workshop EN - 6 for - 0 against
6. Achieving material improvement of the situation of those affected *Proposal for the German-language workshop*	Poverty in general must be be eliminated	**For:** - Material security enables participation and is a prerequisite for participation in democratic processes. - The consequences of poverty must be combatted (existential fear, psychological consequences, etc.). **Against** - Material improvement is a hoped-for effect of the structure, but it cannot be a direct task	**TOTAL** - **6 FOR** - **1 AGAINST** Workshop EN - 6 for - 1 against

7. Sounding out / a place where the ideas of other stakeholders are collected *Proposal of the French-language workshop*		**For:** - Because those affected do not know where to go - because you have to rely on a broad view of the realities in order to adequately analyse the policy. influence - because it's necessary to help the people you represent, to be close to them, their opinions	**TOTAL:** **- 4 FOR** **- 0 CONTRACT** Workshop FR: - 4 for - 0 against
		and find out needs in the course of time - Surveys and debates are important	
8.Facilitating encounters and support among those affected (exchange of advice, information, services, etc.) *Suggestion from the kick-off event*	Be transparent, Share information, make resources accessible		**TOTAL:** **- 2 FOR** **- 0 AGAINST** Workshop FR: - 0 for - 0 against Workshop DE: - 2 for - 0 against
9. Making contact with similar organisations abroad *Proposal of the French-language workshop*		**For**: - To promote exchange of views and enrichment	**TOTAL** **- 1 FOR** **- 0 CONTRACT** Workshop EN: - 1 for - 0 against
10. Aligning services, implementing the system *Proposal of the French-language workshop*		**For**: - To have control over the implementation and staging of strategies, actions, etc. **Against:** - Monitor and evaluate, but not execute - Implementation must not be one of our goals	**TOTAL** **- 1 FOR** **- 3 AGAINST** Workshop EN: - 1 for - 3 against
11. Receiving information about resources that can be used by those affected. *Proposal from the German language-workshop*			**TOTAL** **- 0 VOTES** **- 0 AGAINST** Workshop DE: - 0 for - 0 against

WORK ON QUESTION 2: COMPOSITION OF THE STRUCTURE (WHO SHOULD BELONG TO IT?)

Advantages of it being composed of "only those affected"

- More protection for those affected ("being among themselves", "feeling more

comfortable"); being able to speak out more easily (very important); creating a "safe space" for people experiencing poverty

- Speaking more freely and easily, therefore more richness in the exchange of views. This exchange of views is facilitated because it can be assumed that the rhetorical skills are "identical".
- No need to share power ("We decide alone")
- Opportunity to make greater use of the skills of those affected in order to enhance their value; those affected know what they are talking about and are the best experts; the experience of peers can be utilised.
- More flexible, easier to change direction
- Enables the development of a common position between stakeholders before they meet with other actors; creation of a common "non

civic" culture (importance of a culture of respect); creation of a separate culture of exchange of views.

- Promotes awareness among those affected that they are not alone in the situation, importance of solidarity, promotion of integration of all groups of people affected.
- Enables a larger and more diverse group of people affected (as there are fewer restrictions than with mixed groups).
- Enables all types of people affected by poverty to speak with one voice.
- Enables those affected to change their view of themselves in order to better counteract possible stigmatisation by other actors.
- No influence of experts on the arguments of people experiencing poverty; independence from the influence of people without experience of poverty; discussion of issues exclusively from the perspective of people experiencing poverty; the perspective of people experiencing poverty is 100% present.
- Taking poverty seriously as a relevant issue without having to legitimise it
- Definition of poverty from a personal perspective and experience.

Disadvantages of it being composed of "only those affected"
- Lack of contradictions (different perspectives), which could entail several risks: heading towards something unrealisable or unrealistic, lack of overall vision, lack of distance, shallower, more one-sided, less rich proposals
- Risk of stagnating, not developing further, functioning in isolation, losing orientation (you can't preach democracy if you remain among those affected, that contradicts democratic principles).
- You isolate yourself, marginalise yourself by keeping to yourself / no connection to outside opinions.
- Risk of having no effect and that the others won't hear us
- Lack of credibility and weight; suggestions or opinions are taken less seriously.
- Lack of connections and networks
- Risk of continuing to fear others, not developing and overcoming this fear
- Risk of becoming too militant and resentful (a kind of trade union)
- Risk of remaining frustrated
- Risk that it will not be possible to reconcile the different demands/needs of people affected by poverty (these differences between those affected would be less significant in a mixed structure).
- Risk of being afraid of speaking out (to the public)
- Little awareness raising by the other actors
- Risk of being perceived "only" as a self-help group.

Advantages of a "mixed" composition
- Interest in the contribution of other actors who can say things from their perspective (interest in looking at a reality from different angles); interest in synergies between the different actors (everyone contributes their knowledge, e.g. importance of the knowledge of lawyers).
- Having contradictory opinions and being able to co-construct based on them; interest in direct dialogue (face-to-face); the opinions of professionals must also be heard by the people affected by poverty (mutual equality).
- Improving the proposals of the structure, which would have more impact and relevance
- Changing the view of the other actors and getting the other actors to change their view of those affected; enables education through confrontation.

- Enables other actors to gain access to the views of those affected / awareness- raising work can already be carried out as part of the cooperation with these other actors.
- Possibility to convince these other actors to change their views, their opinion; enables lobbying.
- Need for other actors to adapt (e.g. in terms of language used or possible solutions); no choice but to cooperate
- Lends credibility and greater legitimacy to experiential knowledge; the arguments of those affected are strengthened because they are supported by other actors.
- Enables the combination of knowledge.
- Enlarging the network of each individual promotes an extended network; interest in access to other institutional circles for those concerned (law, universities, etc.).
- Provides access to tips or codes on how to spread ideas, access to resources for "quick help".
- Interest in cooperation with the following stakeholders who should be integrated: SKOS, IV, health directorate, universities, administration, politics, economy
- Increasing the self-confidence of those affected
- Not only discussing problems, but also becoming concrete (e.g. working to raise public awareness)
- Promotes access to resources such as premises etc.
- Important (!): Those affected must have the opportunity to meet each other ("peer to peer"), even in a mixed setting.

