



## Cities on the frontline: local practices for active inclusion in Lille Metropole-Roubaix



Domicil'Enfance: affordable emergency home-based childcare

**Cities for Active Inclusion**

---

### CITIES FOR ACTIVE INCLUSION

---

The EUROCITIES Network of Local Authority Observatories on Active Inclusion (EUROCITIES-NLAO) is a dynamic network of nine European cities - Barcelona, Birmingham, Bologna, Brno, Copenhagen, Lille Métropole - Roubaix, Rotterdam, Sofia and Stockholm - each with a Local Authority Observatory (LAO) within its administration. Their aim is to share information, promote mutual learning and carry out research on the implementation of the active inclusion strategies at the local level.

The nine observatories are coordinated by EUROCITIES, the network of major cities in Europe, and financially supported through the European Commission's Progress programme.

[www.eurocities-nlao.eu](http://www.eurocities-nlao.eu)

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

The town of Roubaix has some 100 000 inhabitants, while the city of Lille has some 226 000 inhabitants. Roubaix and Lille municipalities are both within the Lille Metropole urban area which has a population of 1.2 million. Lille Metropole is at the heart of the Nord Pas-de-Calais region (population: 4.5 million) in northern France, close to the border with Belgium.

Over the past 30 years or more, the Nord Pas-de-Calais region has been characterised by continuing de-industrialisation and profound economic and social transformation. Traditional employment in industry has decreased dramatically, and the services sector is now the main source of work. Lille and Roubaix municipalities have both been affected, with high levels of unemployment and significant numbers of people at risk of exclusion from the labour market and from society.

The work available to people without qualifications is often low-paid, insecure, irregular hours and temporary. In addition, to obtain the right to benefits and to move into the labour market, unemployed people are often given very little notice before they attend interviews or work experience, or start a job.

## 1.2 Families, employment and childcare

Families are particularly affected by these labour market changes. Across Europe, there have been significant changes in family structures and dynamics over the past few decades, with extended family networks becoming more geographically spread out, and a steep rise in single-parent families.

France has a generous system of subsidised day-care for children aged from two and a half months upwards; it is means-tested, and is offered whether parents are employed or unemployed. It can include before-school care, lunch-time care, after-school care and holiday activities. However, it cannot meet the needs of all families: care is daytime only; there are long waiting lists; families must make a long-term commitment; children must attend regularly; and children cannot attend if they are unwell. Even when families have other child-care arrangements, their regular care giver may be unwell or go on holiday, or schools may close for a day of staff training or other unforeseen circumstances.

The lack of access to affordable flexible childcare to meet family needs is a major barrier to labour market inclusion and financial security. This is especially the case if there are no adult family members, such as grandparents, living nearby to provide flexible unpaid childcare.

Single parents are particularly at risk of exclusion from the labour market. Lone parents, responsible for funding and caring for one or more children, often face great difficulties regarding access to employment or training.

The majority of single parents are women. If they are unemployed, they may not wish to, or manage to, place their children in full time day-care just to be sure that they have childcare in the event of being enrolled in training or work. Yet to join the labour market, they will often need to be able to attend training courses, interviews and short-term job placements, or even start a job, at comparatively short notice. It is even difficult to access job centre services, such as advice sessions or training sessions, when accompanied by young children.

Even for employed single parents, the work is often low-paid and irregular hours, with evening and night-shifts and an expectation that they will change shifts at short notice. To retain their job,

they may be reluctant to refuse to change shifts, or to stay at home to care for child who is unwell.

This difficulty in accessing the world of work is a major risk factor for marginalisation, poor job security, and financial insecurity in single-parent families.

### 1.3 Roubaix context

The 2009 national INSEE statistics indicate that Roubaix has a higher proportion of single-parent families than elsewhere in France<sup>1</sup>. Examining various available statistics gives an indication of the figures for Roubaix. In 2007, of the 35 260 households in Roubaix, there were 22 676 families<sup>2</sup>. Other sources<sup>3</sup> indicate that of these 22 676 families, there were some 6 072 single-parent families, although the definition of a single-parent family can vary.<sup>4</sup> Therefore and approximately 27% of Roubaix families are single-parent families, which is significantly higher than the 21% national average for metropolitan France (approximately 17% of all households in Roubaix are single parent households).

