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Socially excluded localities revisited

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ABSTRACT This contribution critically assesses the use of the term “socially excluded (Roma) locality” in politics and in the practice of the Czech public policy towards the situation of the Roma minority. The paper first offers an overview of the genesis of the term within the development of Czech public policy towards Roma. In its conceptual part, it discusses its relation to theoretical concepts of ghetto and social exclusion. An empirical study of four localities, which were denoted as socially excluded, reveals a surprisingly great variety of conditions within these places. The authors argue that there is a tendency of an inflationary use of this term, which is guided by the presence of Roma while often abstracting from the issue of social exclusion.

KEY WORDS socially excluded localities – concept – policy – case study – Czechia

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1. Introduction

The EU has been pressuring candidate and member states to improve the situation of the 10–12 million Roma in Europe, which were in a recent communication described as living “in extreme marginalisation ... and in very poor socio-economic conditions” and facing “discrimination, social exclusion and segregation” (European Commission 2010, p. 2). However, international political pressure has often met limited commitment of national and local decision-makers, which reflects widespread public resistance to the objective of Roma inclusion. The efforts by the EU and other international institutions were hence not successful in substantially changing the overall situation (Barany 2001; UNDP 2003; Guy, Kovats 2006; Steward 2012; Guy, ed. 2013).

As the most disadvantaged Roma tend to live segregated from the majority population (Ringold, Orenstein, Wilkens 2004) one strategy increasingly promoted by the European Commission in order to improve the effectiveness of policies has been the application of territorial criteria. Using European funding, there have been attempts in a number of countries to identify these local concentrations of poverty and underdevelopment and address the situation of their inhabitants. In Slovakia, the evaluation of EU-funded projects had demonstrated that only a small share of resources reached municipalities with a very high share of segregated Roma (Hurrle et al. 2012). In order to improve the targeting of resources, the controversially discussed plans for the new operating programmes include so-called “take-away packages” for a predefined list of municipalities, in which the most underdeveloped and segregated Roma settlements are located (European Commission 2015; Marcinčin 2015). The identification of these locations is based on the results of country-wide mappings of *Roma communities* realized in 2003 and 2013 (Radičová 2004, Mušínska et al. 2013). Country-wide mappings have been realized also in Czechia, using the terms socially excluded Roma locality (2006) and socially excluded locality (2015; GAC 2006a, GAC 2015). A mapping of Roma communities was conducted also in Romania (Moisă et al. 2013). In Hungary, the government identified in 2007 the 33 most disadvantaged micro-regions, which were in 2007–10 targeted by two EU-financed development programmes. While this programme was not ethnically defined, one third of the Hungarian Roma population is estimated to live in the identified rural areas (Janza 2010, Gálosci-Kovács et al. 2011).

The main aim of this article is to analyse, discuss and question the use of the concept “socially excluded Roma locality / socially excluded locality” for the conceptualization of Roma exclusion and policy interventions in the area of Roma integration in Czechia. Introduced in 2006 by the authors of the above-mentioned mapping, this term has in recent years developed into a key concept in Czech public policy approaches towards the situation of the Roma minority. For instance,

many of the programmes that address Roma are defined as targeting inhabitants of socially excluded localities. The existence of a socially excluded locality in a municipality or micro-region is also a crucial condition for the involvement of the state Agency for Social Inclusion, which was created to support inclusion on the municipal level. Similarly, in the 2008–2013 programming period a number of interventions supported from EU Funds were directed towards socially excluded localities and the planning of the new operational programmes foresees to reserve significant resources to municipalities with socially excluded localities (Úřad vlády 2015).

Our interest in this issue was initiated during the field research in Roma population concentrations in smaller towns and rural municipalities that in many cases were identified only recently in newer regional mappings as being socially excluded or threatened by social exclusion (Dvořáková 2013, SocioFactor 2013). Our research has shown that the use of the concept of socially excluded locality has limitations to capture the highly variable character of Roma concentrations. We found that in many cases, it was the Roma ethnicity of the inhabitants rather than the state of social exclusion that was the prime reason for marking certain places as socially excluded localities.

In this paper we will first overview the genesis of the concept of socially excluded locality and its development into a key instrument in the Czech policy towards Roma. Secondly, we discuss the term socially excluded locality in the light of related concepts of ghetto and social exclusion. Then, we present the study of socially excluded localities in four mutually different settings. While acknowledging the concept's importance, we argue that there is a problematic tendency of inflationary use, which contributes to the stigmatization of population living in localities marked as socially excluded.

2. Socially excluded localities in policy

The Czech government approved the first Concept for Roma Inclusion already in 1999. Updated versions of the Concept were issued in 2004, 2009 and 2015. While the government has been aware of the problems and created institutions to tackle them, the gap between Roma and non-Roma population did not disappear. At the same time, there has been a strongly developing trend towards the spatial concentration of Roma (Úřad vlády 2014).

The term socially excluded locality was first introduced in 2006 with the publication of the report "Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities in the Czech Republic and Absorption Capacity of Entities Involved in this Field" (GAC 2006a). Conducted for the Ministry of Social Affairs, this so-called Gabal report identified 310 socially excluded Roma localities across the Czech territory. The survey has

had remained an important reference source up to 2015, when a new country-wide update was published by the same team as “Analysis of socially excluded localities” (GAC 2015). The titles of both reports point to a major shift in the representation of these localities. While the 2006 report was mapping “socially excluded Roma localities”, in 2015 the word “Roma” disappeared.

Reflecting the findings of the Gabal report, the central government established the *Agency for Social Inclusion in Roma Localities* in 2008. Its main task is to support municipalities in developing strategies for the integration of the inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities. In practice, the Agency is the most important state tool for approaching the issue of Roma exclusion. The existence of a socially excluded locality on the territory of the municipality is one official precondition for the support from the Agency and municipalities need to demonstrate this fact in their applications. In July 2012, the name of the Agency was shortened to *Agency for Social Inclusion*.

In 2010, the Strategy for Social Inclusion 2011–2015 was prepared by the Agency and approved by the central government in order “to support the social inclusion of people in socially excluded localities in the Czech Republic, which are currently mainly populated by the Roma” (Uřad vlády 2010, p. 2). The strategy contains 77 measures in six different policy areas (security; housing; education; social services, family, healthcare; employment, benefit systems; regional development).

At present, Czech policy towards Roma is hence guided by two different policy documents: the Concept for Roma Inclusion and the Strategy for Social Inclusion. While the Concept approaches the question of Roma inclusion from an ethnic perspective, the Strategy uses ethnically neutral language and focuses on socially excluded localities.

3. Socially excluded localities: the concept

The development of the political framework summarized above has been influenced by an important paradigmatic shift. While the issue of Roma exclusion was during the 1990s primarily perceived as a minority rights issue, the more recent terminology is dominated by ethnically neutral language. A new generation of social scientists questioned the validity of the ethnic approach arguing in favour of ethnically neutral policies that would tackle the most vulnerable Roma and persons of other ethnicity in the same situation with the instruments of social work (Moravec 2006). Some scholars even went so far to question the very existence of a shared Roma ethnicity (Jakoubek 2004). This school of thought strongly influenced the work of non-government organizations and the state administration.

The introduction of the concept social excluded Roma locality in the first Gabal report (GAC 2006a) was not only a reaction to the emerging new reality, in which

Roma lived increasingly spatially segregated, but also mirrored the critique of the ethnic paradigm. The advocates of ethnically neutral policies saw the application of spatial and social criteria as a way to avoid the problematic ethnic category while ensuring that the most vulnerable Roma would be better reached by general social policies. Defining the group of intervention by their place of residents would also permit to target both Roma and non-Roma living in the same locality. However, even the advocates of the new approach stressed that social exclusion occurs also outside of excluded localities. Moravec warns that it would be a mistake to simply replace “faulty concepts” like *member of the Roma community* or *of Roma ethnicity* with the “better, yet incomplete concept” *inhabitants of Roma localities* (Moravec 2006, p. 22).

One important argument for the introduction of the term socially excluded Roma locality in the 2006 mapping has been an inappropriate labelling of such places as “ghettos”, which was popularized at that time also by a public campaign by the Czech non-government organization People in Need that warned of the dangers of Roma ghettoization: “The ever increasing usage of this popular (vulgar) label with obvious negative connotations by journalists, social workers and members of the academic community reproduces and further increases the negative perception of these locations (...). Calling a locality a ‘ghetto’ hence contributes to the deepening of the social exclusion of its inhabitants.” (GAC 2006a, p. 11)

However, when an updated version of the mapping of socially excluded locality was published in 2015, even the more serious Czech newspapers, such as *Hospodařské noviny* (2015), used the term “socially excluded locality” and “ghetto” as synonyms. Apparently, the introduction of the term socially excluded locality / socially excluded Roma locality did not succeed to change the perception of these places by the general public.

We therefore also intend to explore, whether the term socially excluded locality describes a sociospatial formation that is different from the ghetto or if it is, as suggested by Toušek (2007, p. 21), merely a “euphemistic” term for the same phenomenon. Having criticized that social scientists were frequently lending the term ghetto from popular language in order to describe various forms of bounded urban formations without developing a rigid definition of the ghetto, Wacquant (2011) developed an analytic framework to distinguish ghettos more clearly from other types of ethnic formations. He states that ghettos are involuntarily inhabited by people of one ethnic or religious group and that ghettos are characterized by constraint, entrapment, exclusivity, encompassment, inward orientations, and stigma. At the same time, however, he also stresses the other side of the “Janus-faced” ghetto, which offers its inhabitants protection in an otherwise hostile society.

While the above-mentioned characteristics define historical and modern ghettos alike, a large number of studies described how deindustrialization and

mass unemployment changed the character of segregation in the post-Fordist era (Wilson 1987; Wacquant 1994; Marcuse 1997; Musterd, Ostendorf, eds. 1998; Venkatesh 2000). The modern ghetto has lost its economic ties to the outside world. It further suffered by the loss of minority elites, who benefitted from new opportunities for social mobility and fled the increasingly turbulent minority districts. In consequence of these changes, today's "hyper-ghettos" suffer under an "organizational vacuum" and are much more isolated than their historical predecessors (Agier 2009).

Applying Wacquant's analytical framework Stejskalová (2013), Růžička (2012) and Toušek (2007) have diagnosed the processes of ghettoization occurring in Czechia. They link the processes of sociospatial concentration to wider trends of labour market transformation, stratification of society and ethnization of poverty during postsocialism. While using the term "ghettoization", Růžička (2012) and Růžička and Toušek (2014) observed that the analysed Czech localities are smaller, partially ethnically mixed and have a relatively low level of criminality when compared with the American (hyper) ghettos. These differences bring us back to the issue of the universality of the modern ghetto, which Wacquant (2008) sees first of all as a North American phenomenon. Speaking of "anti-ghettos", Wacquant criticizes the usage of the term "ghetto" for the disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the French *banlieu*, which are more ethnically diverse and less clearly separated from the rest of urban society. This line of argumentation suggests that "ghetto" is not the correct term to describe the character of the majority of ethnically segregated places in Czechia, which were listed among socially excluded Roma locality and socially excluded locality (GAC 2006a, GAC 2015).

However, the other question is: What conditions need to be fulfilled in order to call a place "socially excluded"? In order to approach this issue let's first scrutinize definitions of socially excluded (Roma) localities. The first report (GAC 2006a) emphasized that socially excluded Roma locality is an area (ranging from a single multi-dwelling house to a whole town district) inhabited by Roma. The authors of the report also stressed that "for a locality to be perceived as Roma, it is not at all necessary that Roma inhabitants form the statistical majority" (GAC 2006a). The other key aspect in the definition was that the population is "socially excluded". In the report, social exclusion is described as the process "whereby an individual or a group of individuals is hindered or completely denied access to the resources, positions and opportunities allowing participation in the social, economic and political activities of the majority society" (GAC 2006a, p. 9).

The report further emphasized the existence of both symbolic and physical frontiers between locality and its surrounding that are "recognised by both the inhabitants of the locality and those who live outside" (GAC 2006a, p. 10). Although the concept of social exclusion is central to the definition of socially excluded locality, no clear guidance was offered how to identify and measure the

state and degree of social exclusion. The second report refers to “persons living in inadequate conditions (expressed by the number of welfare recipients)” (GAC 2015, p. 11). According to the interviewed authors of the study, the researchers were however not able to verify the assumed social status of the inhabitants in accordance with this definition as accessible data on welfare receivership were available only for larger statistical units. Reflecting this difficulty, we will refer in this article to the definition used in the first report.

Due to a lack of clarity in the use of the term of social exclusion in the above discussed reports, it is useful to recall the origins of the international debate on social exclusion. The term “exclusion” was coined in France during the 1970s and has been soon adapted in other Western European countries to grasp the essence of the new social situations that emerged in consequence of deindustrialization and economic restructuring. Even though the strong mechanisms for social protection of the Western European welfare states mitigated the worsening of the material situation of those who had lost their jobs due to these economic changes, the unemployed were described as suffering by the loss of opportunities to participate in society. “Exclusion” was hence described as the condition of those who were perceived as being left outside of society and outside the class system (Kronauer 2010). The interest in social exclusion has been closely related to the studies of new sociospatial formations that concentrated disadvantaged populations (e.g. Häussermann, Kronauer, Siebel 2004).

While the concept well reflected the changed character of employment, unemployment and poverty in contemporary societies, it was criticised for suggesting a contrast between “the society” and “the excluded”: “The society appears than as a non-problematic unit whereas the poor are seen as ‘outsiders’ and ‘problematic groups’” (Kronauer 2010, p. 18).

The discussion of three related concepts of “socially excluded locality”, “ghetto” and “social exclusion” has shown that these concepts are not unambiguous. While social exclusion has been adapted to describe a new situation of disadvantaged population without stigmatizing it by a discourse of “othering” based on ethnicity or using the pejorative term “ghetto”, the overview suggests that the labelling of a community as being “socially excluded” can also contribute to its perception as sociospatial concentration of outsiders, which are not an integral part of society. In the light of this discussion, it is important to analyze and assess how the term of socially excluded locality is used in practice, and whether its inappropriate use does not stigmatize population of places, which even do not fulfil basic criteria for social exclusion.

4. Socially excluded localities in practice: findings from four case studies

The idea to systematically address the concept and usage of the socially excluded locality was inspired by the experience gained during a number of research case studies of ‘socially excluded localities’ in various parts of Czechia. While our explicit goal was not to test the concept’s appropriateness, the experience gained during the fieldwork and while interviewing residents, local public officers and politicians indicated that the use of this concept has limitations to capture the highly variable character of Roma concentrations.

In this article, we use examples from four regions to demonstrate what different types of localities have been designated as socially excluded localities in official studies and documents. We selected cases that differ in regard to their geographical location and the past and present employment structures (Table 1). We also sought to include localities of different sizes and with different ownership structures.

All of the investigated localities had been identified by municipal officials in their applications for the co-operation with the Agency for Social Inclusion. In 5 of the 11 municipalities, the applicants were able to refer to the study of socially excluded (Roma) localities (GAC 2006a), which listed localities in Kolín, Spomyšl and Horní Počaply (both Mělnicko), Nové Město pod Smrkem and Bulovka (both Frýdlantsko). The only region omitted entirely in this study was Žluticko. However, two municipalities in this region were listed in a more detailed mapping of socially excluded localities in the Karlovy Vary Region (Dvořáková 2013). In the case of Frýdlantsko, localities in three additional municipalities were identified in a similar regional study for Liberec Region (SocioFactor 2013). The majority of the

Tab. 1 – Key characteristics of the selected regions and localities

Case	Type of location	Geographical, historical and social features	Number and character of localities analysed
Kolín	Industrial town	Well-accessible, urban, industrial	1 in city: several houses in central location, municipality-owned, 90% Roma
Mělnicko	Semi-rural region	Semi-peripheral, fertile agricultural land in combination with heavy industry	2 in villages: owned by inhabitants, highly problematic living conditions, 100% Roma
Žluticko	Rural inner periphery	Highly remote and sparsely populated, traditionally structurally weak, historically dominated by agriculture	4 in small town, 3 in villages: various types of ownership, varying degrees of separation / integration, in most cases less than 50% Roma
Frýdlantsko	Rural and post-industrial outer periphery	Geographically remote, strongly affected by deindustrialization	11 in small towns, 3 in villages: various types of ownership, varying degrees of separation / integration, varying proportion of Roma

new (or hitherto unreported) localities identified in regional mappings are also included in the newer study of socially excluded locality (GAC 2015).

In each case, we analysed official documents, media reports and discussions in social networks and conducted interviews during the fieldwork. The interviews were primarily conducted with residents of localities (20–30 per case). We also interviewed persons living in the surrounding of these localities (10–20 per region) and institutional actors with knowledge of the area and local social relations, such as mayors, social workers, directors of schools and kindergartens (20–30 per region). The purpose of these interviews was to learn about the genesis of each locality and gather information about the social and economic situation of households in the locality including their relationship to property owners and neighbours. We also sought to learn about specific issues, such as fluctuation among tenants or problems with debts.

We expected that places visited during the field research would comply with a common understanding of socially excluded locality, i.e. that they would be: “an area inhabited by a group whose members consider themselves to be Roma and/or are considered as such by a majority of people in their neighbourhood, and who are socially excluded” (GAC 2006a, p. 10). Furthermore, the locality would be “a single building in which several individuals or families live, or a whole town district consisting of several hundreds or thousands of residents” (GAC 2006a). An important feature distinguishing the locality would be “frontiers of such area”, which “may be both symbolic and physical. In both cases, the frontier would be recognised by both the inhabitants of the locality and those who live outside” (GAC 2006a). And finally, the spatial concentration would have an important role in the process of social exclusion: “This area is both the place to which the ‘excluded’ people are segregated and the place which contributes to their exclusion” (GAC 2006a). In the following paragraphs, we discuss the situation in each of the cases.