Disadvantages of a "mixed" composition
- Risk that those affected will be in the minority if no quotas are introduced, risk that those affected will have no place or will not really have their say.
- Risk of takeover of power by other actors, asymmetry (it is therefore important to ensure moderation that prevents such a takeover)
- Risk of self-censorship by those affected; risk that they have inhibitions because they feel overwhelmed/overwhelmed.
- Risk that it will take longer or too long.
- Risk that nothing concrete will be realised.
- Relatively quickly restricted or blocked by barriers that cannot be overcome (restrictions imposed by other actors)
- Risk of stigmatisation of those affected by other actors (devaluation)
- Risk of conflicts among the stakeholders: lack of understanding, mutual intolerance, lack of cohesion, separation instead of cooperation (openness, transparency and respect on all sides are prerequisites for successful cooperation)
- Risk that the other actors use "technical jargon" or even manipulation.
- Risk that people with experience in coping with poverty are used for "marketing purposes". (poverty star).
- Risk of labelling these other actors as responsible for the situation of those affected
- Danger that it works on the basis of people influencing others (assuming too much power).
- Risk that only actors who have already been made aware of poverty will participate.
- No possibility to earn money during involvement, as it is not possible to work (paid activity) during this time (in connection with the intensity of the engagement).

WORK ON QUESTION 3: FORM OF THE STRUCTURE
Advantages of the "advisory commission"

- Greater impact through greater proximity to political actors
- Major impact if it becomes mandatory in the sense that politicians must consult this commission before or when making decisions (mandate) (obligation to listen to the arguments of those affected); opportunity to provide detailed comments manner and in real time.
- Strong recognition of the voice of those affected (especially when decisions have to go through this commission); opportunity to be truly heard, to have weight, to have power; legitimacy and openness on the part of the government; while maintaining the status of an "expert commission"
- Not limited to conferring, but could go as far as a decision.
- More regular and frequent meetings would be good (more effective that "you stay involved", better knowledge of decision-makers and more opportunities to exert influence, easier adaptation to current events and changes, more observation of the reality on the ground, more responsiveness, possibility to process the case files well, information provided would be more up-to-date).
- Decision-makers' interest in direct access to those affected and their experiences
- Interesting and stimulating for those involved to participate when things are going well (even if the workload is heavy)
- Interest of those concerned in further training, learning, being enriched, having more tools and thus becoming experts or experienced people; possibility of inviting specialists/establishing links between knowledge
- Presence of relevant actors on a specific topic
- Possible linking of the national and cantonal levels: by delegating people from each canton (election of one person from each canton); by creating cantonal commissions that are consulted for the federal level (basis, federal standard), then possible adjustments in relation to cantonal and regional specificities
- Possibility to work on long-term projects/issues
- Utilisation of existing resources (e.g. authorities etc.)
- Possibility to define your own content/issues
- Participation in an advisory commission would be linked to prior knowledge, which would promote efficient and rapid work.
- Problems can be addressed and solved (in contrast to a conference, where they are "only" discussed).
- The Commission could decide to also organise a conference (2 in 1 would be an interesting option); the aim of raising awareness is also possible.

Disadvantages of the "advisory commission"
- The name limits it to a consultation, although there is a desire to participate in decisions, an alternative name suggested: decision-making council/commission?
- Seems too rigid, not the right rationale to really make a difference (not intense enough).
- Risk of being limited to a tokenistic commission (no real impact, especially in the context of the fact that it would be a consultation); what power would it really have?
- Risks of too much regularity and frequency of meetings: takes up time and can increase barriers to participation (aimed only at people who have time, who are not working).entering into a form of banalisation, of routine, which can lead to fatigue.
- Difficulties in connection with the issue of representativeness (in particular urban versus rural, French-speaking Switzerland versus other regions): high risk of unequal representation; challenge in the selection of representatives on the commission (limitation of term of office); risk that a single commission cannot represent all those affected; risk of exclusion of certain groups of people.

- Risk that some members of the commission have too much influence.
- Too much heterogeneity in terms of experience and power
- Risk that the goal of awareness raising in society is not fully fulfilled, that it is kept away from the general public.
- Complexity due to the fact that the national and cantonal levels must be linked.
- More difficult not to be consensus-orientated and bang your fist on the table
- With regard to the progress of the case files: who would be responsible for this, should a working group or working groups be formed?
- Intense workload, which can be difficult for those affected, especially if things are not going well (e.g. in terms of group dynamics, etc.).
- Higher costs
- Risk that the commission will not deliver relevant results due to lack of prior knowledge of teamwork, lack of communication skills
- If the commission is in parallel with a conference: risk that the link between the two does not work well (especially in terms of communicating the content of the work).

Advantages of the "conference"
- Reaches a large number of people, many and different actors (e.g. advertising in the media); can promote discussion with different actors / show different points of view.
- Can fulfil the goal of awareness raising in society, change mentalities; possibility of public relations/informing the public.
- Allows more freedom and room for manoeuvre in the selection of invited or participating actors, the issues and subject areas covered.
- Allows deviation from the existing classical conferences on poverty, where the power relations are already fixed (first experts on poverty and possibly a testimony).
- Enables the promotion of different points of view.
- Ability to address and elaborate on a specific important topic or theme; can be used to find topics for the commission.
- Lower financial costs
- Less time-consuming for those affected, less energy required (simpler)
- Format for the general public
- The topic can also have "only" a marginal reference to poverty.

