



**Kurt Wyss**

### **Poverty reduction and work integration – shining a critical light on objectives and effectiveness**

The present contribution is based on the presumption that questions regarding poverty reduction and work integration cannot be answered reasonably without reference to tendencies in society as a whole. Accordingly, the first question to be addressed is whether the so-called normal or successful integration is really as unproblematic as it is frequently described. Could it not be possible that the “normal” working conditions tend to inhibit rather than encourage human self-fulfilment, thus having a disintegrating effect? Against the backdrop of a “disintegration by integration” of this kind, however, the second question to be asked is, how are the objectives of work integration being carried out within the scope of poverty reduction to be evaluated? The thesis is framed that work integration programmes are not designed to truly help those affected but to reproduce, in an even reinforced manner, the integration pressure that has already become problematic in what is “normal”. But if this is so, then how effective can the programmes for work integration be? And how does social work, which is closer to the self-fulfilment of human beings than to their social disciplining, deal with this problem? In conclusion, suggestions will be made as to how social work could counter the negative trends implied and actually pursue poverty reduction.

#### **Brief profile**

Kurt Wyss, born in 1959, sociologist, has been working in his own social research office in Zurich since 1994, focusing on issues of social policy and socio-political development. He undertakes research projects on behalf of public institutions, gives speeches and lectures at universities and universities of applied science, he also publishes regularly. His main interest is in the sociological critique of social processes of incapacitation or of the social disciplining of people, respectively ([www.wyss-sozialforschung.ch](http://www.wyss-sozialforschung.ch)).