4.1. Kolín

The development of the locality begun only in the 2000s, when the city government decided to concentrate “problematic tenants” in municipality-owned tenement houses in Zengrova Street (Vrána, ed. 2011, p. 52). In addition to this, the process of increasing segregation was apparently supported by informal practices of the city’s housing administration. However, some local observers also pointed to the desire of relatives to move next to their family members contributing to a more spontaneous concentration dynamics. Soon the location was perceived as “Roma ghetto” and appeared in the 2006 Gabal report (GAC 2006b). In 2010, a new city government applied for a partnership with the state Agency for Social

Inclusion, which lasted from 2011 to 2014. The city was mainly interested in addressing the problematic situation in Zengrova Street, which was in the local media described as an exotic and even dangerous place. The perception of Zengrova Street as the city's socially excluded locality was at the beginning of the local partnership uncritically reproduced from the Gabal report in the so-called situation analysis, which was commissioned by the Agency for Social Inclusion and realized by an external team of social scientists (Vrána, ed. 2011). The authors of this analysis took the special status of Zengrova Street as a given fact without critically questioning how conditions in this locality would compare with other parts of the city.

Our interviews with the head of the local police did not confirm the street's perception as a crime hot-spot. The police perceived other town areas as more problematic. It should also be mentioned that Roma in Kolín do not live only in Zengrova, but are also dispersed in other parts of town.

At the time of our research in 2012, more than 90% of the locality's estimated 300–350 inhabitants were Roma with the remaining 10% being elderly non-Roma caught in the place due to their age, immobility and lacking financial resources. The visit of the houses and interviews with residents led to a mixed picture. On the one hand, technical conditions in most of the houses were good and have not differed significantly from other working class tenement houses in the city. While the common spaces showed signs of neglect, several of the flats visited were very well-kept and modernized by the inhabitants. Conditions were visibly worse in one of the houses, where relations among neighbours within the building suffered under intense conflicts. The social situation of the inhabitants was not homogenous. Some residents were unemployed and in interviews mentioned their problems with the payments for rent and electricity. Yet, others had regular work and have not seen themselves as "socially excluded".

The heterogeneity of conditions within the location was on the one hand side quite clearly in contrast with the one-sided negative public perception and media representation of the place. It also was at odds with our initial assumptions about the character of socially excluded localities. On the other hand, all interviewed residents emphasised the stigmatization of their street. Some of the better-off also expressed a strong sense of becoming victims of the city's discriminatory housing policy, which had forced them to accept housing in a place they did not like. This clearly is a very important issue, which distinguishes Zengrova Street from other localities in the city. Such stigma has negative influence on the identification of the residents with their location and brings additional disadvantages, for example when searching for employment.

4.2. Mělnicko

In Spomyšl and Horní Počaply-Křivenice, municipalities in the surroundings of Mělník, the investigated socially excluded localities are inhabited solely by Roma. In regard to the technical infrastructure, both localities are known to belong to the most underdeveloped in Czechia. At the time of our field investigation (2012), both sites included a combination of formal and informal housing structures built with simple methods from various materials. The living conditions are dangerous for the health of the inhabitants. In the case of Spomyšl there were serious problems with the quality of drinking water; in Horní Počaply many of the inhabited structures offered in winter only minimal protection against the cold. Being located over half a kilometre of the settlement requiring a walk along a busy road without sidewalks, the socially excluded locality in Spomyšl is physically separated from the rest of the village. The Horní Počaply socially excluded locality is located in the very centre of the tiny Křivenice village. However, the entire village is geographically separated from the rest of Horní Počaply by the vast industrial area of the Mělník power station.

Both socially excluded locality developed spontaneously. In the 1990s, Spomyšl settlement has begun to be formed as a squat of Roma, who lost work and accommodation in the nearby factory. At that time the squat was tolerated by the mayor of Spomyšl. The immigration of additional people and natural growth led to a steady increase of the number of inhabitants. The municipality decided later to legalize their residency by selling the property to one of the inhabitants. Today the property is jointly owned by 13 of the inhabitants, who belong to the same family. As all of the owners are indebted, there is a court-issued distress warrant on the property.

Even though the Spomyšl settlement is much more isolated and housing conditions are much more difficult than in the case of Kolín, the interviewed residents' attitude towards their home seemed more positive than in the case of Kolín. While criticizing the local municipality for allegedly treating the inhabitants of the settlements as second-class citizens when it comes to the provision of water or the collection of trash, the interviewed inhabitants declared that they would consider this locality as their home and expressed no interest in moving to another place. The example of Spomyšl points to the important, yet usually overlooked, question of the inhabitants' self-identification with their locality.

It seems likely that the genesis of the location, the degree of their autonomy and the experience of coercion influences how the place is perceived by its inhabitants.

While the interviews indicated that it might be possible to speak in the case of Spomyšl of a community of people identifying with their place, this seemed impossible in the case of Horní Počaply. The visit of the house and the interviews with residents led to the impression of a conflictual and also fragmented place,

with isolated and lethargic inhabitants. According to the local consultant of the Agency for Social Inclusion, a number of residents had left the place due to prison sentences. It was not possible to verify or rebut this information in the interviews with the residents.

4.3. *Žluticko*

Two socially excluded localities in Žluticko region were identified in the 2012 region-wide mapping commissioned by the Karlovy Vary region (Žlutice and Albeřice settlement within Hradiště army training ground) (Dvořáková 2013). In its 2012 application for a partnership with the Agency for Social Inclusion, the town Žlutice listed seven socially excluded localities in four municipalities (Žlutice-3, Čichalov-Mokrá, Valeč, Vrbice) and the Hradiště training ground (Žlutice 2012).

In the town Žlutice, the identified “localities” are individual tenement houses dispersed within municipality residential areas. It is very difficult to distinguish the identified houses from other houses in the area, as there is no visible barrier or visible differences in regard to the technical conditions. In addition to this, Roma account only for part of residents in these houses. The local situation was in discrepancy with what we thought to be a socially excluded locality. Also the interviewed political representatives expressed their uneasiness with the application of the concept, which they perceived as ill-fitting to the overall situation of the town, where a large proportion of the overall population is living in a difficult social situation.

According to the perception of the interviewed city representatives, the “real” socially excluded localities would rather be the locations in some of the rural municipalities listed above. As the result of housing privatization and the out-migration of population, some of the tenement houses that earlier belonged to collective farms have attracted new Roma inhabitants, who moved here usually from within the same micro-region or adjacent areas. While many of these places are perceived as Roma ghettos, our research showed significant differences among these locations in terms of their ethnic composition, quality of housing and social relations with original population. None of the locations was at the time of our research (2013) inhabited solely by Roma. Most importantly, the conflict lines seemed to develop less between ethnic groups, but rather between old-established households and recent immigrants. In most cases, both of these groups were ethnically mixed. According to a number of local residents, both from the majority and minority population, the ethnicity is of minor importance in case of the old-established residents. The unusually high number of ethnically mixed families seems to support this perception. However, the Roma ethnicity of some

of the new inhabitants clearly influences the way how these places and their inhabitants are perceived. Paradoxically, the ethnic dimension was underlined by the concept of the “white Roma”, by which a number of institutional interview partners referred to poor non-Roma who had moved into the localities to live there “in a Roma way”.

According to residents and local officials, the stability of some of the locations was in recent years threatened by the emergence of “cyclic migrants”, who were described as moving from location to location, often failing to pay their rent and behaving in problematic ways. While the emergence of these cyclic migrants had a major negative impact on the perception of the analysed locations by their surroundings, our attempt of mapping these cases indicated that the total number of such households was below ten in the entire micro-region.

4.4. Frýdlantsko

Our interest in the geographically remote Frýdlantsko microregion was driven by the growth in the number of reported socially excluded locality. Already in 2006, socially excluded localities were identified in two municipalities (Nové Město pod Smrkem, Bulovka; GAC 2006b). The mapping of socially excluded localities realised in the Liberec region from 2013 identified localities in six of the eighteen municipalities within the micro-region (SocioFactor 2013). In the case of the two towns, Frýdlant and Nové Město pod Smrkem, this study identified in total 11 socially excluded localities dispersed over the territory of both towns.

In our analysis realized in 2014, we aimed at the investigation of the places identified in these reports. First of all, we have revealed that there are significant differences among these localities in terms of housing conditions and the degree of segregation. In Frýdlant, the region’s administrative centre, there are four private rental houses inhabited exclusively by Roma (with the exception of one non-Roma family). Originally city property, these houses were privatized in 2005 to the highest offer. The owner acquired similar properties also in other municipalities in the Liberec Region. At the time of our field work (2014), the houses in Frýdlant were in disrepair and very bad hygienic conditions. While paying very high rent for substandard housing, tenants complained about disrespectful treatment from their landlord.

In Nové Město pod Smrkem, Roma live in a number of municipality-owned houses of which many are inhabited only by Roma. The largest concentration of Roma is in one large tenement house on the market square, which was listed in the SocioFactor study as socially excluded locality. There are, however, other municipality-owned houses of different sizes and character spread in many locations all-over the townscape that are inhabited by Roma. Even though none

of these houses is in a good technical shape, conditions are similar to those in other municipality-owned houses in the city and much better than in the privately owned houses in Frýdlant. Some of these houses were listed in the study whereas others were left out. Interviewed Roma appreciated the good quality of inter-ethnic relations in the town. However, they criticized the municipal housing administration for intentionally creating a division between the houses for Roma and the rest of population. Another socially excluded locality included in the report is the municipality-owned emergency accommodation, which was at the time of our field research inhabited only by Roma and in a state of disrepair. The only heating possibilities were mobile electrical heaters owned by the tenants. The third type of socially excluded locality were prefabricated houses located in proximity to the town centre. Owned by large property management agency with nation-wide span, these houses were relatively well-maintained and only partially inhabited by Roma, with a maximum of two Roma families per one entrance. It was not clear at all for which reason these houses were in the study listed as socially excluded locality.

In rural municipalities like Bulovka and Višnova, Roma inhabit both private homes and rural tenement houses, which used to belong to collective farms. Some of the family homes in Bulovka local settlement Arnoltice and also tenement houses in the municipality of Bulovka were listed in the SocioFactor 2013 study. In our field work we found that some of the family owner-occupied houses were in bad technical conditions and the owners stated to be in a complicated social situation. In case of another building listed as socially excluded locality, the situation was much better. The building was owned by one of the inhabitants, who had qualified work in a Liberec-based factory. He renovated the building gradually together with his tenants. All of the inhabitants were Roma.

Another phenomenon observed in the rural municipalities is the rise of cyclic migration in a number of privately-owned tenement houses, which seemed to resemble the development in the Žlutice micro-region. While these houses and their inhabitants were identified by the interviewed local mayor as a source of conflict, we have not confirmed these problems during our visit of the buildings in question. This points to the high changeability of conditions in locations that are characterized by a high population fluctuation.

5. Implications of the Case Studies

The aim of the case studies was to analyse whether the places identified by reports and local governments as socially excluded locality complied with a common understanding of socially excluded locality. In order to answer this question let us first recall how the original Gabal report (GAC 2006a) defined socially excluded

Roma localities. Table 2 links the three key definitions used in the report with the findings from the four studied micro-regions.

During our field research, we found that the term “socially excluded locality” has been used to refer to places, which differed significantly in regard to social exclusion. From the 24 localities analysed in the four studied regions, 11 places did not meet the definition of socially excluded locality used in the first Gabal report (GAC 2006a). There is a high variety of conditions among these places, which are the result of differences in their geographic setting (urban, rural), size, ownership structure and historical development.

More importantly, we found that while the ethnically neutral terminology of the term would imply that ethnicity should no longer be in the centre of attention, in practice, socially excluded localities are associated only with the concentration of Roma. This ethnic dimension is not so surprising, as the presence of Roma has been a key element in the use of the concept since its introduction. This points to a discrepancy between the symbolically used language and the real practice, which is characterised by a strong association between ethnic and social categories of Roma and social exclusion.

The introduction of the socially excluded locality into the Czech political framework was part of a general attempt to de-ethnize the practices of Roma inclusion. However, the findings from the four case studies demonstrated that the labelling of places as socially excluded localities is often not driven by a careful analysis of the inhabitants’ social situation, but by the perception of their ethnic otherness. The blending of social and ethnic criteria is supported by the vagueness of the definitions of social exclusion that is leaving space for subjective interpretations.

Roma concentrations are interpreted as socially excluded even in situations where the actual social and economic situation of the Roma is not significantly different from the situation of the local majority population, when social tension and barriers were not registered and where it was hard to detect signs, practices and processes of social exclusion. In the territorial context of the rural and impoverished regions of Žluticko and Frýdlantsko social problems are widespread among local population and not related specifically to the Roma community. We found that in peripheral rural areas, poverty does not necessarily concentrate in particular localities inhabited by Roma, but threatens substantial parts of the local community.

A number of researchers and decision-makers interviewed during our research admitted that the term socially excluded locality often does not fit to the local reality. Nevertheless, they used the term as they felt a need to frame existing social problems into an established conceptual framework. However, the practices of the application of the concept of socially excluded locality leads to labelling, that may result in stigmatization and symbolic exclusion of places that do not conform to

Tab. 2 – The analysed cases in relation to definitions used in GAC 2006a

Case	Definitions used in GAC 2006a	both the place to which the “excluded” people are segregated and the place which contributes to their exclusion	frontiers of such area as important distinguishing feature, which may be both symbolic and physical and are recognised by both the inhabitants of the locality and those outside	Conclusion: Are the studied places socially excluded Roma localities in the meaning of GAC 2006a?
	<p>a) a single building in which several individuals or families live, or a whole town district consisting of several hundreds or thousands of residents</p> <p>b) inhabited by a group whose members consider themselves to be Roma and/or are considered as such by a majority of people in their neighbourhood</p> <p>c) and who are socially excluded</p>			
Kolín	<p>a) yes (group of buildings)</p> <p>b) yes</p> <p>c) yes (with some exceptions)</p>	Yes, inhabitants considered stigmatization of area as key problem	Yes, high level of stigmatization and negative media perception	YES
Mělnicko	<p>a) yes</p> <p>b) yes</p> <p>c) yes</p>	Yes, even though some residents distinguished between complaints concerning perceived discrimination and a principle satisfaction with life in their secluded community	Yes, both symbolic (both localities) and spatial (Spomyšl)	YES
Žluticko	<p>a) yes</p> <p>b) yes, but Roma constituted only minority in most localities</p> <p>c) problematic claim if understood in relation to local majority population</p>	While the extent and effects of the concentration differ from place to place, the more important factor is the disadvantaged geographical position of the whole municipalities	Houses inhabited by Roma are locally recognised as being Roma-inhabited, yet, clear symbolic division between village and locality was identified only in one case (Valeč)	Concept of socially excluded locality does not fit well in most of the cases
Frydlantsko	<p>a) yes</p> <p>b) yes, but Roma constituted only small minority in some of the localities</p> <p>c) in some cases problematic claim if understood in relation to local majority population, in other cases this is the case due to the strong stigmatizing effect of the locality itself</p>	<p>Frydlant: yes</p> <p>Nové Město pod Smrkem: only in case of one neglected building</p> <p>Rural municipalities: more important factor is the disadvantaged geographical position of the whole municipalities</p>	<p>Frydlant: yes</p> <p>Nové Město pod Smrkem: only in case of the minority of identified buildings</p> <p>Rural municipalities: relevant only in one case</p>	Adequate for situation in 4 Frydlant localities, one building in Nové Město pod Smrkem and one rural locality. It is not fully adequate in the other cases.

basic criteria of exclusion. The widespread and uncritical use of the concept and its misinterpretation hence calls for the revision of its use.

One additional issue to be discussed is the underlying assumption of the negative effect of ethnic segregation. While the term socially excluded locality is a Czech invention, there is a rich stock of international literature dealing with the spatial dimension of exclusion (e.g. Wilson 1987; Häussermann, Kronauer, Siebel 2004). The crucial question is whether the life in segregated places further strengthens exclusion and marginalization. The so-called neighbourhood effect has been widely discussed without a clear resolution (e.g. van Ham et al. 2012). Yet, while it is generally accepted that socio-spatial dialectics (Soja 1980) reinforces social effects in situations of spatial coexistence, these effects might not be only negative and leading to a downward spiral. As Kronauer points out spatial concentration can have positive effects such as in the case of ethnic enclaves and asks whether spatial concentration always worsen “the situation or could there be circumstances where they help at the opposite to master the effects of social exclusion?” (Kronauer 2010, p. 216).

While references to usury, drug usage, prostitution, etc. are at the heart of Czech discourse, positive potentials of supportive networks and solidarity within disadvantaged and spatially confined communities are rarely mentioned. Some Czech authors justified this focus on the negative aspects of ethnic concentrations with the alleged absence of ethnic solidarity in Roma culture, which would in difference to other ethnical groups be characterized by the dominance of family structures and the absence of a shared ethnic consciousness (Jakoubek 2004). In view of the fluidity of any national or ethnical consciousness and the obvious discrepancies between proclaimed and daily practiced solidarity in all kind of national or ethnic groups (including the ethnic Czechs), we argue that it is not possible to omit the solidarity among neighbours in a “locality” solely by referring to these alleged cultural traits.

While inhabitants of some localities complained about the pathological behaviour of some neighbours (drug and alcohol abuse, criminal activities), which put great strain on the relations, our research also identified functioning community relations and solidarity among neighbours. Such positive findings were more common in the rural localities. They involved both people of Roma and non-Roma ethnicity and people living inside and outside the “locality”. Examples include the joint organizing of activities for children (Albeřice settlement, Žluticko; Bulovka, Frýdlantsko), the sharing of vegetables from own production among neighbours (Žlutice), the organizing of shopping trips by car or joint rides to places of employment (Žlutice, Frýdlantsko), or the involvement of tenants in the reconstruction of a building (Bulovka-Arnoltice, Frýdlantsko). In the light of these cooperative relations it seems inappropriate to describe these people and their residential places as “socially excluded”. We point to a mechanical application of the term of

socially excluded locality, which brings misleading representations and risks of creating ambiguities.