Disadvantages of the "conference"
- Being limited to expressing views but not being able to participate in decisions (limited to that of raising awareness in society)
- Rhythm (frequency of meetings) not sustainable enough to really be able to act and achieve something: Danger of taking stock rather than making decisions, not being able to go into more depth, danger of only remaining vague in the exchange of views; it takes time and a certain duration to be able to go into more depth and make progress
- Staying at the national level and only addressing Swiss topics (which could be complicated)
- Less concrete impact; risk that the main task of fighting poverty is forgotten; "eventisation" and spending a lot of energy on organising the event instead of working for the rights of people affected by poverty.
- No timely response to current issues
- Risk that this form promotes a token structure with little actual impact on the lives of those affected (as it is too far removed from the decision-makers); risk of being forgotten due to low level of implementation.
- Less control over the potential impact of the exchange of views during the conference

- Risk of losing time; not producing anything, getting bogged down; wasting a lot of resources without results
- Risk of getting lost in the issues to be addressed (because there are so many)
- Risk that the topic may not reach everyone, depending on the topic
- Not enough continuity, especially if the conference participants are not always the same
- The topic can also only have a "marginal" connection to poverty.

Other suggestions regarding the form
- A *task force* that is not selective (e.g. Covid) but long-term and perhaps provides more resources and power
- Founding an association (recognised by the state)
- Founding a political party
- Setting up an office/department
- A delegation
- A pool of experts
- Various project groups.

WORKING ON QUESTION 4: PROMOTING THE PARTICIPATION OF THOSE AFFECTED
List of identified obstacles kick-off event and Workshop 1
- Time and location
- Getting around, transport (lack of funds for transport, important that this is reimbursed in advance; choice of location with car parks or travelling by train)
- Small children (lack of childcare, which needs to be financed), or also with regard to the care of close relatives or pets
- Physical/mental health problems
- Lack of confidence in your own abilities; fear of not being taken seriously
- Feelings of shame about your own situation, not wanting to expose yourself; shame about introducing yourself in a group (clothing, hairstyle, etc.)
- Difficulties with writing and/or digital media
- Insufficient level of German or French language skills
- Not used to participating, expressing your opinion in a group
- Power relations between the participants (especially if other actors are present)
- Personal problems that leave no time and energy for participation (lack of energy after work, e.g. for the working poor)
- Unstable life situation that prevents long-term participation
- Lack of information about the existence of the structure and the opportunity to participate
- Doubts about the benefits of the structure for those affected; the system is rigid and those affected believe that they have no weight against a system that marginalises people and creates precarious conditions
- Isolation and non-receipt of information (no letterboxes, computers, social networks)
- Being prevented from participating in connection with institutional care (institutional coercion)
- Working and not being able to take time off (no permission from the employer; you cannot take time off in the second labour market)
- Lack of awareness of the strength of the group: those affected do not tell themselves enough that the group has more strength when they come
- The paradox is that compensation is deducted from social assistance (if the person receives CHF 200, their material assistance is reduced so that they do not have more at the end of the month).

- Access difficulties in connection with a physical, visual, auditory or other impairment
- More or less good communication with the professionals who accompany you and let you go (or not)
- Lack of awareness of the right to participate (even if someone receives social assistance)
- Inaccessible, overly technical, scientific or legal language
- Lack of recognition of qualifications (be careful not to require qualifications for participation, whether professional or language level); lack of training in general.
- Cantonal differences that may mean that participation does not make sense
- Lack of balance in the group composition (gender, age, life situations, etc.).
- Group dynamic problems (assumption of power, conflicts, etc.)
- Lack of financial support to attend meetings, no money for transport and food
- No understanding on the part of professionals as to why they should work with people experiencing poverty
- Natural events (thunderstorms etc.).

Ways to reduce the obstacles
- Unconditionally recognise people affected by poverty as experts on the subject of poverty.
- Emphasise everyone's right to participate and encourage those affected to get involved.
- Make those affected and other stakeholders aware that everyone is equal and that working in partnership is necessary; that everyone recognises that we are working together towards the same goal, according to our abilities.
- Build confidence through preparatory work; set up preparation groups to strengthen the skills of those affected and make them feel comfortable.
- Importance of compensation[3] of the people concerned to remunerate them according to their performance (their skills) and the work performed.
- Ensure free travel and possible assistance (organisation of private transport if required for certain people, e.g. wheelchair users or people who live outside the public transport network).
- Reimburse costs in advance (for journeys, babysitting, etc.).
- Pay attendance fees quickly and in consultation with the social welfare offices without reducing the social welfare budget.
- Decentralise the structure (different implementation locations), therefore lower costs and less time required for the participants.
- Shorten the duration of meetings to a maximum of two hours.
- Pay attention to the way you speak (language) in order to remain accessible to everyone.
- Enable access for all (right to equality): Think in particular about accessibility for people with reduced mobility or other types of disabilities (especially written aids, podcasts, adapted spaces); Make sure that the premises are attractive and easily accessible.
- Provide interpreters (on site) according to the languages required in order to give all, including those with a migration background, the opportunity to participate directly, without shyness or prejudice.
- Provide logistical support (free services: childcare, educators who are also competent in caring for children with disabilities, regular breaks where parents and children can see each other, etc.).
- Create certificates of attendance to recognise the work done by those concerned; these certificates must be recognised by all.

- Multiply the channels through which the existence of the platform is communicated and publicised (social networks, online platforms, newsletters, by social workers in the social services, by disability insurance specialists, etc.). Communicate the structure's mission, objectives, etc. in a transparent and understandable way.
- Inform all offices comprehensively in order to legitimise participation.
- Offer interested people further training to make it easier for them to access the structure. (Empowerment or mediation training, interacting with politicians, media, etc.).
- Provide precise information before the meeting about who will be present, etc.; provide information for preparation and follow-up so that people can refer to it even if they do not attend the meeting.
- Strengthen and utilise the resources that exist among people affected by poverty. There can be peer support to minimise barriers (e.g. language, travel, etc.).
- Offer the option of anonymous participation.

