

Most deprived children face biggest risk of unemployment

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Children growing up in jobless households will be less likely to gain employment in an economic recession, according to a new cross-European study led by UCL and the University of Bath.

The working paper, published today, by the UCL Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities (CEPEO), finds [young people](#) from deprived backgrounds face a three-way set of conditions that could lock them out of work: namely child deprivation, resulting from a jobless home, poor [educational attainment](#) and depressed regional labour markets.

However the report entitled, 'Intergenerational joblessness across Europe: the role of labour markets, education and welfare generosity', also shows that in countries with more generous welfare systems, children's chances of being out of work in adulthood are not related to their childhood circumstances.

In a call to action, the report's authors say governments across Europe should offer targeted support to the most disadvantaged, particularly in any upcoming recession, to ensure those worst affected are not left behind. Policies should focus on improving regional job markets and boosting educational attainment.

Lead author, Professor Lindsey Macmillan, Director of the UCL Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities part of the UCL Institute of Education, said: "COVID-19 means Europe once again faces

mass unemployment.

"Our research shows that those people who come from disadvantaged families and have low educational attainment are the most at risk of sustained exclusion from the [labour market](#) when work disappears.

"This will profoundly affect the next generation of deprived children, whose parents are joblessness, and dramatically reduce any future employment opportunities.

"To ensure generations of young people aren't left behind, there needs to be a co-ordinated response to tackle multiple aspects of disadvantage."

Co-author Paul Gregg, Professor of Economic and Social Policy at the University of Bath, said: "This study shows how weak local labour market conditions heavily penalise those from disadvantaged families."

The report explains that, historically, during long periods of recession, it is individuals who are most in need that are left the 'back of the queue' for limited employment opportunities.

The study finds that people from jobless households in childhood who achieve a degree have the same employment prospects as those from working households. However, young jobseekers who have low levels of education and/or looking to enter a weak labour [market](#) are disproportionately more likely to be jobless in adulthood.

Professor Macmillan added: "Countries that offer more general welfare systems which invest in [education](#) and provide welfare payments are more likely to have lower intergenerational jobless associations."

More information: Intergenerational joblessness across Europe: the role of labour markets, education and welfare generosity:

econpapers.repec.org/paper/ucliceow/20-11.htm

Provided by University College London

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