Although the choices for Roma on the housing market are often limited by discriminatory practices and limited economic means, the discourse and analyses on socially excluded localities have only rarely considered to what extent might be the Roma concentrations also the result of their voluntary choices. We should recall in this context Wacquant's statement on the two faces of the ghetto, which is both a place of oppression and a safe haven in a hostile environment. While such effects are likely to be more relevant in larger localities, family bounds are one factor that clearly drives processes of ethnic concentration. Especially in the case of very small "localities", which are in often hardly more than a house that contains two or three families, it is difficult to draw a line between justified concerns about segregation and intolerance towards visible signs of otherness.

6. Conclusion

At the beginning of this article we have documented that the concept of "socially excluded locality" plays a central role in the Czech institutional response to the exclusion of Roma. There have been various attempts to map these places and develop policy strategies and funding schemes to address their situation. Our research in four different regions revealed that the term has been in inflationary usage. While the concept is too broad to capture various local challenges, it was used in many situations that have not complied with the definition of social exclusion. While the concept was supposed to de-ethnize the debate on Roma poverty, our research has shown that 'the socially excluded' is commonly understood as a synonym for Roma and socially excluded locality as the designation of places where Roma live, more or less independently of the actual social situation of these people. The practices in the use of the term socially excluded locality do not prevent stigmatization. On contrary, they contribute to the negative labeling of Roma, even in case when we can hardly speak about social exclusion from the local population.

We do not plead for the abolishment of the entire concept, whose value is in place based policy intervention. The research confirmed that there are highly stigmatized places of involuntary territorial confinement with deteriorating technical and poor hygienic conditions, which require specific attention. Social exclusion has many dimensions and spatial concentration and segregation of socially excluded is a crucial aspect that strengthens the other dimensions. The negative impact of living in these socio-spatial formations thus requires the use of specific place based measures in addition to broader and universal social policies to effectively tackle the root causal mechanisms of the exclusion process.

However, can we reconcile the existing contrast between the intent to use the ethnically neutral concept and the reality of the Czech discourse and practice, in which socially excluded localities are understood as a phenomenon related to the Roma? In our view, this implicit ethnical dimension embodied in the usage of the term shall be acknowledged. We suggest that studies of such localities, which are explicitly dealing with Roma, shall directly refer to socially excluded Roma localities. At the same time, the concept shall be also open for application to such socio-spatial formations, whose inhabitants are socially excluded, while not necessarily being Roma. This for instance concerns spatial concentrations of migrant workers or geographically isolated settlements with a high proportion of senior citizen. Yet even in those cases, where the usage of the term socially excluded locality / socially excluded Roma locality is appropriate, we should be aware of the fact that the designation as socially excluded (Roma) locality brings additional stigma for the place and its inhabitants.

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SHRNUTÍ

Přehodnocení pojmu sociálně vyloučené lokality

Příspěvek kriticky hodnotí užívání termínu „sociálně vyloučená (romská) lokalita“ v praxi českých veřejných politik vůči Romům. V úvodní části se zaměřuje na diskusi pojmu sociálně vyloučená (romská) lokalita v kontextu politik zaměřených na řešení narůstající deprivace Romů. Termín byl zaveden autory celostátního mapování takto označených lokalit v roce 2006 (tzv. Gabalova zpráva). Od té doby se stal klíčovým konceptem v přístupech českých veřejných politik k Romům. Podpůrné programy zaměřené na Romy jsou obvykle cíleny na obyvatele tzv. sociálně vyloučených lokalit. Existence sociálně vyloučené lokality je také podmínkou pro spolupráci obcí se státní Agenturou pro sociální začleňování, jedinou státní institucí, které komplexně řeší otázky sociální inkluze na úrovni obcí, a také častou podmínkou pro žádosti o čerpání financí z fondů EU. Zavedené užití termínu posiluje zájem úřadů veřejné správy tyto lokality identifikovat a mapovat.

V navazující části se proto příspěvek zaměřuje na koncepční vymezení termínu sociálně vyloučená lokalita, a to zejména ve vztahu k souvisejícím teoretickým konceptům ghetta a sociálního vyloučení. Zavedení pojmu sociálně vyloučená lokalita bylo původně odůvodňováno stigmatizací, kterou s sebou označení „ghetto“ nese. Sociálně vyloučená romská lokalita byla v tzv. Gabalově zprávě definována jako „prostor obývaný skupinou, jejíž členové se sami považují za Romy a/nebo jsou za Romy označováni svým okolím, a jsou sociálně vyloučeni“. Při snaze o odetnizování otázky došlo posléze k úpravě termínu na sociálně vyloučená lokalita. Přes tuto snahu jsou ale termíny „sociálně vyloučená lokalita“ a „ghetto“ v mediálním diskurzu často používány synonymně.

Po teoretické části následují případové studie několika lokalit, které byly v předchozích zprávách označeny jako sociálně vyloučené. Lokality se nacházejí ve vzájemně odlišných geografických prostředích. Zengrova ulice v Kolíně je příkladem městské koncentrace v průmyslovém centru Čech. Další dvě lokality – Spomyšl a Horní Počaply – se nalézají ve vesnicích v okolí Mělníka, tedy v ekonomicky relativně stabilním regionu. Zbývající lokality se nacházejí ve strukturálně znevýhodněných regionech. Žluticko je zemědělským regionem ve vnitřní periferii s dlouhodobým nedostatkem pracovních příležitostí. Frýdlantsko, je příkladem pohraničního industriálního regionu Česka, kde došlo ke zhoršení sociální situace v důsledku propadu textilního průmyslu. Prostřednictvím studií lokalit ilustrujeme vysokou různorodost míst označovaných termínem „sociálně vyloučená lokalita“. V některých případech jde o větší prostorové celky (ulice, skupina domů), v jiných se tak ale označují jen jednotlivé domy. Spojujícím znakem lokalit je především prostorová koncentrace Romů. Právě na základě přítomnosti Romů jsou lokality označeny jako sociálně vyloučené, často bez podrobnějšího ověření stavu sociálního vyloučení. Použití pojmu se jeví jako nejproblematictější v případech malých obcí v periferních oblastech, kde se sociální a ekonomické problémy zdaleka netýkají pouze míst prostorové koncentrace Romů a kde je sociálním vyloučením ohrožena podstatně širší skupina obyvatel.

Autoři poukazují na inflační trend v používání pojmu. Tento problematický trend je důsledkem nedostatečného konceptuálního vymezení pojmu a zejména pak praktik při jeho používání, jež se přizpůsobuje současnému politickému a institucionálnímu rámci. Do jisté míry uměle jsou označována i místa, v nichž podstata sociálního vyloučení obyvatel není naplněna. Označení lokality jako sociálně vyloučené bohužel ale přispívá k negativnímu vnímání a stigmatizaci jejích obyvatel, a může tak stimulovat rozvoj procesů vedoucích k sociálnímu vyloučení.

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Lucie Trlifajová a Jakob Hurrle

Nic se tady neděje...

*Životní podmínky
na periferním venkově*

Praha 2018

klíčová slova: venkov, periferie, sociálně prostorové nerovnosti, znevýhodnění, kvalita života, deprivace

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10. Stěhování chudých a vznik sociálně vyloučených lokalit na venkově z perspektivy místních samospráv²⁴

Lucie Trlifajová, Jakob Hurre

Expertní rozhovor: „To je hodně zajímavý, že ten region je natolik chudý a jako přes léto se tady zvyšuje koncentrace lidí, kteří nevím z čeho žijí, jestli jsou to sociální dávky, teď teda myslím romské obyvatelstvo, že se opravdu stěhují všichni ti rodinní příslušníci, hodně mladých lidí, které tady v zimě nevidíte, a přišlo mi, že když je region bohatý, tak ty lidi si tam prostě tu skulinku nějakou najdou, ale oni prostě se stahují sem do regionu, který pro ně nic nenabízí, ale jestli ten život tady je tak levnej, že se jim to vyplatí, nevím...“

Nerovnoměrný prostorový rozvoj a vznik segregovaných lokalit, v nichž dochází ke koncentraci znevýhodněných obyvatel, je jednou z nejstarších otázek sociálních věd, která se řešila v různých historických a sociokulturních kontextech (např. Engels 1957; Sibley 1995; Wirth 1997; Wacquant 2008; Duneier 2016). Vznik znevýhodněných prostor v současných městech západního světa je často popisován jako výsledek rostoucí polarizace společnosti a lze ho chápat jako odvrácenou stranu procesů globalizace a gentrifikace velkých měst. Zároveň v řadě zemí narůstá kontrast mezi úspěšnými ekonomickými centry a regiony v krizi.

Společenské a ekonomické změny po roce 1990 vedly i v případě České republiky k nárůstu nerovností, které se postupně začaly projevovat i v proměně prostorových struktur. V centru pozornosti této publikace stojí fenomén periferizace některých znevýhodněných venkovských a postindustriálních oblastí. Paralelně ovšem jak v ekonomických centrech, tak i v periferních regionech dochází k prostorové polarizaci uvnitř těchto prostor. Jejich nejviditelnějším projevem je vznik segregovaných míst. V české sociologii a geografii se vedou debaty o tom, do jaké míry je správné aplikovat vědecké pojmy jako „gentrifikace“, „segregace“ nebo „ghetto“ při popisu těchto trendů. V některých ohledech je sice český vývoj podobný vývoji popsanému v mezinárodní literatuře, zároveň je ale také silně ovlivněn specifickým postkomunistickým kontextem Česka (Toušek 2007; Sýkora 2010; Sýkora, Bouzarovski

²⁴ Vznik textu kapitoly byl podpořen v rámci projektu specifického vysokoškolského výzkumu č. 260462.

2011; Růžička 2012). Jedním z výstupů těchto debat je zavedení termínu „sociálně vyloučená lokalita“ (SVL) pro popis míst, ve kterých se koncentrují nejchudší obyvatelé. Zájem o mapování a pojmenování takových míst reagoval na zprávy o rostoucí prostorové koncentraci Romů a vyústil v publikování první tzv. Gabalovy mapy v roce 2006 (GAC 2006). Tehdy použitý termín „sociálně vyloučená romská lokalita“ odrážel snahu najít neutrálnější termín, než byl silně negativně konotovaný pojem ghetto, jímž takováto místa často označovala media. Autoři závěrečné zprávy zmíněného výzkumu z roku 2006 definují sociálně vyloučené romské lokality následně:

„Jako sociálně vyloučenou romskou lokalitu označujeme prostor obývaný skupinou, jejíž členové se sami považují za Romy a/nebo jsou za Romy označováni svým okolím, a jsou sociálně vyloučeni. Na jedné straně se může jednat o jednotlivý dům, ve kterém žije několik jednotlivců či rodin, nebo celou městskou čtvrť čítající několik stovek nebo dokonce tisíc obyvatel na straně druhé. Tento prostor je jak místem, do něhož jsou ‚vyloučení‘ odkázáni, tak i místem, které se na jejich vyloučení podílí. Hranice této lokality mohou být jak symbolické, tak fyzické. V obou případech si však existenci těchto hranic uvědomují jak ti, kteří danou lokalitu obývají, tak ti, kteří žijí mimo ni“

(GAC 2006: 10).

Na rozdíl od Slovenska, Maďarska a dalších středo/východoevropských zemích, kde většina Romů žije na venkově, žije většina českých Romů v industriálních městech. Tento stav má kořeny v politických opatřeních socialistického Československa, která podporovala stěhování Romů z venkovských oblastí Slovenska do českých průmyslových aglomerací. Geografická distribuce Romů se odrazila i ve výsledcích mapování sociálně vyloučených romských lokalit z roku 2006, které identifikovaly většinu vyloučených lokalit v industriálních aglomeracích severních Čech a severní Moravy (GAC 2006).

Následující desetiletí přineslo zvýšený zájem o fenomén sociálního vyloučení, vedoucí jak ke vzniku institucionálního rámce, který měl za cíl řešení situace jejich obyvatel (Agentura pro sociální začleňování), tak i k proměně diskurzu, kdy byly postupně zdůrazňovány socioekonomické aspekty sociálního vyloučení oproti její etnické dimenzi. To postupně vedlo k odstranění přívlastku „romský“ jak v názvu lokalit, tak i vládních institucí a dokumentech (Hurrle et al. 2016). V aktualizaci mapy sociálně vyloučených lokalit, která vznikla na základě zadání Ministerstva práce a sociální věcí z roku 2014, již autoři nedefinovali sociální vyloučení prostřednictvím etnicity, ale pomocí pěti indikátorů: 1. vyloučení z trhu práce, 2. kontakt se sociálním okolím, 3. přístup k veřejným službám, 4. způsoby řešení osobních

potíží, 5. míra politické participace (GAC 2015: 14–15). Etnicita obyvatel tedy na rozdíl od roku 2006 již nebyla přímo uvedená v definici, ale byla uvedená jako faktor, který ovlivňuje kontakt se sociálním okolím.

Jedním z hlavních zjištění mapování z roku 2015 v porovnání s výsledky z roku 2006 byl silný nárůst počtu sociálně vyloučených lokalit ve venkovském prostředí. Tento fakt vedl autory k formulaci hypotézy, že „sociální vyloučení v České republice přestává mít svůj dominantně městský charakter“ (GAC 2015: 11). V absolutních číslech stále platí, že nejvíce osob v sociálně vyloučených lokalitách žije ve městech, kde se také nacházejí největší lokality (GAC 2015). Nárůst vyloučených lokalit na venkově může nicméně představovat nový a potenciálně velmi problematický trend v procesech prostorové segregace Romů a dalších marginalizovaných skupin.

Malé obce disponují výrazně nižšími kapacitami k řešení situace sociálního vyloučení. Zdá se pravděpodobně, že prostorová a společenská izolace osob na venkově může být hlubší než v případě segregace v rámci města. Toto platí zejména v případech, kdy nové segregované lokality vznikají ve znevýhodněných periferních oblastech, kde sociální a ekonomická situace celého mikroregionu přináší další bariéry pro účast ve společnosti a na pracovním trhu. Výzkumníci ze Slovenska, kde se nachází většina segregovaných osad v regionech s největšími strukturálními problémy, použili pro pojmenování stejného fenoménu termín „dvojitá marginalizace“ (Radičová 2002).

Výsledky mapování z roku 2015 ani jejich porovnání s předcházejícím mapováním o devět let dříve nenabízejí vysvětlení procesů, které přispěly v mnoha venkovských regionech k nárůstu počtu míst, jež jsou vnímána jako sociálně vyloučená. Vznik venkovských sociálně vyloučených lokalit pravděpodobně nelze jednoduše vysvětlit jako proces vytlačování osob s nízkými příjmy do míst s nižšími náklady na bydlení, protože současné nastavení sociálního systému nevytváří podporu pro stěhování z města na venkov. Princip lokálně zastropovaných nákladů na bydlení a způsob výpočtu dávek v hmotné nouzi, který stojí na principu, že domácnosti má po zaplacení nákladů na bydlení zůstat minimální částka na živobytí, vyrovnává případné úspory z levnějšího nájmu. Sociální systém zároveň nekompensuje občanům z periferních obcí zvýšené náklady pro cesty na úřady, do práce a do škol, které život v malých obcích vyvolává. Život na venkově se tedy pro chudé domácnosti, které bydlí v nájmu a jsou příjemci sociálních dávek, nezdá být ekonomicky vhodnou volbou.

Co ale je v takovém případě hnacím faktorem velkého nárůstu počtu venkovských lokalit? Na základě analýzy dat, poznatků z několika vlastních výzkumů sociálního vyloučení, které probíhaly v několika venkovských regionech ČR a měly charakter lokálních a regionálních studií (Hurrle, Kučera, Trlifajová 2011, 2012; Ripka, Pixová 2012; Hajská, Pixová et al. 2013;

Hurrle, Kopecká, Kubičková 2015; Hurrle, Kučera, Grundza 2015), a analýzy lokálních mediálních diskurzů kolem vzniku vyloučených lokalit jsme byli schopni formulovat jako hypotézy tři vysvětlení.

Prvním vysvětlením je nedobrovolná migrace z měst do periferních venkovských sídel. Hnacím faktorem může být jak nedostupnost bydlení na komerčním trhu, tak cílené politiky některých samospráv, které usilují o odsun neoblíbených skupin mimo vlastní území. Nejznámější případ politicky řízeného stěhování z města do vzdálené vesnice v periferních polohách se odehrál už před mnoha lety v režii starosty Jiřího Čunka, který vystěhoval už v roce 2006 některé romské rodiny z Vsetína do vesnic na Jesenicku (Vomastková 2011).

Alternativní vysvětlení předpokládá, že vznik nových vyloučených lokalit je výsledkem zpožděných procesů segregace a koncentrace uvnitř venkovského prostředí. Tedy jde o procesy, které se odehrály uvnitř měst už dříve nebo byly ve městech dříve vidět. V dřívějších výzkumech jsme se setkali s takovým vývojem například v případě Žluticka, kde jsou místa označovaná jako vyloučené lokality obydlena převážně Romy. I když jsou obyvatelé těchto lokalit často vnímáni jako „přestěhovalci“, rozhovory přímo s nimi ukázaly, že se jedná do velké míry o osoby, které pocházejí ze stejného mikroregionu, kde bydlely v minulosti ve více integrovaných formách bydlení (Hurrle, Kučera, Trlifajová 2013). V takových případech může vznik vyloučených lokalit souviset jak s privatizací bydlení a segmentarizací místního trhu s bydlením, tak s uvolněním bytových kapacit v důsledku vylidňování malých obcí s omezenými pracovními příležitostmi.

Třetí vysvětlení nárůstu počtu venkovských lokalit vychází z toho, že se během poslední dekády výrazně zlepšila znalost problematiky sociálního vyloučení, a to zejména díky založení Agentury pro sociální začleňování, která realizovala velký počet výzkumů na lokální a regionální úrovni. Z tohoto důvodu se zdá být pravděpodobné, že některé „nové“ venkovské lokality jsou staršího data, než implikuje srovnání údaje z GAC 2006 a GAC 2015. Tomuto odpovídají i naše poznatky z některých dalších regionálních výzkumů.