WORKING ON THE QUESTION: TO WHOM SHOULD THE WORK BE ADDRESSED?
- This question is strongly linked to the objectives (who to address depends on the objectives pursued). If you are aiming for objective 2 (making proposals to the relevant authorities to improve policies to prevent and combat poverty), then you need to **address those in power**:
  - politicians and institutions (decision-makers and experts);
  - young people (via compulsory schooling and universities and universities of applied sciences), as they are the future decision-makers and specialists;
  - the world of finance and the economy.

You have to **address the entire population, all age groups, all social classes,** because:
  - this enables prevention (anyone can be affected by poverty, so everyone must be approached).
  - this breaks the stereotypes about poverty that circulates throughout the population.
  - it is the population that votes on laws that affect poverty.
- The politicians are aware of the problem (one participant says so, the others disagree), but do not want/are unable to change the system => important to address **young people** (15-25 years), as they are not yet set in their ways.
- Address people **affected by poverty** => relief, support, creation of a collective.
- Address the media.
- This depends on how the structure is linked between the cantonal and federal levels:
  - If on the federal level, address the Swiss government.
  - If on the cantonal level, address the cantonal governments.

24.2 Findings from Workshop 2

RESULTS FROM WORKSHOP 2 (in French and German)

WORK ON QUESTION 1: STRUCTURE OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING POVERTY OR MIXED STRUCTURE.
The following tables list the identified advantages and disadvantages of the two options.

Advantages of a structure made up exclusively of people with experience of poverty

- More focused statements/proposals (as there is greater freedom of speech) that are more likely to represent the interests (better representation) of those affected (less risk of falling into tokenistic participation)
- Opinions/proposals are less diluted/swamped by the positions of other stakeholders, even if consultation or the contribution of their knowledge is possible.
- Can be recognised as a lobby by and/or for those affected.
- Validates the skills of those affected (and make it visible that they have skills).
- Can really be regarded as equal to the experts.
- Greater recognition by the general public and the media (who are very interested in the experiences)
- It is easier for professionals to enter into a partnership as it is less binding on them (if they are not involved in the final decision); more room for manoeuvre for professionals in the opinions they bring to the discussion (less risk of being 'constrained' by their role if the final decision is not their own).
- Independence - a direct voice for those affected
- Possibility to contact organisations specifically to obtain expertise
- Protected framework for cooperation
- Utilising empirical knowledge - knowing what is "actually needed in life"
- High level of identification of those involved with the topic and the permanent structure
- Opportunity to practise self-efficacy and empowerment
- Possibility to represent radical positions - clear, strong front by means of permanent structure
- Initiation and work on chosen and necessary projects.
- Discussions can be conducted "freely" without influence.
- No role conflicts in the discussions
- Decision-making by consensus is made possible.
- Protection against instrumentalisation (of parties) as the structure itself determines when and where it gets involved
- High credibility (through involvement)

Disadvantages of a structure in which only people with experience of poverty are represented

- Going round in circles, staying angry, having no distance, keeping blinkers on.
- Not having as many resources to keep the structure going where resources are crucial
- Not having the right timing (knowing the right moments to intervene)
- Losing the voice of allies (e.g. social workers or associations)
- Possibility that the proposals that come out are too "crazy" because those affected do not have the knowledge/information that other actors may have.
- More difficult to ensure that the structure is taken seriously, that there are effects/impact
- Hard to be heard
- No lobby available
- The external perspective is missing
- Lack of connectivity to politics, media, etc.
- Cooperation between people with experience of poverty requires neutral moderation
- A solid core is needed to introduce new people
- The rights and obligations of the structure must be clarified

- The structure needs its own mandate/independent legal entity (not BSV)

Advantages of a mixed structure

- More interesting, because more comprehensive opinions/proposals
- Greater impact and greater weight ("If you want to make a difference, you need experts"); lobbying along with experts will be more effective; more recognition by politicians if the proposal was co-constructed with experts; importance of the consensus reached, which carries more weight.
- Better reception (greater legitimacy, greater chance of acceptance, more enquiries) of a proposal/statement if it is constructed with arguments from different groups.
- Specialists are an advantage because they know the language, how the authorities work and the right strategy.
- Faster work, as the specialists are already present in the structure, and you don't have to look for them (or get their opinion)
- Greater involvement of professionals when they are part of the structure, the professionals become real spokespeople.
- Makes it possible to change the perceptions of professionals when they work with those affected.
- Makes it possible to influence each other (with the disadvantage that it takes longer to build up a common mixed culture).
- Results in more specialised opinions that are closer to the decisions of those in power, "can be pulled upwards" in connection with the information and complexity of the system; increases the skills and knowledge of all those involved in the structure.
- Makes it possible to identify sources of conflict/nodes in relation to the problems addressed and to find solutions together.
- Collaboration with specialists makes it possible to have more means and resources available.
- The resources and networks of the organisations can be used.
- Access/ contact between people experiencing poverty and professionals is easier/lower-threshold
- Information and experiences can be exchanged
- Diverse team composition promotes cooperation
- Exchange of views and mediation between experts and people experiencing poverty becomes possible
- Professionals speak as human beings (have no "mandate" and no financial or political issues to manage).

Disadvantages of a mixed structure

- The affected person's voice can be drowned out, i.e. it is less strong and has less impact and intensity.
- Danger of the voice of those affected being instrumentalised.
- Too many people are involved and it is then difficult to balance the weight of each group's voice.
- Conflict of interest (role conflict) for professionals (no freedom in relation to the organisation to which they belong) ◊ Professionals come with their constraints, while those affected come with their experiences (discrepancy?); less room for manoeuvre for professionals if they are also responsible for the final decision (opinion, proposal).
- More complicated to implement, as a mixed structure requires the definition of quotas, conditions for co-operation, operating rules, etc.
- The presence of professionals can be an obstacle to the participation of those affected.

- More time needed to create a common mixed culture.
- No personal experience of the professionals on the subject of poverty
- The challenge of understanding the framework conditions and attitude of the professionals
- Decision-makers are not affected by poverty, which requires a change of perspective, empathy and social commitment

Other important remarks/points for attention in connection with this topic (neither advantages nor disadvantages).