Figures indicate that in Roubaix, 27% of single-parent families in Roubaix have three or more children, which is far higher than the national average of 13%. The statistics indicate that in Roubaix in 2009, some 47% of single-parent families had only one child (2 829 families; and 26% had two children (1 608 families); 16% had three children (988 families); and 11% had four children (647 families).

In terms of participation in the labour market, figures for 2002 in Roubaix showed that 63% of single parents were not in employment, apprenticeships or training: this is very high compared with the national average of only 17% of single parents being inactive in the labour market. A significant proportion of these single parents were at home caring for children (20%), or unemployed and claiming unemployment benefits (23%). Nationally, only 14% of single parents were claiming unemployment benefits<sup>5</sup>.

With regard to qualifications, 2002 figures showed that 23% of single parents in Roubaix had no qualifications and only completed primary or secondary education. Single parents were also less likely to have pursued a higher education. With regard to housing, almost half (47%) of single-parent families lived in social housing run by the municipality. This is again higher than the national average which is 40%.<sup>6</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Source: INSEE (National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies) 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Source: 'Single-parent families in France' (Les familles monoparentale en France), Eydoux and Letablier, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Sources: INSEE, RP1999 and RP2009 additional operations.

<sup>4</sup> Single-parent families can be defined in more than one way: for more details, please see Annex: 2.

<sup>5</sup> Source: INSEE 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Source: INSEE 2002: from 'Single-parent families in France (Les familles monoparentale en France), Eydoux and Letablier, 2007.

In Roubaix, 89% of single-parents are female. This is slightly higher than the national average of 84%. This gender imbalance represents significant gender inequality in care duties. It is partly due to the fact that after separation or divorce, mothers have custody of the children far more often than fathers.

## 1.4 Single parent families at risk of exclusion in Roubaix

In towns such as Roubaix, the high numbers of single parent families at risk of exclusion from society and from the labour market should result in a strong response from public services. For single parents, active inclusion is all the more important: having sufficient income, accessing quality social services, and entering the job market, is even more crucial in order to enable these people, in most cases women, to find their way back to employment and independence and achieve financial security for their family.

The job market often puts disadvantaged parents, particularly single parents, under significant pressure. Employees are expected to be flexible in terms of accepting changes in the hours they work at short notice. The jobs are often precarious, and this affects single parents in particular, who have sole responsibility for the financial security of their family. Some parents cannot stop working even if their children are sick, in case they risk losing their job. Other parents work irregular hours that fall outside the normal traditional day-care system, or may be asked to work additional hours. All these families need alternative childcare solutions for their children.

In addition, uncertain jobs with irregular or extended hours, and offering low job security and low salaries, are often occupied by women. Great social pressure is exerted on women: they are expected to work at the same time as raising young children, and they are sometimes obliged to leave their children at home alone and unsupervised, in order to go to work to pay for their families' needs.

Without access to flexible affordable childcare, access to employment in Roubaix is very difficult for single-parents; and single-parent families make up some 27% of families in Roubaix.

Reconciling family life and working life has long been an issue for parents, but especially if they work unsociable or irregular working hours, outside the traditional state-subsided childcare options.

## 2. CASE STUDY: DOMICIL'ENFANCE: AFFORDABLE EMERGENCY HOME-BASED CHILDCARE

### 2.1 Domicil'Enfance in Lille and in Roubaix

#### 2.1.1 The Domicil'Enfance service

The lack of affordable flexible short-notice childcare was recognised as a factor in labour market exclusion for families in Lille Metropole in the late 1980s. In response to this, the not-for-profit Innov'Enfance association ('innovation for children') developed an innovative child care and educational enrichment initiative: the Domicil'Enfance emergency home-based childcare service. Developed and structured to meet the needs of disadvantaged families at risk of exclusion, the Domicil'Enfance service was initially introduced into Lille municipality, in 1989, by the national family benefit office (CAF: Caisse d'Allocations Familiales).

Following the success of the service in Lille, and given that families at risk in Roubaix were experiencing similar problems with childcare, in 1999, it was decided to implement the service in Roubaix municipality.