Předkládaný text si klade za cíl nabídnout lepší porozumění procesům prostorové koncentrace osob ohrožených sociálním vyloučením na venkově. Díky zkušenosti z různých částí České republiky víme, že pro každé z výše uvedených vysvětlení existuje určitá evidence. Vzhledem ke značným rozdílům mezi jednotlivými obcemi a regiony je zároveň velmi obtížné určit, zda je některé z nich dominantní.

Na základě dat z dotazníkového šetření mezi místními samosprávami se pokusíme v této kapitole popsat charakter a vznik venkovských SVL a trajektorie a příčiny stěhování jejich obyvatel. Naším cílem je lépe porozumět procesům, které vedou k prostorové koncentraci chudých ve venkovském kontextu.

Zároveň je třeba zdůraznit, že jde o zachycení určité perspektivy na danou problematiku, jež se může lišit od pohledu obyvatel tzv. vyloučených lokalit. Jde nicméně o podstatný pohled, který zásadně ovlivňuje politické přístupy a veřejné vnímání fenoménu sociálního vyloučení a stěhování chudých na venkov.

10.1 Metodologie

Výše popsané hypotézy sloužily jako základ pro realizaci dotazníkového šetření mezi zástupci obcí do velikosti 5000 obyvatel, v nichž byly v roce 2014 identifikovány tzv. sociálně vyloučené lokality (GAC 2016), a zástupci sociálních odborů v příslušných obcích s rozšířenou působností (ORP).

Výzkum se zaměřoval na obce, v nichž byly identifikovány tzv. sociálně vyloučené lokality, tento termín ovšem často označuje místa velmi odlišného charakteru a zároveň má stále silnou etnickou dimenzi – místa označovaná jako SVL často bývají úzce spojena s prostorovou koncentrací Romů a naopak například prostorové koncentrace cizinců nebo osob bez domova tímto termínem označovány nejsou (Hurre et al. 2016). Z tohoto důvodu jsme se v dotaznících ptali na vzorce prostorové koncentrace a stěhování Romů a osob ohrožených sociálním vyloučením. V dotazníku jsme tuto skupinu popisovali jako „chudé a specificky chudé romské domácnosti“. Otázky směřované k obcím kladly důraz na vývoj a vnímání lokalit označovaných jako „problematičké“, ve vztahu k ORP jsme se naopak více zaměřovali na příčiny stěhování.

Z vlastní výzkumné zkušenosti víme, že znalost samospráv může být v řadě aspektů nepřesná, a může replikovat některé mýty a stereotypy o chudých, a zejména chudých Romech. Proto je třeba zdůraznit, že předkládaný text nezachycuje proces vzniku nebo nárůstu problémů obyvatel určité lokality objektivně, ale jde o interpretaci z perspektivy místních samospráv. I přesto se domníváme, že na základě těchto dat je možné identifikovat obecnější trendy, byť v místním kontextu může jít o komplexnější souběh více faktorů.

V rámci šetření byly rozeslány dvě sady otázek – první z nich se zaměřovala na vnímání vývoje a situace v místech označovaných jako lokality z perspektivy vedení obce. Dotazníky byly rozeslány všem starostům obcí do 5000 obyvatel, ve kterých byly v roce 2014 identifikovány SVL (144 obcí). Návratnost byla 54 %. Druhá sada otázek byla zaslána vedoucím sociálních odborů, pod něž spadají obce, v nichž byly identifikovány SVL. Dotazníky se kromě vývoje lokality zaměřovaly podrobněji na příčiny a trajektorie stěhování. Návratnost dotazníku byla u sociálních odborů 91 % (z celkem 67 oslovených ORP).

Sběr dat probíhal od 1. června do 15. července 2016 prostřednictvím online dotazníku. V obou případech – dotazníky pro starosty obcí i sociální od-

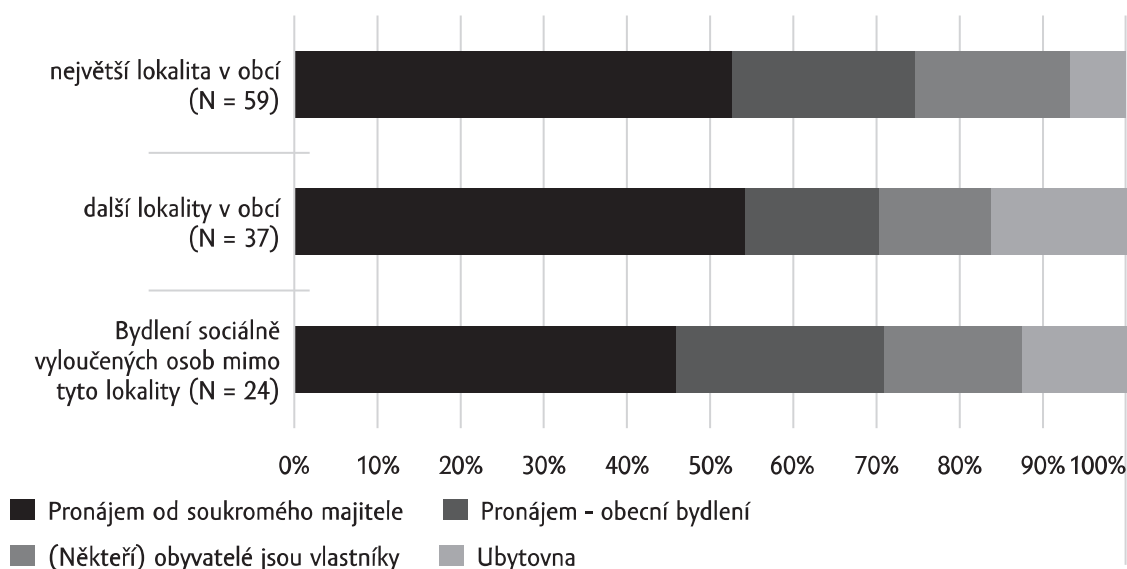
bory – šlo o uzavřené a polouzavřené otázky. U jednotlivých podsouborů otázek byla respondentům dále nabídnuta možnost komentáře. Komentáře byly použity k doplnění a interpretaci dat z dotazníků.

10.2 Venkovské sociálně vyloučené lokality – základní zjištění

I když mapování sociálně vyloučených lokalit z roku 2015 kladlo důraz na socioekonomické aspekty sociálního vyloučení a poukazovalo na nárůst lokalit, které nejsou obývány převážně Romy, ve venkovském prostředí je sociální vyloučení silně spojeno s romskou etnicitou. Data z předkládaného výzkumu ukazují, že všechny malé obce, v nichž byly identifikovány SVL, mají podle jejich starostů část obyvatel romské národnosti. Romové také podle odpovědí obvykle tvoří většinu obyvatel sociálně vyloučených lokalit v těchto obcích. V několika případech bylo zdůrazněno, že lokality jsou etnicky smíšené. Romové ovšem často žili i na dalších místech v obci.

I přesto, že v malých obcích výrazně převažuje vlastnické bydlení (ČSÚ 2014), jak ukazuje graf na obrázku 10.1 níže, v případě venkovských SVL jde převážně o nájemní vztahy, a to nejčastěji u soukromých majitelů (více než polovina případů), dále jsou přibližně v pětině případů vlastníky někteří obyvatelé lokality, podobné je i zastoupení obecního bydlení. Zbytek, téměř desetinu venkovských lokalit, pak tvořila místa označovaná jako „ubytovny“.

Obrázek 10.1: Typ bydlení v sociálně vyloučených lokalitách

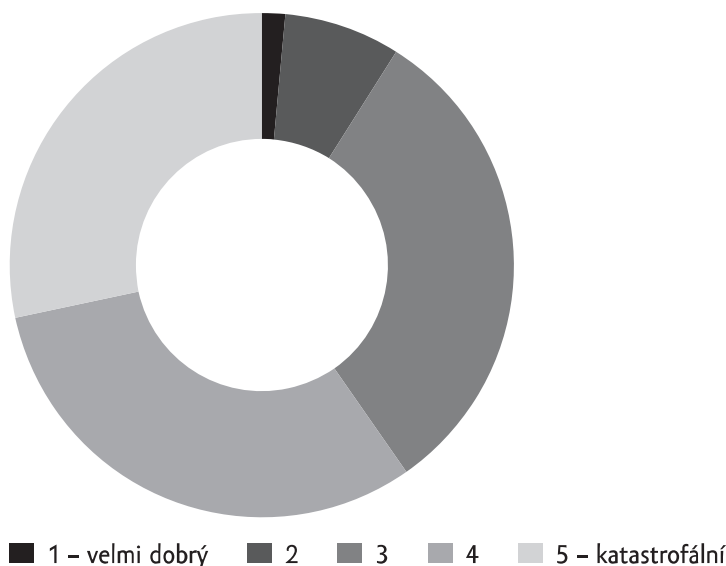


Poznámka: N = 59, obce.

Zdroj: Dotazníkové šetření o sociálně vyloučených lokalitách.

Mapování sociálně vyloučených lokalit z roku 2015 upozorňovalo na špatný technický stav objektů tzv. sociálně vyloučených lokalit na venkově: „U malých venkovských lokalit je pravděpodobně relativně horší fyzický stav budov tvořících lokalitu“ (GAC 2015: 48). Toto potvrzují i výsledky předkládaného výzkumu – jak ukazuje graf na obrázku 10.2 níže, v téměř dvou třetinách případů je stav objektů katastrofální nebo k tomu nemá daleko.

Obrázek 10.2: Technický stav objektů v sociálně vyloučené lokalitě



Poznámka: N = 67, obce.

Zdroj: Dotazníkové šetření o sociálně vyloučených lokalitách.

Technický stav byl častěji vnímán jako lepší u obecních bytů, naopak horší technický stav byl častěji spojován jednak s osobním vlastnictvím a dále právě se soukromými vlastníky. Stav objektů soukromých vlastníků byl v komentářích slučován se špatnou péčí o objekty a s vysokou mírou zadluženosti vlastníků (exekucemi). U pronájmů bylo v některých případech zdůrazňováno, že se situace může velmi lišit u jednotlivých vlastníků, u řady z nich ovšem bylo poukazováno, že majitelé nezajišťují ani základní opravy.

10.3 Venkovské vyloučené lokality – ne tak nový fenomén

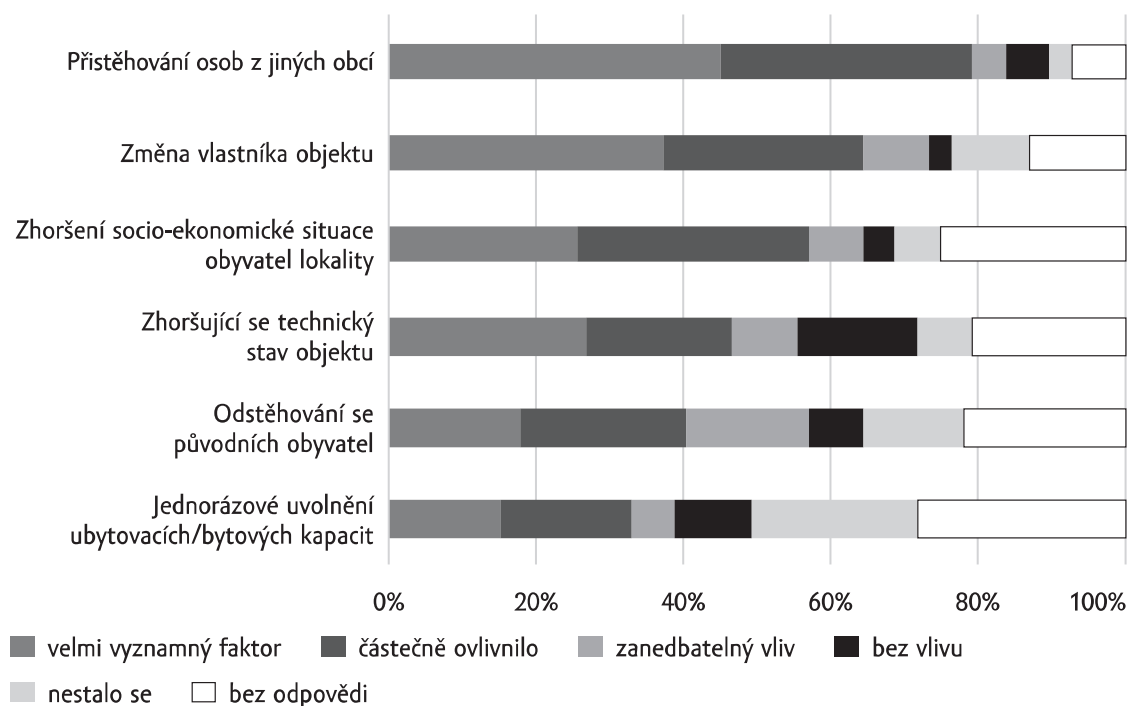
Sociálně vyloučené lokality na venkově jsou spojovány s Romy, přítomnost Romů ve většině dotazovaných venkovských obcí ovšem není novým fenoménem – ve více než 80 % obcí, které odpověděly na dotazník, žijí Romové minimálně od 90. let 20. století, ve dvou třetinách obcí žili již za socialismu. Pouze zhruba desetina obcí udává informaci o přítomnosti Romů až v několika posledních letech.

Existenci určitých problémových míst, „lokalit“, a zhoršení problémů s nimi spojenými ovšem starostové spojují převážně s obdobím od 90. let a zejména pak s posledními dvěma desetiletími.

Tato data odpovídají jen částečně datům z tzv. mapování sociálně vyloučených lokalit, podle kterých dochází k nárůstu lokalit až v posledním desetiletí (GAC 2015). Ve více než 60 % lokalit identifikovaných pouze v mapování z roku 2015 (nikoliv v mapě z roku 2006) existovaly lokality podle tamních starostů 10 a více let. I přesto, že o nárůstu SVL na venkově hovoří až zmiňované mapování z roku 2015, zřejmě v mnoha případech nejde o nový fenomén, ale spíše o výsledek postupných procesů, které se stávají viditelnějšími, a proto byly podchyceny až v nedávné době.

Jako klíčový faktor, který nastartoval tyto procesy, a tedy vedl ke vzniku lokalit, vnímala téměř polovina respondentů z řad obcí stěhování, konkrétně přistěhování cizích osob z jiných obcí. Alespoň částečný vliv mu připisuje více než 80 % obcí (obrázek 10.3). I v komentářích bylo obcemi často rozlišováno mezi „starousedlíky“ a „nově příchozími“. Jsou to přitom právě „nově příchozí“, kteří byli často vnímáni jako problematictí.

Obrázek 10.3: Jaká je příčina vzniku lokality?



Poznámka: N = 65, obce.

Zdroj: Dotazníkové šetření o sociálně vyloučených lokalitách.

Zhoršování situace ve venkovských lokalitách ovšem nelze redukovat jen na problematiku (při)stěhování. Z grafu na obrázku 10.3 je také vidět, že značný

význam byl respondenty připisován i zhoršující se socioekonomické situaci obyvatel a technickému stavu objektů – tedy faktorům, jež by napovídaly tomu, že dochází k sociálnímu vyloučení části (romských) obyvatel, kteří v obci žijí dlouhodobě. V komentářích dále některé osoby ve vedení obce zdůrazňovaly nízkou míru zaměstnanosti – v perspektivě obcí byla nezaměstnanost často popisována jako individuální rys („životní styl“), strukturální faktory a jejich nerovnoměrně silný dopad na Romy s nízkým vzděláním (Radičová 2002; Hurrle, Kučera, Trlifajová 2013) byly ve většině komentářů přehlíženy.

I když volné bytové kapacity nebyly považovány za primární důvod pro vznik lokalit (viz dříve), někteří respondenti v komentářích poukazovali na provázanost mezi vznikem „ubytoven“ a uvolněním bytových kapacit v důsledku úbytku pracovních míst a odchodu obyvatel z venkovských oblastí. Vzniklé ubytovny se soukromými vlastníky se následně specificky zaměřily na ubytování osob ohrožených sociálním vyloučením.

10.4 Trajektorie stěhování a fluktuace v lokalitách

Jestliže bylo stěhování vnímáno jako takto podstatný faktor pro vznik lokalit, odkud a kam směřuje? Jak mezi obcemi, tak sociálními odbory byla zřejmá shoda v tom, že stěhování obvykle probíhá na místní úrovni/v rámci regionu.²⁵ Naopak ani jedna z těchto skupin respondentů nezaznamenala výraznější stěhování z větších měst na venkov. Migrace ze zahraničí, v komentářích někdy explicitně spojována s Velkou Británií, byla hodnocena jako vyšší než stěhování z Prahy.

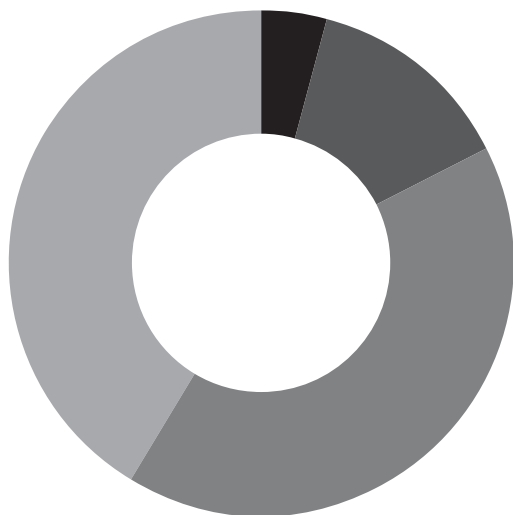
V odpovědích sociálních odborů, které mají přesnější přehled o dlouhodobějších trajektoriích jednotlivých domácností, ovšem bylo zdůrazňováno, že část domácností se stěhuje opakovaně. Opakované stěhování bylo označováno jako „cirkulární“ migrace a obvykle spojováno s pohybem v rámci regionu.