Regardless of the option

- It is important to know who is coming and on whose behalf in order to be able to work on the same level; it is important to know what interests the people involved represent.
- It is important that the participants agree on the goals to be pursued.
- The question of the external representativeness of the structure is important and should be reconsidered; who would be legitimised to represent the structure externally?
- It is possible to imagine different degrees of participation with working groups.
- One strong idea that is emerging is to form a mixed structure with professionals, but in which the professionals only have an advisory voice. This would be a third
- option compared to the two options discussed in the workshop. For the option

of only people who are affected

- It is important to build up a solid network so that you can consult other experts and know who you can turn to.
- Need to clarify who the "affected" are: People who are directly affected by poverty, who have real experience of it.
- Interest in direct experience (of what is experienced first-hand), in the opportunity to exchange ideas among those affected, being careful not to stop there but to aim to achieve other goals (do not limit yourself to a discussion group)

For the mixed option

- It is important to know what attitude the professionals come with and how an open attitude can be promoted among the professionals (in connection with the role conflict mentioned in the disadvantages).
- Attention to who takes part in the structure: in particular with regard to the diversity of backgrounds/profiles for the people concerned (migration - asylum, ALV, IV, etc.), also for the professionals (empathy required, working in the field and/or in the administration at national level, professionals from associations, linked to different areas (asylum/migration, family policy, education, poverty, etc.), representatives of SKOS or SODK).
- The issue of involving the richest people (or representatives of all social classes) is also emphasised in the idea of a mixed structure to promote awareness.
- There needs to be a clear framework for voting/resolutions so that everyone is equally represented
- A ratio of 7 (people experiencing poverty) and 3 experts is proposed.7:3

WITH REGARD TO THE VOTE:

The results are not clear-cut, as the third option only emerged in the course of the deliberations.

- In favour of a structure consisting only of those affected: 10 votes.
- In favour of a mixed structure: 14 votes.
- In favour of the 3rd option (mixed structure, but in which the specialists or others only have an advisory vote): 6 votes.

WORK ON QUESTION 2: WHAT ARE THE PREREQUISITES FOR BEING HEARD BY DECISION-MAKERS?
List of highlighted conditions

- Have a clear profile: Clearly define who is participating in the structure and what its task is.
- Defend the added value of the structure. This added value consists of: 1. being more creative, more inventive in the fight against poverty by taking into account the point of view, skills and resources of the people concerned 2. developing more effective solutions (e.g.: making it possible to better free the people concerned from social assistance) that bring economic benefits 3. being able to make victories visible, i.e. changes that would not have been possible without the people concerned.
- Organise personal meetings between representatives of the structure and decision-makers (promote real and human contacts); have personal contacts, direct links with decision-makers.
- Speak with one voice: Coming to decision-makers with a collective (co-constructed) point of view, with a clear and well-prepared goal that
  each individual represents (ambassadors of the group messages).
- Develop proposals for improvement that are concrete (underlying question: how realistic are these proposals?).
- Be proactive (not just waiting for the structure to be used) through various means (monitoring, liaising with the media, responding to consultations, etc.).
- Talk about poverty differently, positively (to counteract attitudes of individual responsibility).
- Have means/resources, especially financial (to be able to work, to assign people to carry out studies, to work seriously on the elaboration of proposals), have a dedicated budget (for the structure) to decide what can be done.
- Have a professionalised secretariat.
- Be recognised as an official body (e.g. extra-parliamentary commission) to ensure that you are consulted ex officio, with a secretariat.
- Be recognised as an indispensable actor (make yourself known through awareness-raising, prevention).
- Decide on the form of the structure with the help of allied organisations (e.g. parliament, conference, meetings, etc.)
- Ensure a certain legitimacy of the structure: The more legitimate it is in terms of its composition and its tasks, the greater its impact (the diversity of the people concerned is important, the representativeness, in order to obtain a balanced, nuanced and comprehensive opinion).
- Make sure you are seen as real experts and are not "judged" or "stigmatised" because of your past (risk of not being taken seriously).
- Encourage decision-makers to react or respond to proposals/opinions (e.g. there is an obligation to respond to motions), whereby the response must be reasoned.
- Make sure you are known and visible in the media and to the general public (like an existing lobby).

- Question (not clearly answered) to what extent it can be an advantage to have people with a high level of legitimacy (in the general public, the media or politics) within the structure.
- Avoid being associated too quickly with a political party (e.g. the left).
- Make sure the professionals working in the structure have an empathetic attitude in order to listen to the realities of the lives of those affected.
- Provide structure at different levels (national, cantonal, communal) and focus on the decisions made at these different levels.
- Pay attention to the size of the structure: that there are a large number of people affected (however, this argument was discussed in the context of the size of some social movements, which nevertheless have difficulties making an impact (e.g. the climate movement)).
- Include all languages (not just the three national languages).
- Organise demonstrations
- Come with well-developed positions and master the subject matter
- Treat each other with respect - and demanding it
- Act as a unit/group
- Appoint people as representatives, ambassadors (they must be eloquent, like to be authentic and enjoy doing their job - be committed)
- Lobby - in the sense of building a network, creating a national network
- Have a media presence, timing must be right, communication at the right time via the right channels
- Have a radical vision in order to derive common, achievable goals from it
- Consider framework conditions (infrastructure, space, money, basic skills - reading, writing, IT)
- Install a support group that knows the "languages and logics" of administration/politics and people with experience of poverty
- Make the specialist centre known in order to refer people with experience of poverty to administration, politics and research
- Make the group representative the position of people with experience of poverty

VALIDATION OF THE PRIORITY OBJECTIVES OF THE STRUCTURE

Goal 5:
Supplemented by mobilisation.
"Mobilise the general public too" - How should we mobilise? (Awareness raising means informing, mobilising means doing something).
Raise awareness and mobilise the public to the issue of poverty with the aim of changing attitudes/prejudices towards poverty.
Goal 2:
Submit proposals for improving poverty prevention and alleviation to the decision-making authorities.
Proposal: The authorities should be given binding written feedback on every proposal if something is not implemented or is accepted
Integrate commitment into the goal.
This addition can possibly be listed above as a supplement to the objectives in the report.
Goal 3:
How to participate in the political decision-making process. This is mentioned and alluded to in the introductory section of the report. Objectives are general and are supplemented in the report. Parliamentary and extra-parliamentary activities must be mentioned in the objectives.