The Domicil'Enfance service is unique in that it provides affordable short-notice temporary childcare, at home, and without any advance reservation or timetabling; and at the same time, it provides a variety of educational enrichment activities, adapted for each child. It prevents families from resorting to unsafe or unstable childcare solutions. It also complements other childcare services, by helping parents to find longer-term childcare solutions. The Domicil'Enfance is inclusive: the service provides at-home childcare to all the children in the family, including children with a disability and children who are unwell; and the service is tailored to each family's cultural environment. The Domicil'Enfance childcare staff are careful to respect the rhythms and habits of each child. In addition, the service is affordable: each family pays an annual membership fee of just €20, plus a subsidised hourly rate based on family income and family size.

Access to the Domicil'Enfance homecare for children service is made as easy as possible, via a simple telephone conversation; and a quick response is made. Through this service, families can access a rapid response to their occasional emergency childcare needs, for those times when it is impossible to use traditional forms of childcare. These last-minute situations include: irregular working hours; the care of children who are unwell and therefore cannot attend the normal day-care; a new job, a training course; weekend working; child-minder training; or a child-minder who is unwell. The service gives parents peace of mind, so that instead of worrying about their children, they can focus fully on their job or their training course, to prevent the risk of exclusion from the labour market and from society.

Domicil'Enfance is a unique scheme which currently only exists in Lille and Roubaix.

### 2.1.2 Active inclusion

The Domicil'Enfance service is a good example of an active inclusion initiative: it provides high quality services, consisting of a very flexible, affordable and accessible form of child care with educational enrichment activities, in order to ensure labour market inclusion for all parents, but mainly for those at risk of exclusion.

Without this service, many disadvantaged parents who are unemployed or in low-income jobs, especially single-parents, who are mostly women, would be prevented from following training courses that can lead to employment or taking up employment, or would risk losing a job, if one of their children becomes sick. Therefore the scheme is a form of labour exclusion prevention. Because so many of the beneficiaries are women, it also helps to prevent gender inequality due to care duties.

In addition, the Innov'Enfance association has arranged for some women who previously had no qualifications to receive child-care training and achieve professional childcare qualifications, and to then take on positions within the Domicil'Enfance organisation. The Domicil'Enfance service has therefore given a direct access to employment to people who originally had no qualifications.

Furthermore, the Domicil'Enfance service has also been providing childcare in job centres, allowing job-seeking parents to take full advantage of the centre's services, such as training and advice sessions: a further example of an active inclusion initiative.

Domicil'Enfance is also an indirect income scheme: the child care is affordable, with the fees being means-tested and subsidised according to the parent's financial situation and family size.

### 2.1.3 A partnership of stakeholders

In both Lille and in Roubaix, the Domicil'Enfance service is the result of a wide partnership of local stakeholders involved in both childcare and employment services. Domicil'Enfance brings together: the Innov'Enfance social enterprise association; the family benefits office (CAF: Caisse d'Allocations Familiales); the Lille and Roubaix local authorities; Roubaix's enterprise and employment office which provides integrated services for people at risk of exclusion, including jobseekers; and local associations that are in contact with parents who are at risk.

The Domicil'Enfance service relies largely on public funding from the Nord department (part of the Nord Pas-de-Calais region), and from the municipalities, Lille and Roubaix, and the CAF family benefit office (through the contract for childhood). The funding authorities need to be certain that the funds are being invested in the active inclusion of parents, and that the Domicil'Enfance childcare service is being used in genuine cases of need, while parents are attending genuine activities relating to training or employment. In addition, institutional stakeholders are involved to ensure that the Domicil'Enfance service complies with current policies on caring for children and providing appropriate enrichment activities.

### 2.1.4 Service-beneficiaries

Key beneficiaries of the Domicil'Enfance service are disadvantaged families with a lone parent, the majority of whom are women. The service enables them to attend training, interviews, or employment, at short notice, and also to retain their jobs when their children are unwell, thus promoting active inclusion and gender equality in the labour market.

The Innov'Enfance association which runs the Domicil'Enfance service collects data on the service in order to understand the demographics of the service-users, and measure the performance of the Domicil'Enfance service. Data in the annual report includes numbers of hours of childcare provided, family situation, reason for the request, and data on the specific neighbourhoods where most service-users live.

Domicil'Enfance service-users are families living in Lille or Roubaix: the parents are working or training during irregular or non-office hours, when traditional forms of childcare are not available.

