

The Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice

14th October 2010

Minimum Essential Budget for Six Household Types in Rural Areas

The Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice

- ▶ The Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice (VPSJ) was established in 1996 to work for social and economic change – tackling poverty and exclusion

The Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice

- ▶ 4 Members:
 - The Society of St. Vincent de Paul
 - Daughters of Charity
 - Sisters of the Holy Faith
 - Vincentian Congregation

The VPSJ Focuses on 2 main areas:

- ▶ Promotion of Active Citizenship in disadvantaged communities
- ▶ Promotion of Adequate Income

To Raise Awareness of the impact of inadequate income the following studies were undertaken:

- ▶ 2000 One Long Struggle – A Study of Low Income Households
- ▶ 2004 Low Cost but Acceptable Budget Standards for Three Households
- ▶ 2006 Minimum Essential Budgets for Six Households
- ▶ 2008 Minimum Essential Budgets for six households – Changes during the Period 2006-2008
- ▶ 2009 Income and Expenditure for 6 Households
- ▶ 2010 Minimum Essential Budgets for Rural Households

Minimum Essential Standard of Living:

- ▶ A Minimum Essential Income Standard is an income which people need in order to have a standard of living which meets physical, psychological, spiritual and social needs.

How Is It Established?

- ▶ By reaching a social consensus about the goods and services different households need and by drawing on expert knowledge about basic living requirements and expenditure patterns

What does it Include?

- ▶ Concerns more than food, clothing and shelter.
- ▶ It includes what is needed to participate in society
- ▶ The focus is on needs - not wants!

- ▶ Individuals or households having more than a minimum income cannot be guaranteed to have a minimum essential standard of living.

However

- ▶ someone with an income falling below the minimum income is unlikely to have a minimum essential standard of living.

What is its purpose?

1. to provide decision/policy makers with hard facts to evaluate the adequacy of social welfare payments.
2. to provide organizations with detailed information to guide them in their work of advising and supporting individuals and households.

Rural Study

- ▶ Following on from the 2006 Study 'Minimum Essential Budgets for Six Households' (Urban households and updated annually) a decision was made in 2009 to establish the cost of a Minimum Essential Standard of Living for Six Household Types in Rural Areas.

Identification of Locales

- ▶ Lack of definitions of degrees of Rurality in Ireland
- ▶ With the assistance of the CSO, IRL and Ordnance Survey Ireland decided to identify locales in Munster, Connaught, Ulster (Rep of Irl) and the Midlands with the following characteristics:

Characteristics:

- ▶ Population 300 – 400
- ▶ 1 hour approximately from a major hospital
- ▶ No secondary school
- ▶ No large supermarket
- ▶ No Garda station
- ▶ No bank

(Could not control for distance to nearest urban centre)

Focus Groups

- ▶ Focus Groups were established in 4 geographical areas (A, B, C, D) for the following household types:
 - Households with children (one & 2 parent households)
 - Pensioner Households (Including pensioners living alone)
 - Single Adult Males, living alone

Focus Groups

- ▶ Focus Groups of approximately 10 – 12 people from different socio-economic backgrounds
- ▶ Total Participants – 120 approximately
- ▶ Each Group taken for a 2 X 3 hour session

The Field Work Phase

- ▶ Orientation Phase
- ▶ Task Group Phase
- ▶ Costing Phase
- ▶ Check-Back Phase

Orientation Phase

- ▶ Focus Groups discuss, agree – accept a working definition of a Minimum Essential Standard of Living
- ▶ Consider the difference between needs & wants
- ▶ Study the illustrated case histories for the relevant households

Task Group Phase

- ▶ Focus groups for each household type in areas A, B & C:
 - Studied the detailed list of goods and services identified in the urban budgets
 - Focused on the particular goods and services necessitated by living in rural areas
 - Identified the goods and services which need to be added/subtracted
 - Specified the relevant shops and providers

The Costing Phase

- ▶ Budget items obtainable only locally or in the nearest urban centre were priced at the end of the Task Group Phase in each of the 3 areas
- ▶ Separate tables showing the costs of each budget category (e.g. food, clothing etc) for the different household types (e.g. pensioners) were prepared for areas A, B & C
- ▶ The average and range of costs for each budget category across the 3 areas was established

The Check-Back Phase

- ▶ The Check Back Groups consisted of focus groups representing the different household types

- ▶ After the orientation exercises the check back groups:
 1. Revisited the relevant urban budgets and the additional/different items and services identified by the Task Groups

 2. Studied the separate costings for each geographical areas and the range and average costs across all 3 geographical areas

The Check-Back Phase

- ▶ The consensus showed strong agreement with the range in expenditure between the 3 geographical areas and the average expenditure across the 3 areas
- ▶ *'This is the reality if you are not near a Tesco's or Dunnes and if there is nobody to give you a lift you are going to pay more for food'*
- ▶ *'You must buy something's locally, even if you do most of your shopping in Tesco's or Aldi'*