WORK ON QUESTION 3: WHAT WOULD THE STRUCTURE NEED TO FUNCTION PERMANENTLY?

Lists of highlighted elements

- Ensure recognition and support from the state (become an official body funded by the state); importance of status and place in an official organisation chart (ensure that the procedure requires going through this structure).
- Financial resources to be secured include: compensation for the transport of the people concerned, a place of work (or several places), the ability to produce documentation, the ability to benefit from administrative materials, the ability to finance the opinion of specialists, the development of a website, access to subscriptions for access to information (associations, newspapers, etc.).
- Human resources (members, natural persons; provide a secretariat to follow up the projects; reach out to the most distant people; reach out to the general public); be able to get advice from a lawyer (ally) to give this structure a framework.
- Distribute human resources well in relation to the activities to be carried out (especially between stakeholders and other actors).
- Consider which form is most effective in order to be sustainable (possible form: like a trade union (without membership fees)).
- Importance of credibility for durability. Credibility depends on who represents the structure, when, how and in what context; who puts the structure together; having argued and reality-based positions; having some caution about the early elements that will emerge from the structure).
- Ensure that successes are achieved quickly and make them visible.
- Have a good network to obtain information and multipliers in order to benefit from expertise.
- Have a clear mandate (role) and specifications with room for manoeuvre at the same time (be adaptable within a certain framework, neither too much flexibility nor too much framework); have clear rules for internal functioning (a form of statutes as in associations).
- Create a certain level of trust within the structure (charter, confidentiality, collegiality).
- Have the means to publicise the existence of the structure (examples of information channels: set up a website, it is important to secure the digital means); be able to create places nearby (antennas) to be seen and known.
- Have publications in order to make the work visible (work synthesis).
- Inform experts from the world of experience (Belgium) about the existence of the structure.
- Receive help from an organisation.
- Ensure that you have a connection to reality (via associations; importance of legitimacy vis-à-vis those affected) and to current events (examples: the war in Ukraine or Covid).
- Have people who are willing to make a long-term commitment (aim for a certain stability among participants who could commit for a certain number of years).
- Have different profiles of the people involved.
- Clearly define which representatives of the individual levels (Federal Social Insurance Office FSIO; cities, etc.) should be part of the structure.
- Note on the sustainability of the structure: Ideally, the structure should not have to function permanently but should become obsolete in the context of the goal of ending poverty; importance of reflecting on sustainability (deadlines should be set - in 10 years, in 5 years, in 1 year, etc.).
- Installation of a support team with the tasks of securing resources, distributing addresses, managing the website, managing personnel, creating information material
- Secure ongoing commitment and the continuous presence of specialists and people with experience of poverty as a prerequisite.

- Have regular contact with parliamentary committees and participation in them.
- Advertise on all channels.
- Ensure that social commitment is recognised.
- Initiate lobbying by experts and people with experience of poverty in order to reach both stakeholder groups. People with experience of poverty through direct involvement, understandable language, experts through strategic networks, a political rationale, technical language.
- Have a central specialist centre installed.
- Establish driving forces, i.e. representatives who are elected (this requires clear selection criteria) and assume responsibility (pay attention to the distribution of power).
- Set clear and realistic goals and prioritise them.
- Offer training courses for the representatives (media competence, political processes, conflict management, change of perspective, current affairs).
- Provide documentation of work for information assurance and further development (operational know-how).
- Foster an organisational and team culture that corresponds to the objectives etc. of the permanent structure.
- Create physical, real and low-threshold meeting places that make regular group meetings possible.
- Arrange fair pay for all employees, including compensation/organisation for childcare, public transport, etc.
- Create a financial foundation (for infrastructure etc.), also clarify who pays.
- Set up a permanent contact point (e.g. secretariat in all national languages)
- Organise access for all via different channels (e-mail, letter, telephone, etc.)
- Be present - be permanently visible.
- Engage in regular communication on social media and in the print media.
- Establish a competence centre on the topic of poverty.
- Seek solutions that work for everyone (people represented) -> win-win for all stakeholders.
- Ensure that representatives are able to negotiate.

ELEMENTS HIGHLIGHTED ON THE OPINION WALL & OTHER POINTS RAISED

Several post-its showed general satisfaction with the day.
- Although workshops were too short, as there was a lot to say, there was nevertheless satisfaction.
- Experts have to do more fieldwork because they are not sufficiently informed about the reality.
- A demand was made to include asylum migrants in order to consider who composes the platform.
- The meaning of the name of the structure should be communicated (it's about something).
- The results must be processed further - keep at it.
- Integrate other organisations into the process.
- Create an official vessel financed by the Confederation.
- "Why isn't the goal to end poverty?"
- The structure should not lose contact with the grassroots – but constantly represent this position.

25 Selected photographic impressions[112]

Figure 2: Group photo with some of the participants after Workshop I in Bern. (© Christoph Ditzler).

Figure 3: Joint work in Workshop I. (© Christoph Ditzler).

Figure 4: Exchange of views in Workshop I. (© Christoph Ditzler).