The latest available figures, which are for 2011, show that in Roubaix, Domicil'Enfance provided childcare for a total of 41 families, for 4 202.75 hours. Of these 41 families, 19 were two-parent families, who received for a total of 817.25 hours of childcare (i.e. 19% of the total hours provided); and 22 were single-



parent families, who received a total of 3 385.50 hours of childcare (i.e. 81% of the total hours provided), proving that most of the childcare (81%) was provided to single parents. Most single parents using the Domicil'Enfance service are women, and in Roubaix, a large number of the women using the service are third-country migrants from African countries.

In Roubaix in 2011, the most common reasons given for needing the Domicil'Enfance home-based childcare were, in order of frequency, as follows:

- unsociable and/or extended working hours: for a training course, a new job or a temporary assignment (1,214.75 hours: 28.90%)
- long-term training course without immediate solution (684.5 hours: 16.29%)
- to provide after-crèche, after-school or after-activity care (622 hours: 14.80%)
- hospitalisation of a parent (423 hours: 10.06%)
- unavailability of usual day-care solution (362 hours: 8.61%).

Apart from hospitalisation of a parent (the fourth most common reason), the four other main reasons given for using the Domicil'Enfance childcare service are directly linked with active inclusion and preventing exclusion from the labour market.

In Roubaix, in 2012, due to the continuing recession, requests for childcare were mainly due to the need for a parent to attend active inclusion training courses, to move them closer to the labour market. Several single mothers who started using the service are foreign-born women who are obliged to take civic training courses as part of the process of regularising their immigration status, and to prevent exclusion from society and the labour market. Very few parents used the service due to irregular working hours or because they had found a new job, as jobs in the region have become scarcer.

In 2011, statistics in the Innov'Enfance report show that the families who benefited most from the Domicil'Enfance service are those with very low incomes. Each family in France is given what is known as a Family Quotient<sup>7</sup>. This ranges from 0 to 1500+, and is based on income levels and family size. Families with lower incomes have a lower Family Quotient.

In 2011, of the total 4 202.75 hours of childcare provided to 41 families, 3 966.25 hours of childcare were provided to 31 families who had Family Quotients of under 656, and therefore had to pay a maximum of €1.85 per hour for their Domicil'Enfance childcare, as follows:

- 8 families with a Family Quotient of between 199 and 350, benefited from 453.50 hours of childcare
- 16 families with a Family Quotient' of between 351 and 472 benefited from 2179.50 hours of childcare
- 7 families with a Family Quotient of between 473 and 655, benefited from 1333.25 hours of childcare.

### 2.1.5 Domicil'Enfance personnel

The Domicil'Enfance service employs seven people. They are all professionally qualified in the care of young children and are: child welfare assistants, classroom assistants, special needs teachers, or workers with vocational training qualifications in childcare. They provide home-based childcare to families in Lille and Roubaix, on a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week basis.

---

<sup>7</sup> The Family Quotient is based on a family's circumstances, including all taxable income from employment, all family allowances and benefits, and the composition of the family unit. Every family is given a Family Quotient by the CAF (Caisse d'Allocations Familiales) family benefit office, and this is updated whenever there is a change in the family's situation. It is used by CAF to calculate benefit entitlements, and also by local authorities and other service-providers, including Domicil'Enfance to calculate means-tested rates for services, depending on each family's financial situation: see Annex 1 for 2011 Domicil'Enfance rates.

When the Domicil'Enfance service was first set up by the Innov'Enfance organisation, several women who were unemployed and had no existing childcare qualifications, but who had the right qualities to work with children, were given the necessary training in order to achieve the professional qualifications to work in the Domicil'Enfance service. Through active inclusion, these women have been included back into the job market as professionals: despite what some people may believe, caring for young children is a profession. The Innov'Enfance organisation puts great emphasis on this professionalism among its employees. In addition, although its childcare professionals are currently all women, the organisation is hoping this situation can change at some point in the future.

### 2.1.6 Affordable childcare

Each family pays for the Domicil'Enfance childcare on a per hour basis, based on their individual income and circumstances. One of the main advantages of the service is that families are not asked to make a medium-term to long-term commitment in advance. In traditional forms of childcare, families must commit to a set period of childcare, over the medium-term, and pay in advance. However, many disadvantaged parents face uncertainty in terms of working hours and training opportunities, which makes it difficult to predict when they will need childcare.