Význam opakovaného stěhování poukazuje na to, že stěhování v řadě lokalit není jednorázovým jevem, který vedl nebo vede ke změně situace a vnímání lokality, ale že se zvýšená míra fluktuace stává jedním z charakteristických rysů velké části venkovských lokalit. V řadě lokalit je z perspektivy

²⁵ Respondenti z malých obcí častěji vnímali, že jde o stěhování z okolních měst na venkov. Naopak na úrovni ORP byla častěji zdůrazňována migrace z venkovských obcí do měst. Zde je třeba zdůraznit, že ani obce, ani sociální odbory nedisponují přesnými statistickými daty – odlišnost v datech může být dána odlišnou perspektivou zástupců měst a menších obcí. Lze předpokládat, že respondenti mají přesnější informace o osobách, které přicházejí, než o odstěhovaných.

vedení obcí fluktuace vnímána jako výrazně vyšší než ve zbytku obce. Jen o něco více než 40 % respondentů uvádělo, že míra fluktuace je srovnatelná se zbytkem obce (obrázek 10.4).

Obrázek 10.4: Jaká je míra fluktuace obyvatel v rámci lokality?



- Extrémně vysoká (žádní stabilní obyvatelé)
- Vysoká (více než polovina obyvatel bydlí v lokalitě jen krátkodobě)
- Nadprůměrná (migrují jednotlivci/rodiny v rámci celkově stabilní lokality)
- Míra stěhování není výrazně vyšší než v jiných částech obce

Poznámka: N = 68, obce.

Zdroj: Dotazníkové šetření o sociálně vyloučených lokalitách.

Zároveň je ovšem z grafu na obrázku 10.4 zřejmé, že ve většině obcí (téměř v 80 % obcí, kde byly dotazníky vyplněny) je větší část obyvatel SVL vnímána jako stabilní. Pokud toto spojíme s dříve zmiňovaným negativním vnímáním nově příchozích, otevírá se otázka, nakolik může stěhování menší skupiny vést ne-li k destabilizaci lokality, tak přinejmenším k jejímu označení jako problémového místa.

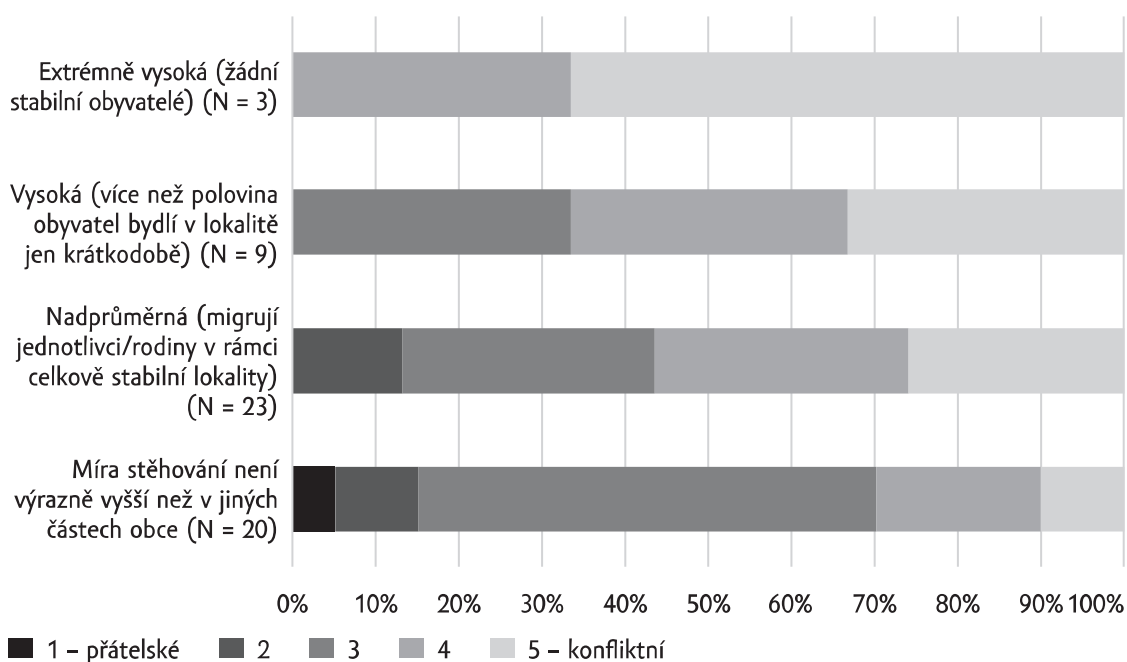
Jen v malé části lokalit (méně než 5 %) je vnímáno, že zde nežije téměř žádná stabilní populace. Toto potvrzují i výsledky lokálních studií, které ukazují na vznik „přestupních míst“, kam se nájemníci stěhují při absenci jiných alternativ, a v lokalitě se zdrží jen krátkou dobu před odstěhováním do dalších lokalit s podobnou charakteristikou.

Vyšší míra fluktuace byla častěji spojována se soukromými vlastníky, kde se ovšem podle komentářů může míra fluktuace u jednotlivých majitelů výrazně lišit, a to i v rámci jedné obce. Relativně vysokou míru fluktuace zaznamenávali respondenti i u lokalit s domy v osobním vlastnictví obyvatel, naopak v lokalitách s obecními byty byla fluktuace nižší. V komentářích byla dále zdůrazňována vysoká míra fluktuace na ubytovnách.

Jak ukázaly některé lokální analýzy, i pokud jde jen o jednotlivé domácnosti, může opakované stěhování velmi negativně ovlivňovat místní vztahy. I když jde o několik osob nebo domácností, které se stěhují v rámci regionu, může to být interpretováno jako „vlna“ přistěhovalců – a vést ať již ke zhoršení vztahů na místní úrovni (s podobnou situací se autoři tohoto textu setkali na Žluticku), nebo mít výraznější dopady vedoucí až k otevřeným konfliktům, jako tomu bylo třeba na Šluknovsku nebo v Litvínově (Hurrle, Kučera, Trlifajová 2012; Kafková, Sokačová, Szénássy 2012; Trlifajová a kol. 2015).

Toto se projevilo i v odpovědích obcí, v nichž míra fluktuace úzce koreluje s vnímáním vzájemných vztahů – zatímco v obcích s nízkou mírou fluktuace byly vztahy ze strany vedení obce často popisovány jako neutrální až přátelské, vyšší míra fluktuace byla spojena s konfliktními vztahy. Vztahy byly popisovány jako konfliktní i v těch lokalitách, kde byla značná část obyvatel stabilní a stěhování bylo spojováno jen s několika jednotlivci nebo domácnostmi.

Obrázek 10.5: Vliv míry fluktuace na vztahy s obcí



Poznámka: N = 54, obce.

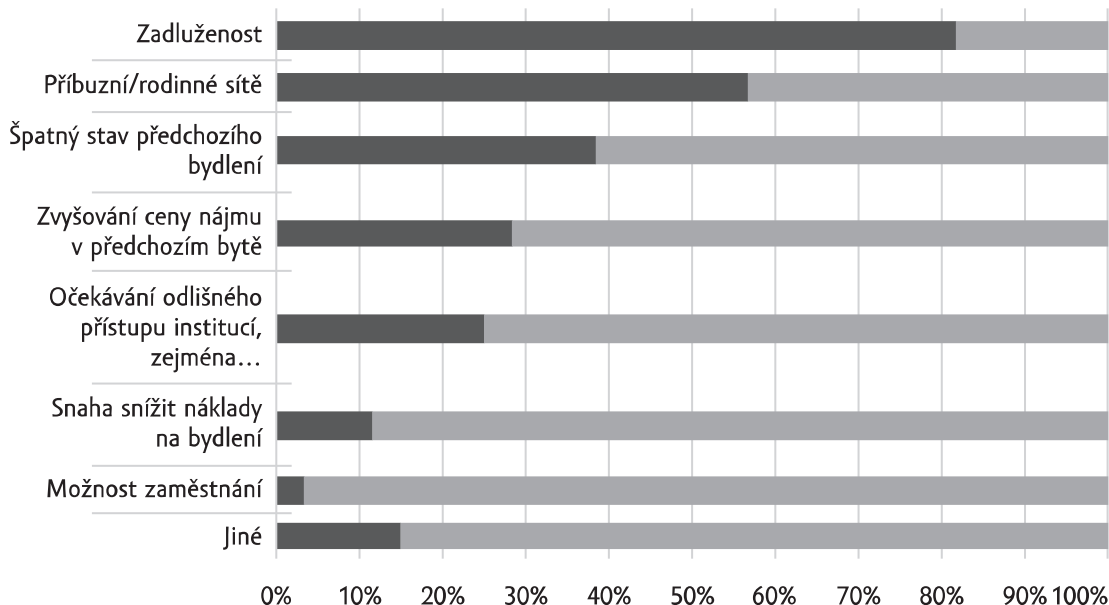
Zdroj: Dotazníkové šetření o sociálně vyloučených lokalitách.

10.5 Příčiny stěhování

Jako klíčový faktor stěhování vnímalo přes 89 % respondentů vysokou míru zadluženosti. Zadlužení je také spojováno s již zmiňovanou cirkulární mig-

rací, respondenti ze sociálních odborů mluvili o „přelévání problémových rodin z jednoho bytu do dalšího s tím, že dluhy z předešlého bydlení nikdo z nich neřeší.“

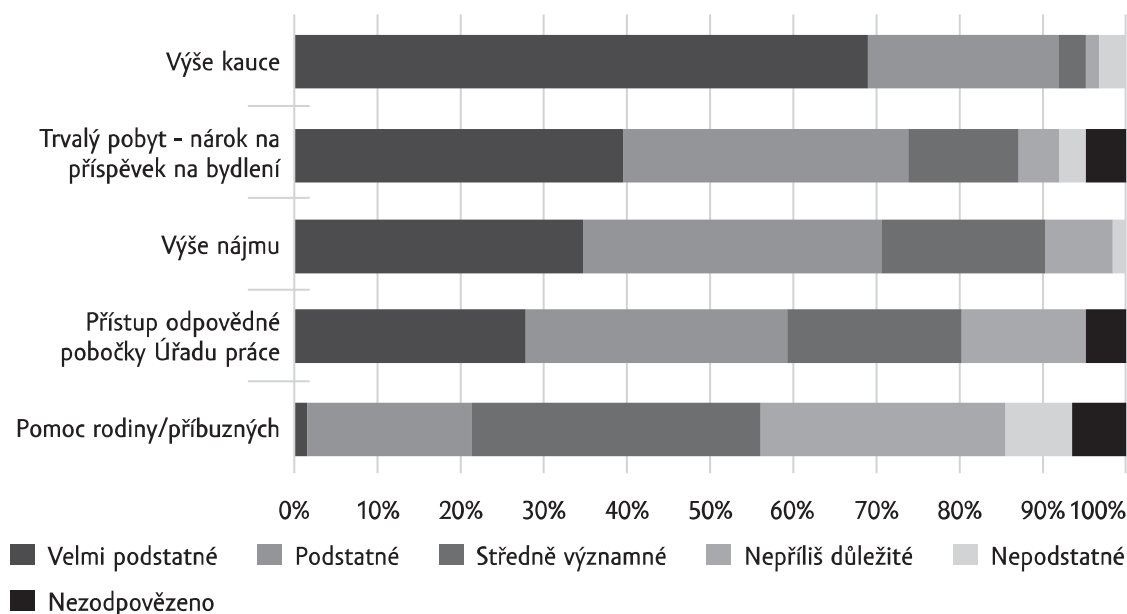
Obrázek 10.6: Co je nejčastějším důvodem stěhování chudých Romů a domácností ohrožených sociálním vyloučením? (více možných odpovědí)



Poznámka: N = 60, ORP.

Zdroj: Dotazníkové šetření o sociálně vyloučených lokalitách.

Obrázek 10.7: Které faktory jsou z Vašeho pohledu důležité pro získání bydlení a pro schopnost platit nájem po první 3 měsíce?



Poznámka: N = 61, ORP.

Zdroj: Dotazníkové šetření o sociálně vyloučených lokalitách.

Díváme-li se na všechny příčiny stěhování uvedené v grafu na obrázku 10.6, je vidět, že push faktory (faktory, které vytvářejí tlak pro odchod) výrazně převyšují nad pull faktory (faktory, které přitahují stěhující se jedince nebo domácnosti na dané místo). Stěhování je spojeno se špatným stavem předchozího bydlení, nutností opustit předcházející bydlení, často jde o hledání akutního řešení situace bytové nouze.

Zásadní pro získání bydlení je podle téměř všech pracovníků sociálních odborů výše kauce. Jak bylo zřejmé i z citace na předchozí straně, právě kvůli ní se domácnosti často zadluží, resp. prohloubí existující zadlužení. V tomto ohledu působí paradoxně nejednotná praxe úřadů práce. Dle vyjádření zástupců ORP platilo v polovině z nich v době výzkumu, že osoby, které jsou v hmotné nouzi, mohou mít kauci pokrytou z mimořádné okamžité pomoci. Ve druhé polovině tomu tak nebylo. Přitom není zřejmé, na základě jakých kritérií by podobně nejednotný přístup měl být založen.

10.6 Paralelní trh s bydlením

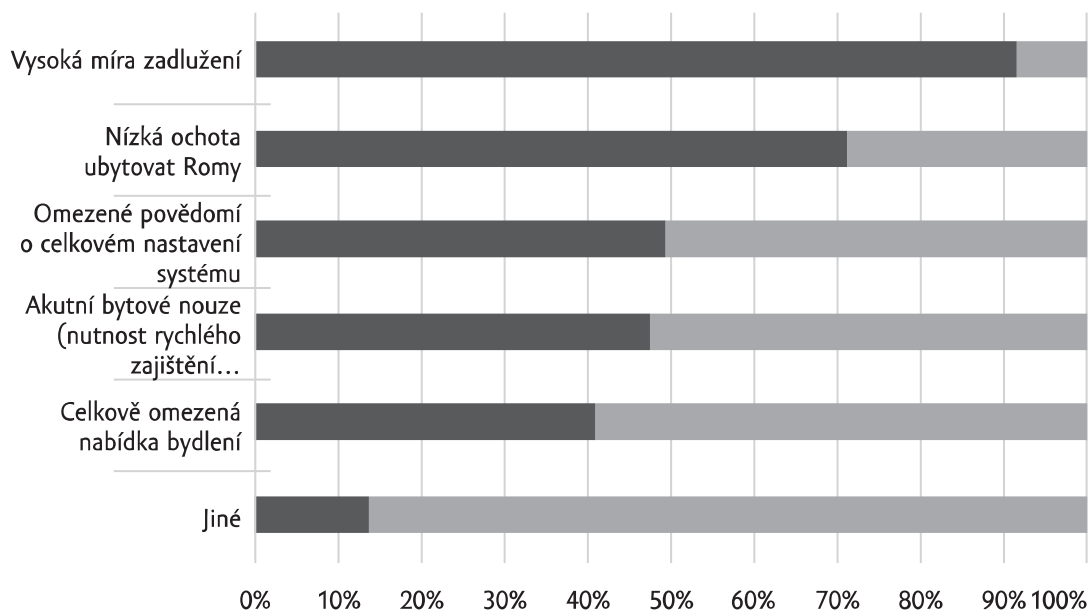
V případě sociálně vyloučených lokalit jsou často – ovšem ne vždy a ne všichni – jejich obyvatelé příjemci některé ze sociálních dávek. Zejména jde o dávky na bydlení, v případě nezaměstnanosti nebo velmi nízkých příjmů o dávky v hmotné nouzi. Náklady na bydlení jsou sice zastropovány místně definovanými normativy, současný dávkový systém by nicméně měl příjemcům těchto dávek zajistit schopnost dosáhnout na (levnější) bydlení v rámci komerčního sektoru i mimo problémové lokality. I přesto ovšem podle zjištění z dotazníku většina obyvatel venkovských SVL bydlí v substandardním a nestabilním bydlení.

Čím je to ovlivněno? Vysoká míra zadluženosti není podle výpovědí jen faktorem, který vede k (opakovanému) stěhování, jak bylo popsáno, ale také výrazně limituje schopnost domácnosti využít své finanční možnosti při hledání bydlení.

Dalším podstatným faktorem je ovšem velmi omezená dostupnost bytů pro Romy a obecně osoby ohrožené sociálním vyloučením. Jak ukazuje graf na obrázku 10.9, dostupnost bytů pro tuto skupinu je výrazně horší než pro ostatní obyvatele – a to i v situaci, kdy jsou v rámci ORP celkově dostačující bytové kapacity. Tato skutečnost poukazuje na existující diskriminaci na trhu s bydlením, která představuje výraznou bariéru dostupnosti a výběru bytů pro domácnosti ohrožené sociálním vyloučením.

Obrázek 10.9 shrnuje hlavní specifika bydlení pro Romy a domácnosti ohrožené sociálním vyloučením – často jde o ubytovny, byty nižší kvality,

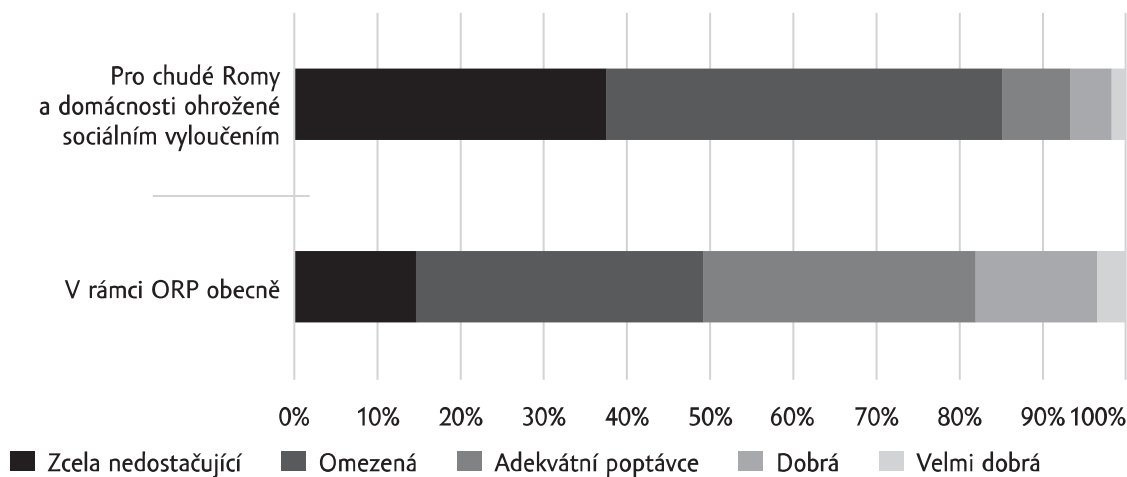
Obrázek 10.8: Pokud jsou schopnosti domácností využít své finanční možnosti při hledání bydlení nízké, čím je to ovlivněno? (Více možných odpovědí)



Poznámka: N = 59, ORP: soc. odbor.