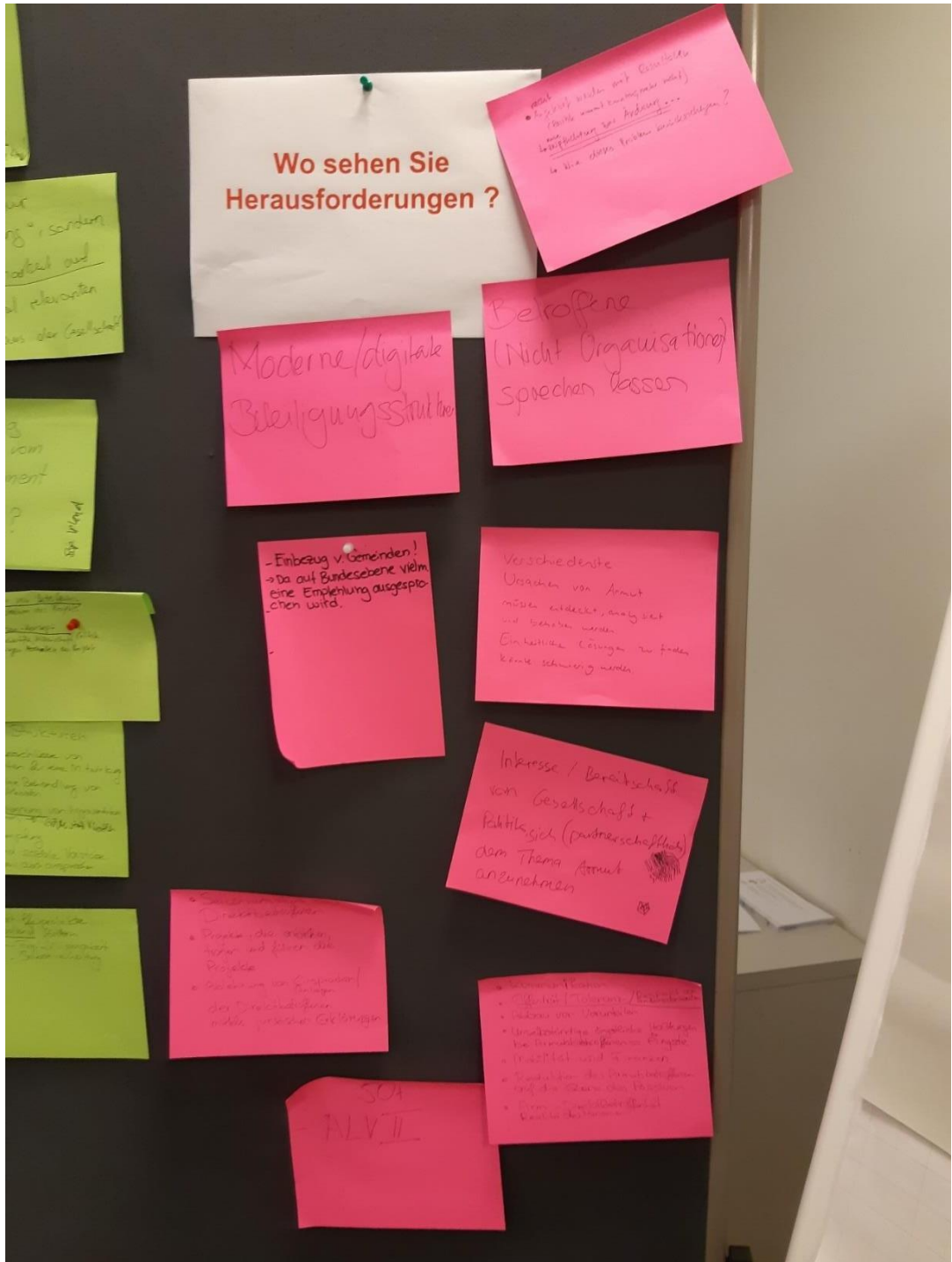[112] The people depicted gave their consent for the photos to be used for this purpose.

Figure 5: Excerpt from the results of the question "Where do you see challenges?" during Workshop I. (© Bern University of Applied Sciences).
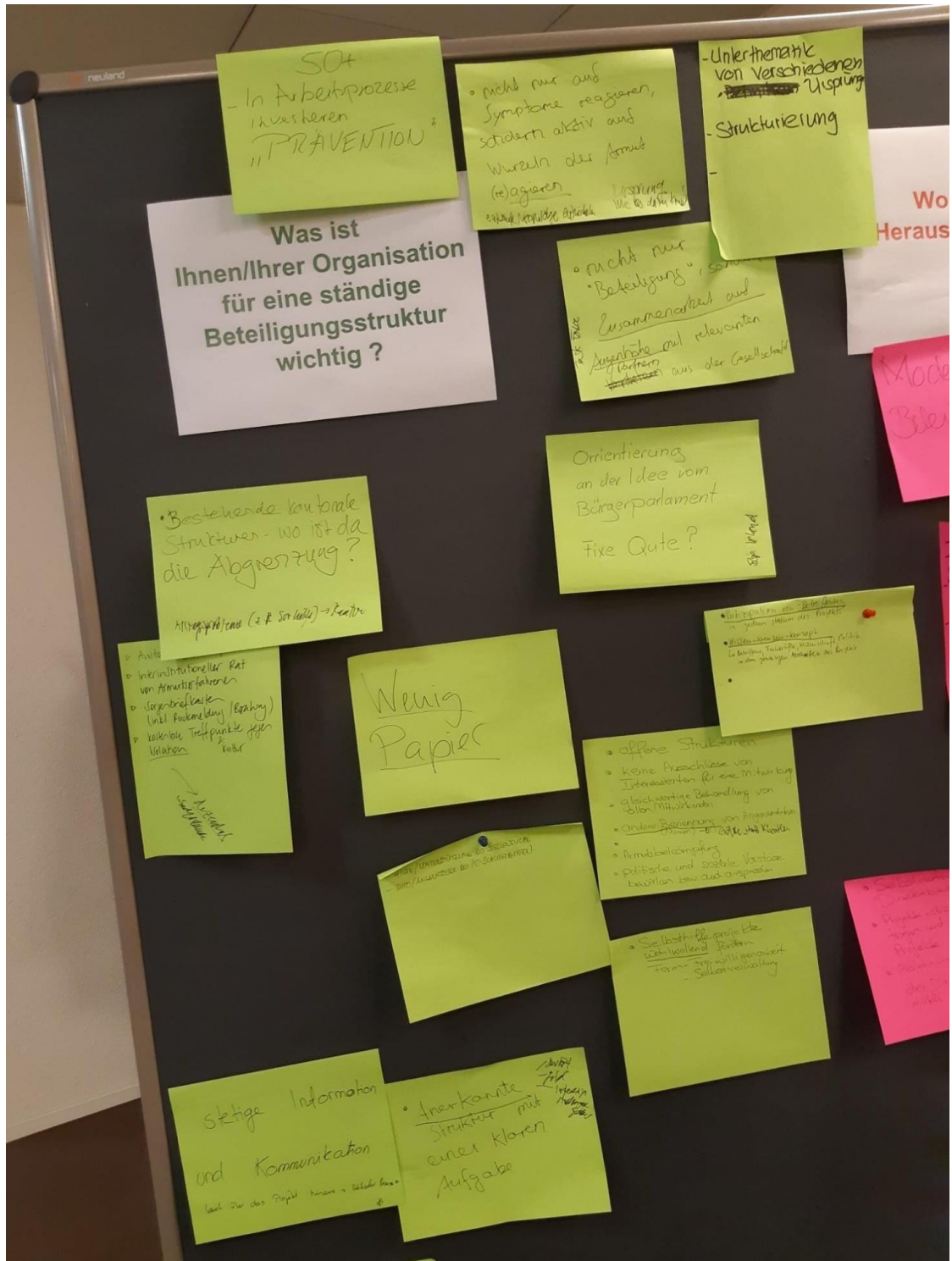
Figure 6: Excerpt from the results of the question "What is important to you/your organisation for a permanent participation structure?" during Workshop I. (© Bern University of Applied Sciences).