The family pays a subsidised rate which is determined according to their Family Quotient: the hourly rate varies between €0.50 and €8.00. (For the hourly rates payable by families in each Family Quotient band, please see Annex 1). The cost of providing the service is €30 per hour, so the support of public funding institutions is therefore vital to this service.

### 2.1.7 Organisation of the service

The Lille and Roubaix Domicil'Enfance services are organised according to when care is needed, the number of hours requested, and the reasons for requesting childcare. This is in order to help as many families as possible in Lille and Roubaix. When a parent calls the Innov'Enfance organisation which manages the Domicil'Enfance service, Innov'Enfance asks why childcare is needed, to ensure that the reason corresponds to the Domicil'Enfance criteria. The level of urgency and the relevance of the request are the main considerations, and requests for childcare that are just so that parents can have more free time are not accepted.

The Domicil'Enfance childcare service has inbuilt flexibility, in order to meet the needs of families and to match these needs with the availability of the personnel. A daily management system aims to minimise the time that employees are on duty but are not providing childcare: it can be challenging to find the right balance, to ensure that the scheme is viable and efficient. The service is run as a social enterprise and is permanently seeking to create a balance between its budget and its costs. The higher the demand for childcare, up to a maximum capacity, the easier it is to ensure the viability of the service.

### 2.1.8 A combination of at-home care and enrichment

Domicil'Enfance is specifically and exclusively a child-focused childcare service: not only does it provide childcare; it also offers a learning-based programme and educational initiatives. Employees are professionals who have received in-depth training in childcare.

At various times during the year, the Innov'Enfance association arranges workshops for families who use the Domicil'Enfance scheme, to keep in touch with the families, and update them on the service. Particular attention is paid to families who are experiencing their first at-home childcare intervention, in order to ensure they understand the Domicil'Enfance approach, and to put them at their ease with the whole team.

### 2.1.9 Innov'Enfance association: originator of the Domicil'Enfance service

The Innov'Enfance association is an NGO, established in 1988 following input from parents and childcare professionals working in parent-run crèches in Lille Metropole. The organisation is entirely citizen-focussed. Its first project was the La Luciole crèche (The Firefly), open 24 hours a day.

Innov'Enfance sets up and manages various services, structures and schemes to respond to the needs of families with young children in the Nord department in France, where Lille is the main city. At the present time, Innov'Enfance manages 14 services, consisting of: the Domicil'Enfance short-notice home-based childcare service; day-care centres, including two mobile day-care centres; a child minder drop-in centre; and parent-child workshops. The Innov'Enfance association employs 70 staff, and its overall budget for 2011 was €2,169,231.

### 2.1.10 Roubaix Domicil'Enfance: experimental initiative through the Espoir Banlieue programme

Since 2011, Roubaix's Domicil'Enfance service has received some additional funds through the national Espoir Banlieue ('hope for the suburbs') outreach programme, working through Roubaix municipality. This is a special three-year support programme, funded on a national scale, to develop projects in priority disadvantaged urban areas known as city hotspots. To justify this extra funding, it is now important to take note of the geographical location of the families using the Domicil'Enfance service, to confirm whether they live in the priority city hotspot neighbourhoods. There is also a requirement to record the reasons why they are using the childcare service: for example, whether it is to cover employment or training during irregular hours. Further details can be found at: <http://bit.ly/17VDIIM>.

This additional Espoir Banlieue funding for Roubaix has enabled the Domicil'Enfance to introduce an additional service for disadvantaged parents at risk of exclusion. This provides a half-day-per-week childcare service at the Roubaix job centres (the MIEs: Maisons de l'Initiative et de l'Emploi: centres for enterprise and employment). So, job-seeking parents, who have no access to alternative childcare, can bring their children into the jobcentre, and attend job interviews, training, group sessions or use other employment services, while their children are being looked after. An additional objective for this job-centre-based childcare was to encourage disadvantaged parents, in particular mothers, who may not have left their children with another adult before, to get used to allowing other people to take care of their children. In this way, the additional service represents a further active inclusion initiative for mothers or fathers in training or actively seeking employment.

To provide this additional service, Domicil'Enfance has been working in close partnership with the other stakeholders: Roubaix's job centre (the Maison de l'Initiative et de l'Emploi); the department for community and social initiatives; and the Amitié Partage ('friendship and sharing') charity that supports disadvantaged single mothers.