Zdroj: Dotazníkové šetření o sociálně vyloučených lokalitách.

Obrázek 10.9: Jaká je podle Vaší zkušenosti dostupnost (nabídka) nájemního bydlení v rámci ORP?

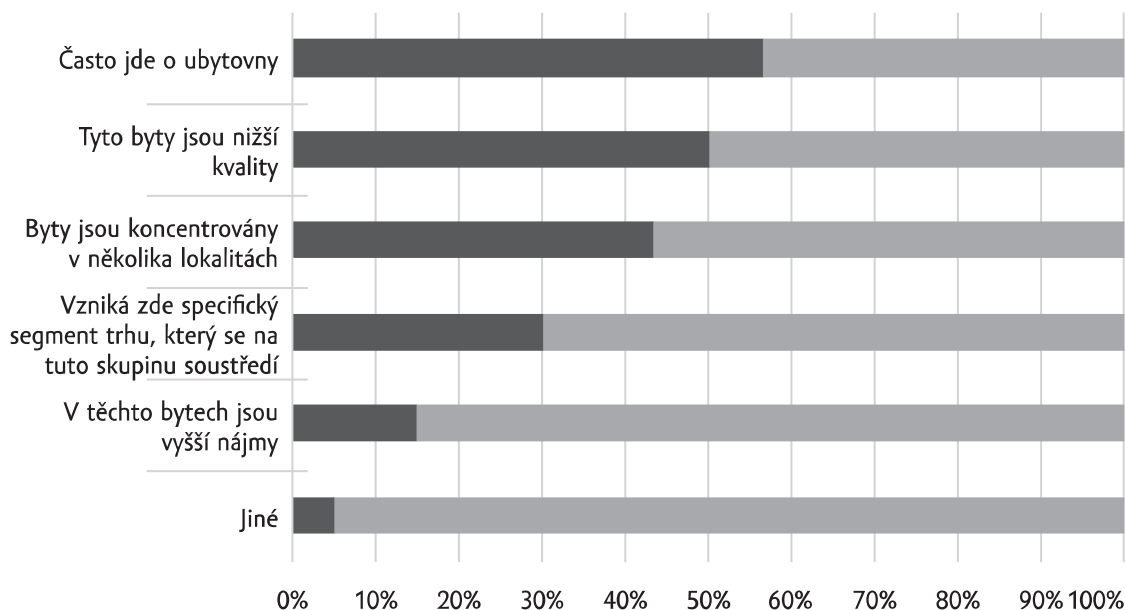


Poznámka: N = 60, ORP: soc. odbor.

Zdroj: Dotazníkové šetření o sociálně vyloučených lokalitách.

byty koncentrované do určitých lokalit apod. Všechny tyto odpovědi napovídají existenci paralelního, substandardního trhu s bydlením pro osoby ohrožené sociálním vyloučením.

Obrázek 10.10: Je bydlení pro chudé Romy a domácnosti ohrožené sociálním vyloučením něčím specifické? (Více možných odpovědí.)



Poznámka: N = 60, ORP: soc. odbor.

Zdroj: Dotazníkové šetření o sociálně vyloučených lokalitách.

10.7 Závěr

V úvodu byla formulována tři možná vysvětlení nárůstu počtu sociálně vyloučených lokalit. Výsledek analýz ukázal, že venkovské sociálně vyloučené lokality nejsou zdaleka tak novým fenoménem, jak indikují data z GAC 2015. Dochází k němu výrazněji od přelomu tisíciletí. To ovšem neznamená, že nejde o velmi problematický vývoj. Velká část menších obcí vnímala existenci sociálně vyloučených lokalit na venkově a nárůst stěhování chudých (romských) domácností jako velmi problematický jev, který se navíc v čase dále zhoršuje.

Existence lokalit má silnou etnickou dimenzi, místa označovaná jako problémové nebo sociálně vyloučené lokality většinou vznikají v obcích, kde dlouhodobě žijí Romové, a Romové také tvoří velkou část obyvatel těchto míst.

Pro řadu těchto lokalit je typický velmi špatný nebo katastrofální stav bydlení a vyšší míra fluktuace – i přesto, že značná část jejich obyvatel je podle respondentů stabilní. Data poukazují na to, že stěhování i menší skupiny může vést ne-li k destabilizaci lokality, tak přinejmenším k jejímu označení jako problémového místa. Zároveň výpovědi naznačují, že v některých malých obcích vznikají místa, kde nežije téměř žádná stabilní populace. V místech s vysokou mírou fluktuace bývají nejhorší sousedské vztahy.

I když i ve venkovském kontextu dochází k přistěhování z větších měst, jak mezi obcemi, tak sociálními odbory byla zřejmá shoda na tom, že stěhování obvykle probíhá na místní úrovni/v rámci regionu. Data, která jsme získali, ukazují na to, že spíše než o rozsáhlejší posun chudé populace na venkov jde o důsledek nárůstu počtu chudých, zejména romských domácností bez stabilního bydlení. Důvodem ke stěhování je často situace bytové nouze, z níž zranitelné domácnosti nevidí jiné východisko – klíčovým push faktorem je vysoká míra zadlužení a nízká kvalita stávajícího bydlení. Historická přítomnost Romů ve většině obcí naznačuje, že trajektorie stěhování určuje kombinace tržních faktorů (volné bytové kapacity a strategie soukromých majitelů) a kulturních a sociálních faktorů (rodinné vazby).

Při analýze celého problému je potřeba zdůraznit jeho systémové příčiny. Současný systém sociálních dávek by měl nabídnout i nízkopříjmovým domácnostem přístup ke standardnímu nájemnímu bydlení. Výzkum nicméně ukazuje, že chudé, a zejména chudé romské domácnosti, znevýhodněné rovněž z důvodu etnického původu, fungují na paralelním, substandardním trhu cíleném na tuto skupinu obyvatel. Paralelní trh s bydlením nicméně nepřispívá ke stabilizaci domácností – naopak, nízká kvalita bydlení a vysoká míra zadlužení vedou k dalším (opakovaným) stěhování. Venkovské lokality jsou atraktivní pro některé podnikatelské subjekty, které se zaměřují na tuto skupinu a kterým může akvizice venkovských objektů přinést snadný zisk.

V České republice chybí celostátní politika, která by nabízela osobám v bytové nouzi alternativu k nabídkám sekundárního trhu. Ve venkovských obcích chybí nástroje pro krizové bydlení, což zhoršuje situaci některých lokalit, jež slouží jako přestupní stanice pro řešení krizové situace. Nejde ovšem jen o stabilizaci situace na trhu s bydlením, ale i o nástroje, které by přispěly k celkové stabilizaci jednotlivých domácností (řešení situace zadlužení aj.). U sociálně vyloučených skupin v segregovaných lokalitách se snadno mohou znásobovat problémy, které postihují periferní regiony jako celek. Romská etnicita k těmto procesům výrazně přispívá, protože vede k přehlížení strukturálních faktorů a redukci příčin na (kulturalizované) individuální nebo skupinové charakteristiky. Menší obce často nemají zkušenosti, nástroje a vůli k řešení specifických potřeb vyloučených osob, vzdálenost od pracovních míst zhoršuje možnosti integrace na pracovním trhu. Stěhování chudých a vznik nových venkovských lokalit představuje vážnou výzvu jak pro dotčené obce, tak pro státní politiky romské či sociální integrace.

Při absenci systémové intervence hrozí, že v rámci venkovských regionů bude docházet k dalšímu prohlubování situace sociálního vyloučení, zhoršování vzájemných vztahů a nárůstu počtu vyloučených lokalit. Migrace osob,

které jsou vnímané jako „problémové“, má navíc silné psychologické aspekty. Toto platí specificky ve znevýhodněných místech a regionech; sestěhování osob vnímaných jako problémové může zesílit obavy o celkovou budoucnost regionu a může provokovat negativní reakce okolí.

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Work must pay: Does it? Precarious employment and employment motivation for low-income households

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Abstract

One of the core dilemmas of current welfare politics is the question of how to ensure social protection while providing incentives to seek employment at the same time. A way to address this dilemma is to base policies and policy models on the principle notion that ‘work must pay’; in other words, income from employment should be higher than the social support of the unemployed. However, how accurately do these approaches and models represent the reality of benefit recipients, particularly in the context of increased employment precariousness? In this article, we use the cases of two disadvantaged regions in Czech Republic in order to contrast the presumptions of ‘making work pay’ policies with the everyday experience of welfare recipients. As we show, their situations are strongly shaped by current changes in the labour market, particularly the precarious character of accessible employment and high levels of indebtedness. The modelling of financial employment incentives and the public policies based on these calculations often do not correspond with the reality of welfare recipients that are often cycling in and out of precarious forms of employment. However, the authors’ main claim is that the very idea of the ‘work must pay’ approach focuses on the wrong question. A truly functioning financial incentive would need to focus not solely on the difference in income between those who work and those who do not work, but rather should analyse what type of arrangements allow working households to rise permanently above the poverty line.

Keywords

Activation, Czech Republic, dualization, in-work poverty, labour market, making work pay, unemployment, welfare

Introduction

One of the leitmotifs of labour market reforms and social protection systems in many European countries during the last two decades has been the notion that ‘work must pay’. On one side, slogans like ‘work must pay’ are sometimes used in political debates on the welfare state and welfare recipients, in line with the negative notion of undeserving welfare recipients who are

passive and unmotivated to find work. While declaring that ‘work must pay’, the key message in such debates is often a call to sanction those perceived as demotivated or even workshy. On the other side, ‘work must pay’ refers to the desire to reform welfare systems and labour market regulations in order to increase the efficiency of the system, which should provide social protection and incentives to accept employment. In this sense, ‘work must pay’ principles are used in models by international organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) that seek to compare the efficiency of its member states’ welfare systems.

While acknowledging the usefulness of models and calculations which attempt to simulate the impact of a change in employment status on household income, we need to ask how accurately these models, which are based on the principle that ‘work must pay’ and which measure the financial motivations for employment, represent the reality of welfare recipients. This question is particularly salient given the trend towards a highly flexible and deregulated labour market. While there are significant differences between countries, people in marginalized positions of the labour market are often pushed into precarious or atypical forms of employment (Emmenegger et al., 2012; Rueda, 2005, Palier and Thelen 2010), with in-work and recurrent poverty becoming as important an issue as unemployment (Crettaz, 2013; Shildrick et al., 2012).

While the international literature on ‘work must pay’ policies focused mostly on Western countries, the slogan has also been resonating strongly in the Czech Republic. The principle was applied in a number of government-funded studies which sought to compare the income of working households with the income of unemployed households (Hora and Vyhliđal, 2016; Jahoda, 2006; Pavel, 2005; Trlifajová et al., 2014; World Bank, 2008; Źiřlavský, 2010). Recommendations from these studies contributed to the direction of Czech welfare reforms over the past 10 years, introducing the logic that the state should support labour market participation by widening the difference between the disposable income of employed and unemployed citizens.

There are two reasons why Czechia’s social and economic environment offers an interesting opportunity to critically reflect on the applicability of the ‘work must pay’ logic. First, the Czech Republic has a very low-wage level, with one of the lowest minimal wages in the European Union (EU) at the time of this research (2014–2015), lower than neighbouring Eastern European countries like Poland and Slovakia, and Turkey as well (OECD.stat, 2017). This low wage level arguably contributed to the popularity of ‘work must pay’ policies as there is widespread frustration over the small income difference between the working poor and the unemployed. Second, the Czech labour market is characterized by a comparably low share of part-time jobs (Eurostat, 2016b) and a high share of full-time open-ended employment (European Parliament 2016). However, over the past decades, it has trended towards increasing precarity in certain segments of the labour market and a rising proportion in long-term unemployment (Martiskova and Sedlakova, 2016; Sirovátka et al., 2009), which makes the Czech Republic a good case to test the impact of these trends on the possibilities of modelling financial incentives for employment.

Due to the increase in regional disparities after 1990, poverty and social problems are

concentrated in a number of areas of Czechia that are either geographically remote and/or were severely affected by de-industrialization. Focusing on the situation of low-income households in two of these disadvantaged regions, this article critically examines policy implications and possible shortcomings of the notion that 'work must pay' in the specific environment of post-communist Central and Eastern Europe (CEE).

We have approached this analysis from a holistic perspective, taking into account not only the policy measures themselves but also other, related issues or fields, such as regional labour markets, knowledge of the tax and benefit system and its administration, individual non-financial motivations and the overall socio-economic situation of the households.

The article proceeds as following: we will first briefly describe the theoretical context and presumptions of the 'making work pay' approaches. Then we will discuss the development of the 'making work pay' approaches in the broader context of Czech social policy and summarize the findings from previous studies that sought to measure financial incentives for employment through household microsimulation models.

In the main part, we compare the findings of the household microsimulations with the everyday experience of welfare recipients in disadvantaged regions of the Czech Republic. In order to be able to do so, we sought to cover households with the same composition as those of the microsimulations. The findings are structured into four parts. In each of them, we describe one factor which influences the position of vulnerable households on the labour market yet is not acknowledged in the microsimulations used to design policies.

Our analysis, therefore, points to serious limitations in the 'work must pay' approaches. While pointing out how future microsimulations might be improved to address some of these shortcomings, we question at the same time the underlying logic of these approaches. From our point of view, focusing on the difference in income is not sufficient to cover the financial motivation for employment in situations where employment does not allow people to rise above the poverty line. To some extent, this problem has its roots in the specific context of the Czech Republic as a low-wage economy. However, several factors that we identify relate to the broader processes of labour market precarization and the rise of low-wage sectors, which have also been described in more affluent European economies.

The development of welfare policies over the past decades has brought a greater emphasis on the question of whether welfare support functions as a disincentive for employment. Even though there are important differences depending on the political context and national traditions, the literature agrees on a general trend towards emphasis on labour market participation and individual motivation for employment across different welfare regimes. These are observable in the proliferation of activation schemes in which individual benefit-recipients are often requested to demonstrate their availability for work (Clasen and Clegg, 2007; Bonoli and Natali, 2012; Bonoli, 2010; Van Kersbergen and Hemerijck, 2012; Taylor-Gooby et al, 2015).

Theoretical introduction: why ‘make work pay’

The development of welfare policies over the past decades has brought a greater emphasis on the question of whether welfare support functions as a disincentive for employment. Although there are important differences depending on the political context and national traditions, the literature agrees on a general trend towards emphasis on labour market participation and individual motivation for employment across different welfare regimes. These are observable in the proliferation of activation schemes in which individual benefit recipients are often requested to demonstrate their availability for work (Bonoli, 2010; Bonoli and Natali, 2012; Clasen and Clegg, 2007; Taylor-Gooby et al., 2015; Van Kersbergen and Hemerijck, 2012).

The emphasis on the notion that ‘work must pay’ is in line with these trends. The attractiveness of the concept is closely linked to its intelligibility within the general public, promising to tackle the perceived negative impact of a supposedly overgenerous welfare state. In practice, however, it may take the form of a variety of goals and policy instruments, ranging from emphasis on poverty protection and employment incentives (through in-work benefits, tax deductions or a raise in minimum wage), to strongly controlling approaches to benefit reductions aimed at enhancing labour market participation regardless of the quality of employment. The concept is closely linked to New Labour’s policies and 1990s welfare-to-work programmes as part of attempts to re-constitute the welfare state in line with the neoliberal emphasis on individual responsibility, the fight against welfare dependency and market-driven solutions promoted by international organization such as the OECD (Gray, 2001; Mahon, 2014).

By the late 1990s/early 2000s, social policy analysis and recommendations on both the international and EU level become increasingly sensitive to the negative impacts of rising inequality and processes of social exclusion and marginalization within the population (Mahon, 2014; Hemerijck, 2012). This translated into changes in policy approaches sometimes described by the term ‘social investment’ (see Nolan, 2013, for an overview of the term). In these approaches, the need to address structural issues (re)legitimized state intervention and spending, but the continuity of the neoliberal emphasis on labour market participation and efficiency led to the promotion of policy designs that maximize the returns of social expenditures, mainly through active employment and social participation (Jenson, 2012; Kersbergen et al, 2014; Rueda, 2005). The notion that ‘work must pay’ gained new importance as a promise to address one of the core dilemmas of this approach to social policy: the struggle between the social protection guarantee and stress on the involvement of people at risk of unemployment in the labour market (Bonoli and Natali, 2012). ‘Making work pay’ should ensure that the work is competitive with social benefit rates, but also allow for the supplementation of wages and the provision of low-cost services. Policies designed to ‘make work pay’ should be able to address the twin problem of persistent labour market difficulties and in-work poverty, to ‘get the incentives right’ and find an equilibrium between social protection and pressure on labour market participation (Jenson, 2009; Immervoll and Pearson, 2009). As such, ‘make work pay’ became one of the key tools for reducing benefit dependency and increasing labour market participation, as articulated in the European employment strategy through which the European Commission sought to react to increased levels of long-

term unemployment in the continental EU states (Porte et al, 2001; De Lathouwer, 2004; Verbist et al, 2007; Matsaganis and Figari, 2016).