Kontinuierlicher Einbezug von armutserfahrenen Menschen und ihren Organisationen in die Armutsprävention und -bekämpfung in der Schweiz

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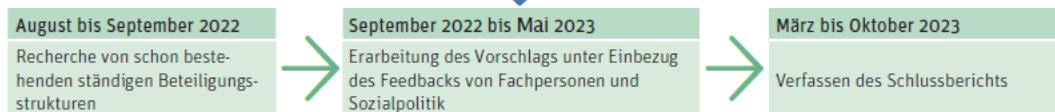
Kontinuierlicher Einbezug von armutserfahrenen Menschen und ihren Organisationen in die Armutsprävention und -bekämpfung in der Schweiz

Auftrag: Vorschlag für eine ständige Beteiligungsstruktur zuhanden des Bundesrates zu erarbeiten.

Wie können Sie sich als Betroffenenorganisation oder Einzelperson beteiligen?	Was können Sie tun?	Teilnahmebedingungen	Zielgruppe
An **zwei Workshops** (deutsch/französisch) teilnehmen 1. Workshop: Betroffenenorganisationen und armutserfahrene Personen **23. Februar 2023 (ca. 09:00 -16:00 Uhr, Bern DE)** 2. Workshop: Betroffenenorganisationen, armutserfahre-ne Personen und Vertretungen aus Politik und Sozialwesen **11. Mai 2023 (ca. 09:00 - 16:00) in Bern DE/FR**	– Ihre Anliegen und Erfahrungen bezüglich der ständigen Beteiligungsstrukturen einbringen – Informieren, wie Sie sich als Organisation oder Einzelperson in der ständigen Beteiligungsstruktur einbringen können – WS 1: Gemeinsam eine umsetzbare ständige Beteiligungsstruktur entwickeln – WS 2: Sichtweisen von Teilnehmenden und Vertretungen aus Politik und Sozialwesen integrieren	– Aktive Teilnahme an beiden Workshops	– Vertretenden von Betroffenenorganisationen – Armutserfahrene Personen – Fachpersonen aus Politik und Sozialwesen (im 2. Workshop)
An **Begleitgruppe** teilnehmen (Die Begleitgruppe wurde bereits gebildet)	– Ihre Anliegen und Erfahrungen bezüglich der ständigen Beteiligungsstrukturen und Partizipationsprozesse einbringen – Mitarbeit am Detailplan für die zwei Workshops und Mitorganisation der Durchführung – Aktive Teilnahme an den zwei Workshops – Aktive Teilnahme an vier Besprechungen (Oktober 2022 bis Februar 2023) – Schriftliche Stellungnahmen und Feedbacks per E-Mail – Kontakt zu den anderen interessierten Organisationen pflegen und auch ihre Meinungen einbringen	– Erfahrung mit Beteiligungsprozessen mitbringen – Einer Betroffenenorganisation angehören – Passive Sprachkenntnis in Deutsch und Französisch	– Maximal drei Betroffenenorganisationen (je zwei Personen, mindestens eine mit Armutserfahrung)

Zeitplan des Projektes

August bis September 2022	September 2022 bis Mai 2023	März bis Oktober 2023
Recherche von schon bestehenden ständigen Beteiligungsstrukturen	Erarbeitung des Vorschlags unter Einbezug des Feedbacks von Fachpersonen und Sozialpolitik	Verfassen des Schlussberichts

Kostenübernahme:
Fahrkostenübernahme für die **Teilnahme an allen Veranstaltungen** (Rückerstattung aufgrund von Belegen).

Armutsbetroffene Personen und Vertreter*innen von Betroffenenorganisationen, die in der **Begleitgruppe bzw. in den zwei Workshops mitarbeiten,** haben Anrecht auf eine **Entschädigung** von 200 CHF pro Sitzung / Workshop.

Jetzt mitmachen!
Melden Sie sich für die Workshops bis spätestens am 15. Januar 2023 bei Kevin Bitsch:
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Telefon +41 31 848 46 57

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