One of the limitations of this job-centre childcare service is that the funding has only allowed a fixed half-day per week of childcare to be provided, which is not sufficient to meet all the needs of a job-seeking parent. A second limitation is that many parents find it difficult to leave their child or children in an unfamiliar place, and with unfamiliar staff, for up to an hour or so, and with no time to settle them in. This is less of a challenge for parents who already know each other and can leave their children together in the childcare facility; and it is also easier for those who have previously used the childcare services of other NGO partners, for example, when attending group meetings. The Espoir Banlieue outreach programme is due to end in 2013.

### 2.1.11 Funding

Currently, 89% of the Domicil'Enfance service in the Lille Metropole area is funded by Lille municipality, Roubaix municipality, the CAF family benefits office, and the Nord department (part of the Nord Pas-de-Calais region).

Each year, the Innov'Enfance association negotiates a financial agreement with the various Domicil'Enfance partners which sets out the number of hours of childcare to be provided in the two towns, Lille and Roubaix, that have signed up to the scheme.

Currently, families pay a €20 annual membership fee, plus a means-tested hourly rate based on family size and resources up to a maximum of €8 per hour. The cost of providing one hour of childcare is actually €30: so the remaining cost is borne by public funding.

For the Roubaix Domicil'Enfance service in 2011, the funds amounted to €139,135. This consisted of the following elements:

- **2011 Revenue from service-users**  
(means-tested hourly fees and membership fees): €5 979
- **2011 Public sector funding:**
  - Nord department: €9 203
  - Roubaix municipality (including CAF subsidies): €118 937
  - Direct funding from CAF family benefit office: €5 000
- **Total public sector funding: €133 140**
- **Total funds used: €139 135**

For the Roubaix service in 2012, draft figures indicate a €8,922 decrease in the funds available to provide the service compared with 2011. The Domicil'Enfance service is highly dependent on public subsidies, which have been decreasing each year over the past several years.

## 2.2 Key successes

The innovative Domicil'Enfance home-based childcare initiative is successfully providing flexible home-based childcare on a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week basis.

In Roubaix, in 2012, the Domicil'Enfance staff provided childcare on some 600 occasions for a total of 3 840 hours. This involved looking after 236 children in 43 families: 60% were single parent families, and 40% were two parent families. In 2010, 70% of those using the service were single-parent families; and in 2011, 80% were single-parent families.

In about a quarter of cases (26%), childcare was needed while a parent was given a work internship or training course at short notice. In a further fifth of cases (22%), childcare was needed due to atypical or irregular hours, either in the early morning, late at night, at weekends or during school holidays and childcare holidays. Another fifth of cases involved starting a new job or temporary work.

The Domicil'Enfance home childcare service has therefore succeeded getting many disadvantaged families at risk of exclusion back on track when they find themselves in difficulties: the service prevents them from moving further from the labour market by helping them to keep or to find a job.

The Domicil'Enfance figures for Lille Metropole as a whole show that in 2012, a total of 119 families used the service. As a result of the active inclusion aspect of Domicil'Enfance, the adults in 65 of these families (53 single-parent families and 12 two-parent families) entered employment or training as a result of using Domicil'Enfance childcare. In addition, the Domicil'Enfance service delivers significant benefits for the disadvantaged children who are cared for by Domicil'Enfance staff. They often show significant developmental progress as a result of the enrichment activities provided for each child. Some of these children suffer from delays or problems in speech and motor functions, and the Domicil'Enfance childcare staff within the family setting can help to highlight any problems, so that they can be addressed professionally.

Most of the families receiving Domicil'Enfance childcare have multiple disadvantages. Domicil'Enfance helps prevent exclusion and allows parents to pursue a pathway to inclusion. It also contributes to the future inclusion of the children being cared for, as it ensures these children are looked after in far more favourable conditions than they might otherwise experience.

Domicil'Enfance is a successful example of active inclusion for parents at risk of exclusion in Roubaix and Lille. It promotes active inclusion of families at risk of exclusion from the labour market. For single parent families headed by a single mother, the service promotes gender equality in the labour market, despite inequalities in care duties.