The ability of different states to 'make work pay' became an object of benchmarking. The calculation of the difference between welfare state payments and the financial rewards from employment became one of the tools used by both the OECD (Tax and Benefit Systems: OECD Indicators) and the European Commission (Tax and benefits indicators database/EUROMOD) when assessing the effectiveness of its member states' labour market regulations. The microsimulation models based on the notion that 'work must pay' had been used in analyses evaluating the impact of welfare reforms on the financial incentives of employment, pointing to some important problems in the construction of welfare support (Pearson and Scarpetta, 2000; Blundell, 2001; Danzinger et al, 2002; Martin and Immervoll, 2007; Immervoll and Pearson, 2009; Bargain et al, 2010; Figari, 2010; Kurowska et al, 2015; Navicke and Lazutka, 2016) (and for CEE countries, a particularly interesting analysis of the costs of the formalization of employment by Koettl and Weber, 2012). The financial incentive for employment is usually measured through household simulation techniques that compare the situation of households that are receiving welfare benefits with those that are employed. In these analyses, the main focus is on the relationship between welfare payments, wages and taxation. The financial motivation is usually measured through the replacement rate, with focus on the potential 'traps; in other words, situations when the shift into employment (or a wage increase) does not bring financial reward (OECD, 2007; Matsaganis and Figari, 2016).

While the EU, OECD and other international bodies had an important role in promoting the idea of 'work-must-pay policies', offering methodological tools to measure incentives, it would be wrong to assume that the Czech government simply implemented ideas coming from abroad. As will be shown in the next section of this chapter, Czech policy-makers borrowed concepts from abroad, on the one hand, yet reacted to domestic debates, dominated by claims of wide-spread welfare misuse and calls for more efficient usage of state resources, on the other.

Czech social policies and the principle of 'make work pay'

Having been part of the Soviet bloc for four decades, the Czech Republic underwent a far-reaching transformation after 1990, in which the role of the hitherto omnipotent state in the country's economy was dramatically reduced through privatization of state property and attraction of foreign investment. While the social disruptions resulting from this process were not as severe as in most other post-socialist countries, the re-organization of the economy produced winners and losers, deepened regional inequalities, and led to the return of unemployment, a phenomenon that had practically not existed in the planned socialist economy (Švejnar, 1995; Drahokoupil and Myant, 2010).

The policies dealing with unemployment and low income were first constructed as 'emergency measures' (Offe, 1993) meant to moderate and compensate a negative and presumably

temporal consequence of the economic transition as well as preserve social cohesion (Gallie et al, 2001; Potůček, 2004; Vanhuyse, 2006). However, in the context of the dominant neoliberal discourse and the absence of strong labour unions and their political allies, the income protection policies gradually shifted closer to the safety net schemes of neoliberal regimes. As a consequence, Czechia's current welfare system is characterized by a combination of a Bismarckian (conservative) pre-Second World War policies, its socialistic legacy, and the strong influence of laissez-faire, market liberal ideology. As such, it does not fit easily into any of the established typology of welfare state regimes and did not develop equally in all areas (Potůček, 2004; Saxonberg et al, 2013).

Similar to other states, the Czech Republic has two main schemes of support for the unemployed: *unemployment support*, an individual benefit based on previous insurance contributions, limited to 5 months in most cases; and *social assistance*, which is a tax-financed minimum income scheme, means-tested on the level of households. With the limited coverage of unemployment support (about one-fifth of the unemployed (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2016)), the 'making work pay' policies and models in the Czech Republic are usually linked to social assistance and other tax-based benefits. The social assistance scheme has low public legitimacy, as its perception is strongly shaped by the alleged polarity between the 'working and contributing' majority and the 'not working and not contributing' Roma minority, who are perceived as the main beneficiaries (Rabušic and Sirovátka, 1999; Rat, 2009). Calls for a tougher approach towards 'welfare misusers' and 'free-riders' are, in the Czech Republic, an evergreen issue in every election campaign across the entire political spectrum. Even when used without any direct racial connotation, they are often understood as a hidden reference to the Roma minority (Hurrell et al, 2013). Furthermore, the low level of unemployment in the Czech Republic makes it attractive to explain 'welfare dependency' as the result of individual choices steered by a supposedly over-generous welfare system.

These presumptions, supported by government-assigned analysis pointing to low financial incentives for employment (Pavel, 2005; Jahoda, 2006) and an increase in the number of the welfare recipients, shaped the new act on social assistance, which was introduced in 2007. The act fundamentally reformed the previous scheme from the mid-1990s, shifting the focus towards 'activation' and the reduction of public expenditure (Sirovátka, 2014). One of the main aims of these reforms was to increase the financial incentives for employment. This emphasis led to the introduction of new forms of testing income and a lower redefinition of the minimum guaranteed income for 'inactive' recipients than the existing *subsistence minimum*. The following years brought further legislative changes, which sought to reduce the value of benefits and to financially incentivize employment.¹ These reforms were strongly shaped by workfarist approaches, where people were required to work in return for social assistance benefits. The toughest workfarist approaches peaked in a 2011/2012 welfare reform (introduction of obligatory public services, expenditures control of benefit recipients, as so on) and were abandoned not more than a year after their introduction, partly because they were found unconstitutional by the Supreme Court and partly due to political changes (Sirovátka,

¹ These measures included discretion over the indexation of benefits, a reduction of benefits after six months and financial incentives for public service.

2016; Kotrusová and Výborná, 2015). However, measures that aimed to increase the financial incentive of benefit recipients for employment remained intact. Furthermore, several changes in taxation and family benefits were introduced in this period, shifting support for (low-income) families from income-tested benefits toward in-work support (Průša et al, 2013; Horáková et al, 2013).

Despite these changes, the emphasis on financial incentives for employment, often explicitly translated into slogans like ‘work must pay’, remains one of the central goals in the social policies targeted towards low-income households and the unemployed across the political spectrum, with ongoing debate on the need for lower social benefits and extending in-work support. While the changes of the past ten years sought to tackle financial disincentives for employment in the social system, the centre-right government decided at the same time to freeze the minimum wage during most of this period. The minimum wage, one of the lowest in the EU (Eurostat, 2016a), had stagnated between 2007 and 2014 (with the exception of a 500 CZK rise in 2012). Aiming to strengthen the economy’s competitiveness, this cheap labour strategy unintendedly undermined the goal of increasing the financial attractiveness of low-wage employment.

The effects of financial incentives for the employment of benefit recipients in the Czech Republic had been measured by several studies using microsimulation models (Pavel, 2005; Jahoda, 2006; World Bank, 2008; Žižlavský, 2010) that calculated the consequences of various employment choices on household income through data from the preceding two abovementioned major welfare reforms (2007 and 2012). A more current attempt to model these choices focused particularly on the situation of low-income households (Trlifajová et al, 2014).

In all of these analyses the authors used several model-type households (usually single adult households, single adults with children and two adult households with children) and calculated the impact of full-time employment at different wage levels on the overall financial situation (*disposable income*) of the previously unemployed household, whose income was composed solely of welfare benefits. Most of the analyses used the *marginal effective tax rates* in order to assess the extent to which taxes and benefit loss reduce the financial gain of employment. The last of the analyses (Trlifajová et al, 2014) also measured the *relative difference* in disposable household income before and after employment (percentage increase/decrease of monthly income after covering housing) and the *absolute difference* in disposable income before and after employment (absolute increase/decrease of monthly income after covering housing).

According to these calculations (Trlifajová et al, 2014), low-paid employment brings a relative income difference, but the absolute value is not high – it might be questionable whether it is sufficient even to cover the additional costs that come with employment, such as travel costs, food or childcare. Yet the calculations imply that if there are no additional costs, employment should be rewarding, both for households with and without children, for whom the difference in income is mostly due to the child tax credit (in-work benefit conditional upon employment, delivered through employers monthly with the wages of one of the parents). However, with low-wage, full-time employment, households with children still qualified for support from

social assistance (and other benefits) as their income was below the state-defined poverty threshold. In this situation, the wage increase results only in modest increases of disposable household income (Trlifajová et al, 2014).

Confronting MPW with reality: methodology

To what extent do these findings correspond to the everyday experience of welfare recipients? As we have stated, we have analysed making-work-pay-policies from a holistic perspective, aiming to understand to what extent models based on this paradigm are able to capture the complex realities of benefit recipients. In order to examine this question, we will replicate household microsimulation studies using qualitative research methods based on interviews with benefit recipients and administrators.

Our aim was not to have a representative sample, but to conduct the research in a context that is typical for the largest group of those who are unemployed. The Czech Republic has seen a rapid rise in inter-regional differences since 1990 (Meier and Franke, 2015). Unemployment, particularly long-term unemployment, has a strong regional dimension (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2016); the unemployment rate is highest in structurally disadvantaged border regions, which are either of old-industrial or rural character. While the situation of such regions is usually discussed under the prism of the transition, it needs to also be seen much more broadly as part of the story of de-industrialization and industrial change, which had already affected workers with lower qualifications in western countries much earlier. Hampl and Müller (2011) refer to this double challenge by distinguishing between ‘post-totalitarian’ and ‘post-industrial’ transformations. Although, contrary to public perception, the problems of unemployment and poverty are not restricted to the Roma minority; due to a number of structural reasons and the long history of discrimination, Roma are overrepresented among the unemployed and benefit recipients (FRA, 2012; Hurrle et al, 2013). The last two decades saw a trend toward the exclusion of the Roma from the labour market and spatial concentration in so-called socially excluded localities, mostly located in these disadvantaged regions (GAC, 2015). The trend towards segregation is driven by the absence of a co-ordinated policy of social housing on the national level, and it has created a situation where populist local politicians have strong incentives to either concentrate unpopular populations in segregated localities or to encourage them to move somewhere else (Hurrle et al, 2013).

Aiming to focus on regions with a higher concentration of people on the borderline between employment and welfare, the research was conducted in two of these regions. Both of them have been facing a long-term decline in jobs and, in the Czech context, high levels of overall and long-term unemployment. The first one has an urban character with high levels of unemployment being mostly the result of the continuous process of de-industrialization, while the second has a more rural character, which also implied higher commuting costs. The region’s decline started in the mid-1990s with the end of textile manufacturing.

The fieldwork was conducted between October 2014 and January 2015. While this was already

a period of economic recovery in the Czech Republic, the recovery had not yet had an impact on the local labour market situation in the selected regions.

The core part of the research was based on in-depth interviews with low-income households on the border between welfare and employment (30 persons from 26 households). The main criterion for selection was current experience with social assistance schemes. Moreover, in order to be able to compare this experience with findings from the model, we needed to cover in each locality households with the same composition as previously used in the modelling: two adult households with children (represented by 12 households), one adult households with children (7 households), and households without children (7 households). Approximately half of the respondents were of Roma ethnicity. Multiple generation households as well as households with additional income, such as pensions, long-term care benefits, disability benefits or insurance-based unemployment benefits were excluded.

Both the economic situation of the household and employment motivation represent sensitive issues (especially in the context of rising control and stigmatization of welfare recipients in the Czech Republic). For this reason, we used informal networks to contact the respondents. In each locality we cooperated with two or three local non-governmental social service providers to reach potential interview partners. While some of the partners were clients, others were acquaintances of the co-operating organizations' staff members. The involvement of social service providers also allowed for the identification of households which, in the opinion of the service provider, represented typical problems of households on the border between welfare and employment in the region. Cooperation with multiple service providers helped us to check for individual bias. The respondents were offered a small remuneration for the interview, which, as we perceived, engendered positively a feeling of dignity and, consequently, mutual trust. The interviews attempted to capture the interview partners' work trajectories to see how welfare support and employment interlocked. They further focused on the economic situations of the households and experience with the welfare system (including knowledge of the system and access to information), as well as other sources of income.

In addition to this, a set of interviews was conducted with a total of 17 local labour market professionals: labour office employees responsible for the administration of benefits and employment services on the local level (6), employees of a non-governmental organization responsible for the implementation of employment projects (5), and local employers offering low-waged employment (6). This allowed us to better understand the wider context of the individual narratives. Furthermore, we have used these interviews as a means of triangulation (which does not imply that the narratives cannot be mutually conflicting).

The interviews with low-income households allowed us to identify a number of key issues which the respondents mentioned most often as crucial factors when explaining their position on the labour market, these were then used for coding and further analysis. The resulting structure was kept in the presentation of the findings in the following chapter, which is divided into four sections.

Based on the situations of our respondents, described in the interviews, we developed simplified scenarios and calculated the difference between unemployment and employment.

As a first step, we used the methodology of the microsimulations. The disposable income has been defined as the household's resources after covering housing costs. Similar to previous models (Pavel, 2005; Jahoda, 2006; World Bank, 2008; Žižlavský, 2010; Trlifajová et al, 2014), the status of unemployment was defined as the situation where a household receives all benefits to which it is entitled by law: child allowance, a housing benefit and social assistance benefits (subsistence minimum and additional housing supplement). Employment was calculated with the inclusion of taxation (including the monthly individual tax deduction and child tax credit, which is a form of in-work benefit) and obligatory health and social insurance for this type of employment. Benefits based on previous financial contributions (unemployment insurance) and pensions were excluded.

In the second step, we also took into consideration factors which had been identified as crucial in the interviews yet were not considered in the microsimulation methodologies. The calculation of these factors required the study of relevant tax and social welfare legislation and learning about its practical application by employers, labour offices and other relevant authorities.

This analysis revealed that the identified factors can change the financial incentives for the household in very significant ways. In order to illustrate our argument, four graphs were constructed that demonstrate these effects. Please note that the scenarios have been simplified in order to reduce the amount of possible variations. Therefore, the amounts in the graphs do not necessarily fully comply with the amounts mentioned in the quotes from interviewees.

Confronting MPW with reality: the everyday experience of welfare recipients

'Making work pay' is predicated on models that assume rational choices about stable, long-term employment. But the outcomes of the interviews have shown that the experience of benefit recipients is characterized by chaotic cycling in and out of low-wage and precarious employment, with important implications for the socio-economic situation and strategies of the household. In the following part, we will focus on the four key areas most respondents mentioned when explaining their personal situation: (1) accessibility of employment and its impact on the possible choices of welfare recipients; (2) knowledge of the system and its impact on the possibility of making a 'rational' choice; (3) the difference between an increase in income and the perception that employment is financially rewarding; and (4) over-indebtedness and its impact on household strategies. These areas are crucial to understanding why the reality of the respondents differs in important ways from the inexplicit assumptions on which the previously described models are based.

Limits of accessible employment

The households on the border between welfare and employment are strongly impacted by the process of segmentation in the Czech labour market and the rising number of atypical or nonstandard employment relationships (see for example, Sirovátka et al, 2009; Martiskova and Sedlakova, 2016).

While the majority of the respondents had been employed in the 1990s with long-term full-time positions, the labour market trajectories in the following decade were shaped by an increase in part-time and temporary employment, prolonged periods of unemployment and the increased importance of public work schemes (temporary full-time low-skilled employment for minimum wage). However, while designed as temporary interventions that should support beneficiaries making the transition into the private labour market (Sirovátka 2014), the public work schemes were, particularly by middle aged people and older, perceived as the only possibility for full time employment:

I just couldn't find a job. Then I found that you could earn a bit at the employment office after the floods, and through that I went to the town council [public work]... otherwise I'd never get a job. All my husband and I could get our hands on was just temporary part-time work.

(woman, couple, adult children)

Next to the subsidized public work schemes, the respondents were most often employed through so called 'employment agreements'. The Czech Labour Code recognizes two types of agreements on work that is performed outside of the employment relationship. These contracts are designed for occasional work of limited scope as a more flexible alternative to an employment relationship. In some cases, this employment was temporary and/or part time, while in others it lasted for several months or even years. Some of the respondents employed through these agreements received additional money informally.

I always have a temporary job in a hotel, always on a temporary contract...but the employer is decent. They pay ten thousand crowns in the contract and, besides that [outside the contract], they pay my health insurance.

(woman, no family)

Under certain circumstances (if the wage is 10,000 CZK or lower) these agreements do not have to include health and social insurance. Consequently, when employed, many respondents

were covering the health insurance, obligatory in the Czech Republic, themselves. None of them paid pension insurance, as these payments are not obligatory, and the costs were perceived as too high.

I've never had really illegal work...I've always worked on [temporary] contracts. For seven years I worked like that for a businessman, who was a millionaire, and didn't even want to pay my social and health insurance...Then I worked on a contract for a friend and he told me, look, Pepa, even if I give you [an employment contract with] the minimum wage, it doesn't pay off.

(man, couple, adult children)

The majority of respondents were moving back and forth between these types of employment and welfare support. While microsimulation models assume that people are employed full-time through a regular labour contract, which covers contributions to health insurance and pension funds, the more precarious combinations leave such costs to the employee. Even though the income might be slightly higher in some cases, the additional costs for health care significantly reduce the amount of money the household could spend to cover living costs.

Making work pay models neglect thus the crucial role of the nature and extent of labour market demand. The limited accessibility of employment strongly shaped the possible choices of the welfare recipients we were interviewing; the available employment offers were often of a different character than the regular (full-time) employment used in the models to calculate financial incentives. Even if limiting our focus to formal employment, different forms lead to different levels of taxation, insurance payments and access to in-work benefits.

Limited knowledge of the system and benefit non-take up

The unstable situation of the labour market also influenced how the respondents thought about the question of whether it 'pays to work'. Most of them did not understand the system and their perception was usually based on anecdotal knowledge of the experiences of other welfare recipients. The complexity of the system of welfare support, which consists of several types of benefits (with differentiated administration proceedings in different departments), means that the administrators themselves are often not familiar with the system as a whole.

