Combatting poverty
On a visite with the mayor ...
In the beginning

Unemployed, housing problems, debts, dependency, absence of school, psychological problems, hygiene...

Bureaucracy
Telling people what to do
Too little focus on the here and now
New approach

- GO-team: FAMILY SUPPORT
- 3 social workers (now 7)
- Collaboration with the local police, Child Welfare and Schools
- Intense & integral counseling, low case load
- Follow up by Foundation Roi Boudaoin & Prof. B. Storms (UA)
New approach

• Methodology:
  • Hands-on approach
  • Based on the needs of the family
  • Focus on trust & mutual respect
  • No restrictions on what
  • No bureaucracy
Scientific bases

• Theory of scarcity – E. Shafir & S. Mullainathan
  – Why do poor people, make poor descisions.

• Social exclusion – Berghman
  – Shortage of money for a longer period in time gives social exclusion.

• Accessibility of social services – Cantillon
  – Accessible, available, affordable, comprehensible, known, reliable and useful
  – Client - perspective
Scientific bases

- Providing welfare should be:
  - Generalistic & integral:
    - Contextualize, remove thresholds, negotiate with institutions, prevention (Raeymakers & Van Riel).
  - Oriented on motivation
    - Model of Prochaska, Diclemente & Narcross
  - Focused on empowerment
    - You can’t empower people
Scientific bases

• Competent care-takers:
  – Positive attitude
  – Inequality based on expertise – equality based on relation.
  – Outreaching & interfering

• Competent organisations:
  – Empowered, participative and interprofessional.
Impact

- 9 criteria:
- Before intervention: av. 5.3/9
- After intervention: av. 4.1/9
- 87.7% improved their situation on min. 1 criterium
- 53% improved their situation on min. 3 criteria.
Note: these are the most difficult cases in Mechelen.

– Progress where none was made before
– 50-60 families / year
– 1/3 families were unknown
– Template for our entire organization