## 2.3 Challenges

At first, the main challenge for the Domicil'Enfance service was that it was unclear whether the service could be successfully implemented. This was mainly because Domicil'Enfance requires cooperation between partners in two very different policy areas: childcare, and employment and training services. However, this challenge was overcome, and the network of institutional stakeholders involved in Domicil'Enfance services in Lille-Metropole is in itself an innovative example of integration at the local level.

There are also continuing funding challenges. Each year, increasing numbers of requests are received for Domicil'Enfance childcare: with the changing economic climate, and the increasing need for organisational flexibility, there has been an increase in jobs with irregular or unscheduled hours, such as night-shift work, and temporary work, where people are needed at short notice at out of normal child-care hours. This presents families with significant problems in terms of flexible childcare. Meanwhile, public sector funding for Domicil'Enfance is being reduced year on year. The service is dependent on public funding, but this funding is precarious and decreasing, which may jeopardise the service's existence.

Another major challenge is that, due to family mistrust, it has not been possible to employ male childcare professionals to provide Domicil'Enfance home-based childcare, even though male childcare professionals, working with children who are being raised by a single mother, can contribute to childhood development by providing positive role models.

A further challenge is that it is never easy for parents to leave their children at home to be cared for by strangers! Domicil'Enfance has overcome this challenge by using trusted, qualified childcare personnel, fully supported by a team of other childcare professionals, and by gaining a good reputation over time. In both Lille and Roubaix, parents using the Domicil'Enfance service discuss their experiences with other parents. So, each family's positive experiences of the Domicil'Enfance childcare service are shared by word-of-mouth, which often seems to be the best way for a service and its staff to become known in the community, and being seen as genuine and trustworthy.

## 2.4 Future plans and dissemination

The experimental Domicil'Enfance home childcare service was implemented from 1989 onwards, when Lille and Roubaix municipalities could more easily afford the financial resources for innovation in active inclusion. This coincided with an increase in precarious jobs and parental isolation which now puts so many families at risk of exclusion and gender inequality, particularly single parent families, mostly headed by women.

Although the success of the Domicil'Enfance service is widely recognised, sustainability depends on public funding. Each year, the Innov'Enfance association, which manages the Domicil'Enfance service in Lille-Metropole, signs an agreement with Roubaix and Lille municipalities, and with the CAF family benefits office, for continued partnership and public subsidies. However, public funding is being cut year on year. It is hoped that the Domicil'Enfance home childcare service can be continued in Lille and Roubaix, despite public sector funding cuts, including the 2014 budget reduction for the CAF family benefit office.

The transferability of the Domicil'Enfance concept to other municipalities is very relevant. The Domicil'Enfance concept was rolled out from Lille municipality to Roubaix in 1999, because families, especially single-parent families, at risk of exclusion in Roubaix faced similar issues to those living in Lille. Similar, but not identical, schemes have also been set up in Brittany and in Marseilles.

Disadvantaged families in other Lille-Metropole towns and districts, for example Tourcoing and Villeneuve D'Ascq, also have the same need for flexible short-notice childcare. The Domicil'Enfance concept is transferable, but it requires public funding and partnership agreements from the municipalities. Lille-Roubaix can share experiences with other municipalities, but during the current financial crisis, budget pressures may restrict implementation of the Domicil'Enfance childcare concept elsewhere.

The national CAF family benefit office (Caisse d'Allocations Familiales) is encouraging the development and implementation of similar flexible childcare services within other organisations or home-help services for example. However, the Domicil'Enfance service is very specific: it is



exclusively focussed on childcare provided by professionals, with its own educational enrichment programme for each child. Moreover, the prices and methods of payment are very clear: it is a means-tested service entirely adapted to parents' financial circumstances. This is what makes the Domicil'Enfance service so successful in actively including disadvantaged families at risk of exclusion, especially single-parent families, and promoting gender equality in care duties.

