



Dr. Eric Crettaz

Poverty in Switzerland from a theoretical and empirical perspective

In Switzerland, talking about poverty immediately raises several questions. Naturally, the first one is to know what form poverty takes in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. As a matter of fact, the living conditions of Swiss inhabitants have greatly improved thanks to the post Second World War boom and the developments in social and health policy. However, even though the most extreme forms of poverty were significantly reduced, they have not entirely disappeared. In addition, another form of poverty emerged: certainly it is more relative, but it also has very concrete negative impacts on physical and mental health, life expectancy, the risk of social isolation, the children's school performance, etc.

This presentation aims at understanding and addressing the poverty-related issues in Switzerland by presenting a reflexion on the definitions of this phenomenon in the country as well as on the dimensions within it, and on the mechanisms that lead households to poverty, a particular emphasis being placed on the problem of access to the labour market. Empirical results on the magnitude of the phenomenon and the main risk groups will also be presented.

Brief profile

Dr. Eric Crettaz is Professor at the University of Applied Sciences of Western Switzerland (HES-SO), School of Social Work, in Geneva.