## 2.5 Additional information

Basic information	Web link & Contact person
<p><b>Funding</b></p> <p>Domicil'Enfance is 89% funded by the targeted municipalities, Lille and Roubaix, and the local CAF family benefit office, through the contract for childhood, and the Nord department (part of the Nord Pas-de-Calais region). Families pay €20 annual membership plus a means-tested hourly rate based on family size and resources.</p> <p><b>Budget</b></p> <p>The annual budget for 2013 is €127 000.</p> <p><b>Location</b></p> <p>Lille municipality and Roubaix municipality.</p> <p><b>Dates</b></p> <p>The Domicil'Enfance home childcare service was implemented in Lille in 1989 and in Roubaix in 1999. Both services are ongoing.</p>	<p><b>Weblink</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.innoenfance.org/">www.innoenfance.org/</a></p> <p><b>Contact</b></p> <p>Mme Chahpar Badkoube, Early childhood coordinator at the Innov'enfance association for early childhood services.</p> <p><b>Email</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:contact@innovenfance.org">contact@innovenfance.org</a></p> <p><b>Tel</b></p> <p>0033320152045</p>

## ANNEX 1

Table: Domicil'Enfance home-based childcare: means-tested hourly rates payable by families in 2011: based on Family Quotient

Each family pays an hourly rate for childcare, depending on its Family Quotient: in 2011, the hourly rate varied between €0.50 and €8.00. The actual cost of providing the service was calculated at €30 per hour for 2011.

Family Quotient	Rate per hour €	Family Quotient	Rate per hour €	Family Quotient	Rate per hour €
0 to 167	€0.50	595 to 655	€1.85	1083 to 1143	€3.20
168 to 228	€0.65	656 to 716	€2.00	1144 to 1204	€3.50
229 to 289	€0.85	717 to 777	€2.15	1205 to 1265	€4.30
290 to 350	€1.00	778 to 838	€2.35	1266 to 1326	€5.00
351 to 411	€1.20	839 to 899	€2.50	1327 to 1387	€5.90
412 to 472	€1.35	900 to 960	€2.65	1388 to 1500	€7.00
473 to 533	€1.50	961 to 1021	€2.85	More than 1500	€8.00
534 to 594	€1.65	1022 to 1082	€3.00		

Table based on data sourced from: Innov'Enfance activities for 2011: hourly rates.

## ANNEX 2

### Definitions: single-parent families

In France, the 'single-parent family' or 'one-parent family' description first appeared as a statistical category, a subject for study and research, and the focus for public policy and initiatives in the 1970s (Meulders-Klein and Théry, 1993). The emergence of the 'single-parent family' category contributed to the recognition of the plurality of family forms and groups.

Various different statistical and administrative definitions of single-parent families are used in France. So, although it is possible to gain approximate indications of the numbers of single-parent families, it is difficult to obtain exact figures. In addition, the role of each child's other parent is often not taken into account: in some families the parent who is not living with the child is nevertheless involved in the child's life and care duties; in other families, the absent parent plays no part in the child's life.

The following two definitions of single-parent families are the most widely used:

- **CAF: Caisse d'Allocations Familiales (National Family Benefit Office) definition:** a single parent or lone parent is defined as any person (whether unmarried, widowed, divorced or separated) who is single-handedly and permanently responsible for one or more dependent children on a daily basis, on condition that they are not living with their partner as part of a married or cohabiting couple. In most circumstances, CAF categorises single individuals living in the same household as 'dependent children' if: they are under 20 years old; and their monthly income does not exceed 55% of France's minimum wage; and they are not parents themselves. To qualify for additional family allowance or housing benefit through CAF, dependent children can be up to 21 years old; and to qualify for income support (RSA: Revenu de Solidarité Active), dependent children can be up to 25 years old.
- **INSEE (National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies) definition:** a single-parent family, or one-parent family, is defined as a family formed of a single parent who lives with their children, but without a partner, in ordinary housing; no other adult person shares the same housing, neither relatives nor non-relatives. Single individuals of any age living in the same household as their parent/s are counted as children, as long as they have never been married, and on condition that they do not have a partner or children living in the household. (Until 1999, there was an upper age limit: children had to be under 24 years old). One disadvantage of the INSEE definition is that it assumes there is only one type of household situation for single-parent families: one containing a single adult and one or more children. However, many single-parent families share housing with another single-parent family, who effectively are like a step-family, even though the two single-parents may not get married. Each single parent may have sole responsibility for childcare for their own children but the household contains two adults, living as partners, so the INSEE definition would not define either of them as single-parent families.

All photographs © Arnaud Loubry, Ville de Roubaix



This publication is commissioned under the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013). This programme is managed by the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission. It was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the EUROPE 2020 goals in these fields.

For more information see: <http://ec.europa.eu/progress>.

The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.