I don't really know what we're entitled to get...The people at the unemployment office don't know anyway. Our housing benefit was reduced. When I didn't work, it was lower than when I did work. So I went

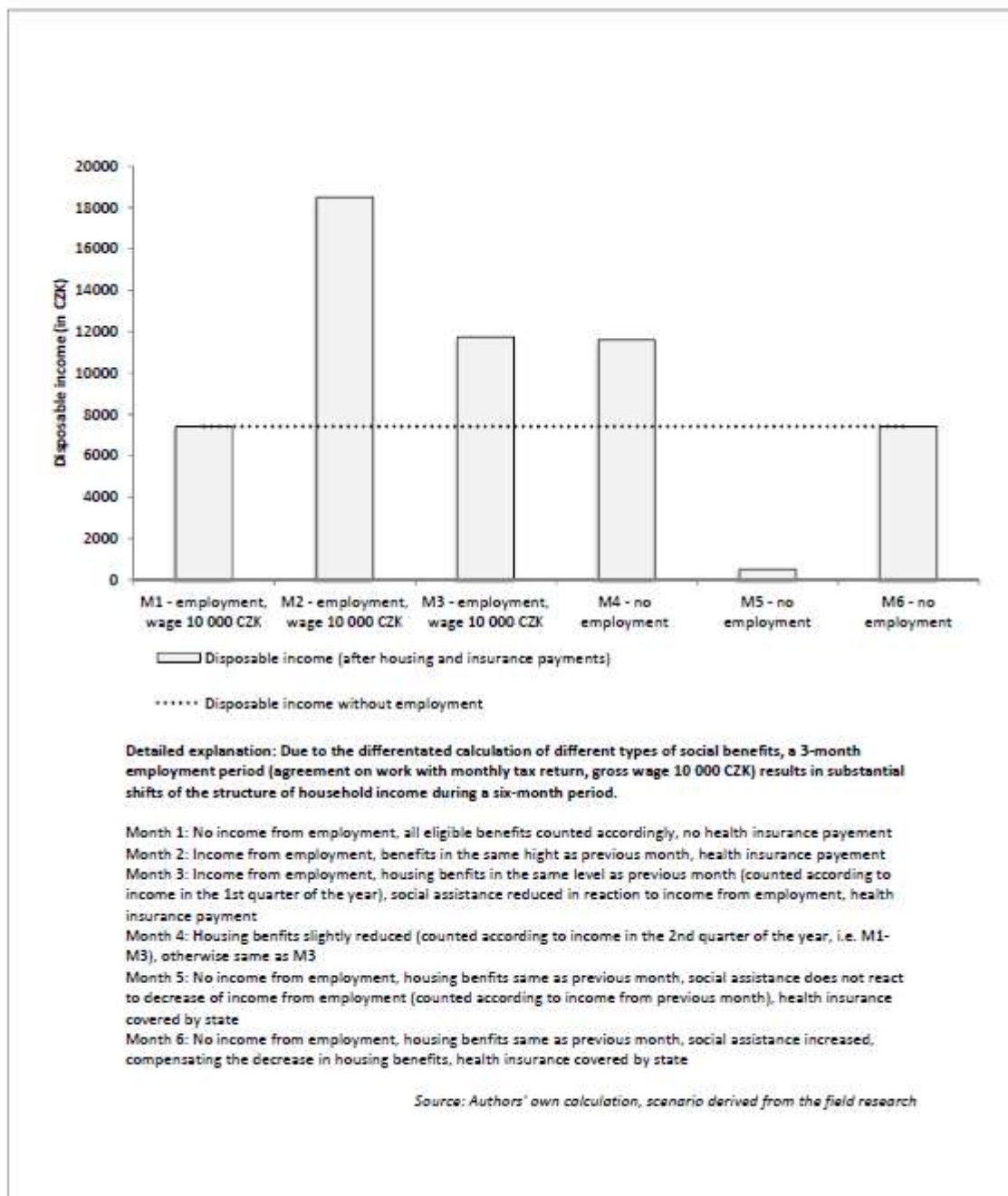
there to ask, and they said they didn't know, that it was what the computer calculated...I have no idea how it's calculated.

(woman, couple, 2 children)

The difficulties in estimating the financial impact of employment were greater for those who were involved in temporary employment as it has different impacts on different benefit payments due to different time frames used in the assessment of eligibility. Social assistance is evaluated on a monthly basis; housing subsidies are evaluated quarter; and the child benefit, once a year. Once the eligibility for the payment is established on the basis of the income situation in the past assessment period, it is paid throughout the following assessment period without considering changes of income that might occur within this period of time.

Figure 1 illustrates the effect of these rules on the income of a single-parent household with two children in the case of temporary employment over a three-month period. In the first month of employment, the combination of earned income and reduced social benefits leads to a significant increase in income. The amount is lower in the following two months of employment, as the household benefits are lowered. However, the economic situation is still significantly better than in the times before entering employment. The opposite is true after employment had ended: The social benefits do not return to the initial level immediately (month 5). In many cases, this is the moment when households become indebted.

Figure 1: Impact on temporary employment on household monthly disposable income (1 adult + 2 children)



Yet, in evaluating the models' accuracy in calculating the financial incentives for employment, it was most striking that many of the respondents did not know about the possibility of combining full-time employment and benefits, and even when they did. In some cases, they were told that they were not entitled:

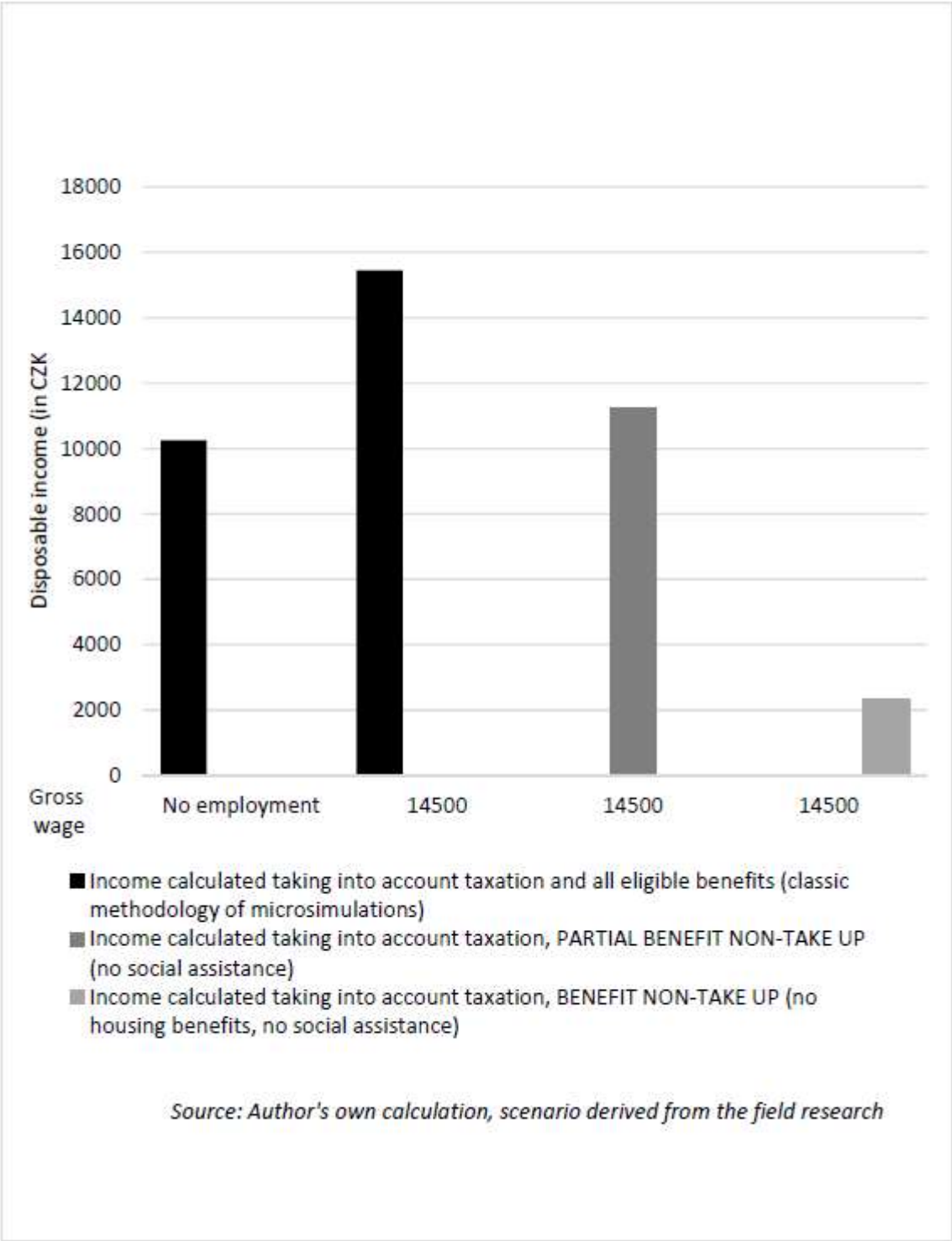
When I first went to apply for the housing benefit, they told me I wasn't

eligible: 'You earn 12 thousand crowns, you're living in luxury', and 'With such a wage you don't stand a chance'. Well, and then they told me to move into a smaller flat...Most people would give up. They get fobbed off, but a' I'm employed in social services, I knew I was entitled...In the end they said, 'Well, try it then'.

(woman, no children)

As we have shown in the previous part, according to microsimulations, most households still qualify for support from social assistance (and other benefits) as their income was below the state-defined poverty threshold. Figure 2 shows the impact of the non-take up of various benefits on the disposable income of a household of one adult and two children. The comparisons show how non-take up significantly reduces the financial benefit of employment in comparison to the model outcomes. While the non-take up of any benefits shown in the case on the right is unlikely to occur, in the case of low-income families with children, the non-take up of social assistance (second case from the right) is likely to be much more common.

Figure 2: Impact of benefit non-take-up on household income (2 adults plus 2 children, 1 person employed)



One reason for this is limited awareness about the possibility of combining earned income with social assistance, which is often perceived as benefits for those who do not work. In addition to this, the acceptance of social assistance comes with strict restrictions and incursions into privacy. Combined with stigmatization and lack of knowledge, this implies that

many low-income households do not apply for social assistance if they are employed, even though their income is below the poverty level. This corresponds with data on social assistance recipients, which shows a low level of formal economic activity (Hora and Vyhlídal, 2016).

The lack of knowledge of the benefits system and the high level of non-take up corresponds to the literature that points out that there is no evidence of the 'dependency culture' proposed by the political right (Dean and Taylor-Gooby, 1992; Dunn et al, 2014). Furthermore, and more importantly for our analysis, it shows that, whereas general knowledge about the difference in income between full-time employment and benefits corresponded vaguely to the models, in many situations (such as temporary employment or low-wage employment) the benefit recipients were either unable to predict the financial impact or their knowledge was incorrect.

Income increase x financially motivating employment

So far, we have discussed the knowledge of the difference in income with or without employment. However, the interviews showed that the difference in income per se does not imply that certain employment was perceived as *financially motivating*. The financial motivation for accepting low-wage employment was strongest in single or two adult households because of the perceived impossibility of covering even basic needs from welfare support.

*If we lived only on the benefits, we'd get just 4,000 and we'd be screwed.
We wouldn't make ends meet even if we ate only those Chinese instant
noodles.*

(man, couple with adult children, employment through public works)

However, for many households the *relative increase* of income resulting from employment was not motivating as the *absolute increase* of income was too low. This applied particularly when the employment required additional costs (commuting, food, childcare, and so on). These costs may not only reduce the financial reward from employment, but even push the household into a situation where their income is lower than before accepting the employment.

*Now I got a job offer as a chambermaid, but for minimum wage and far
away, and I don't have a driving licence. With the commuting they'd have
to offer me at least 12,000 [CZK] gross, otherwise it won't pay off at all.*

(woman, 2 children)

For many households, entering low-wage employment usually did not bring a *significant* change in income. It only brought a shift in the importance of different financial sources, shifting the main source of income from welfare support to employment. All households were combining the income from employment and/or social support with informal employment, support from wider family and loans.

Now my husband gets paid 10,500 and I get 8,500, so we get a lot. It's a great change from only 5,000...but those basic things like buying clothes, furniture – our [grown-up] son helps us with that.

(woman, couple, 1 child)

The quotations above also capture an important feature, present in most of the interviews: Neither low-wage employment nor benefits *per se* offer adequate income to cover the expenses of a household.

Wages are low, that's the problem. It's not the high benefits. I haven't met a single person who could live off benefits. In that case they can't live off minimum wage either.

(Head of a Job Counsellor unit)

The necessity to combine different sources to cover basic needs increases the importance of informal employment as a critical additional source of income. Informal employment thus becomes a 'survival strategy' as it is described by MacDonald (1994) in the British post-industrial context. In the words of one of the respondents:

Without some odd jobs, we wouldn't even have enough to buy food... We had to take out a loan when the boys started their school, otherwise we wouldn't have made it...We paid that off just thanks to those odd illegal jobs.

(woman, couple, 3 children)

This precarious position leads to the development of strategies beyond the reach of formal regulatory frameworks, which are further contributing to the continuation of irregularity resulting in growing informalization (Slavnic, 2010). The households find themselves in a vicious circle, where the source of finances change, but the overall financial impact is limited as it often does not provide a way out of poverty and recurrent dependency on social support.

In this part, we have shown that the financial motivation to accept low-wage employment, which appears rewarding in the models, might in reality be much lower. However, we need to emphasize that we were focusing on the financial aspects of employment motivation. As could be seen from the employment trajectories of many of the respondents, the lack of financial motivation does not imply that employment might not be perceived as motivational for other non-financial reasons (social contact, status, and so forth), as has also been outlined in some literature (Nordenmark, 1999; Ervasti and Venetoklis, 2010; Dunn et al, 2014).

Over-indebtedness

Many of the households that were interviewed were over-indebted and faced a number of property seizures. According to the estimation of interviewed Labour Office employees, over half, in some cases three quarters, of welfare recipients are facing property seizures.

For these households, accepting formal employment might lead to a decrease in disposable income:

I just got a job offer for 12,000, but it wouldn't pay off. I'll only go to work when my husband has a job and we'll be able to apply for insolvency. When I worked, we had 15,000 and now that we're at home, we have 17,000.

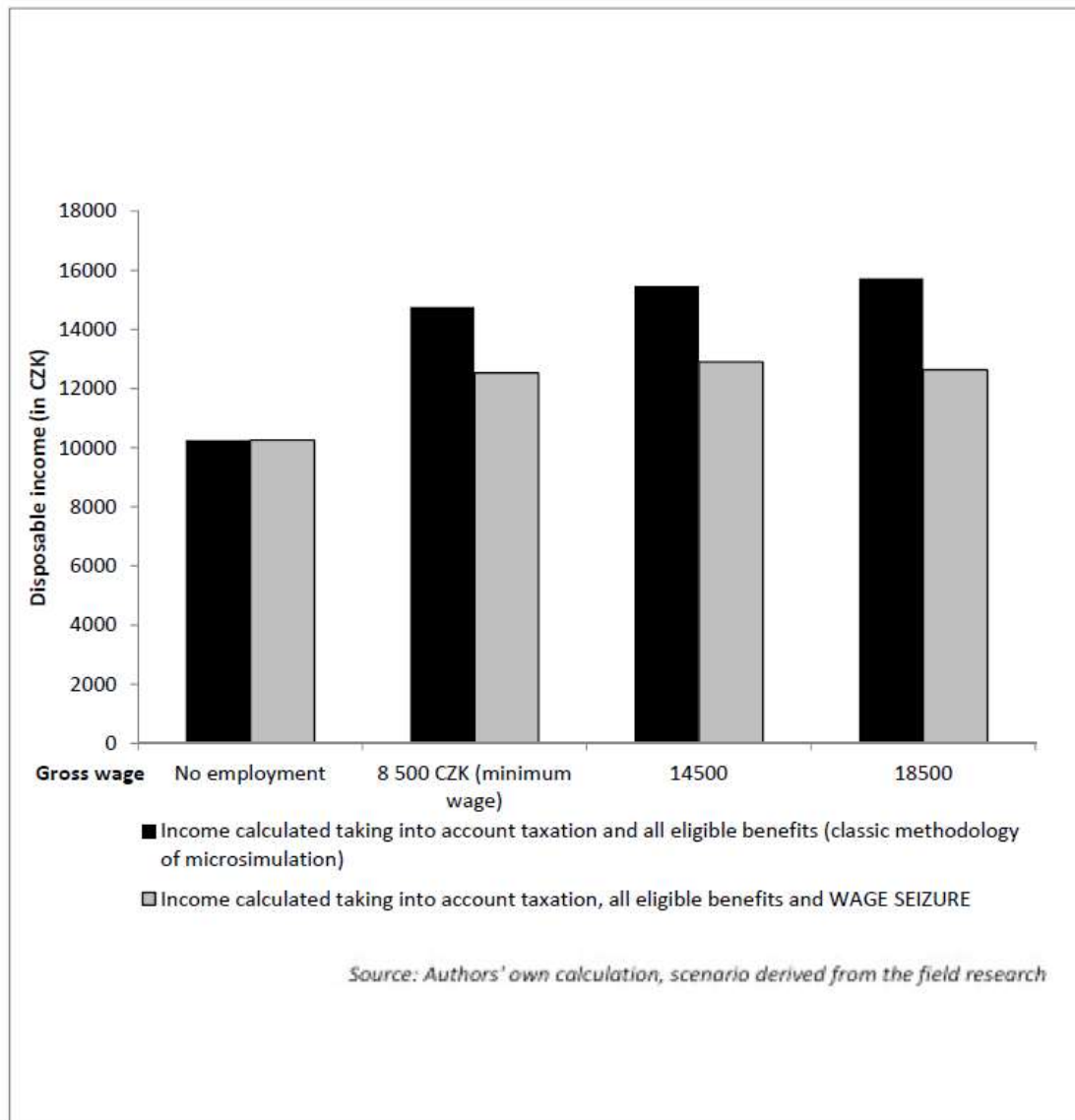
(woman, couple, 2 children, low housing costs)²

For over-indebted households, the financial incentive for employment is shaped by a different logic than that used in the microsimulation models. Once the person is employed, the creditors seize part of their wages. As the entitlement for social assistance and housing benefits are calculated on the basis of income before wage seizure, the wage increases may not result in an increase of disposable income; in certain circumstances it can even result in an income reduction. This effect is illustrated in Figure 20 with the example of a household with two children. The black colour illustrates households without wage seizure. The microsimulation models allowed us to show that if the family is entitled to social benefits, substantial increases of earned income result only in modest increases of household income (Trlifajová et al, 2014). However, when the wage is subject to wage seizure, the economic benefit from accepting work is reduced by almost half, and the increase of wage does not result in economic improvements. In some cases, it can even lead to a slight reduction of family income (the two cases on the right). The final household disposable income considerably differs from the microsimulation

² The number does not correspond with the figures 3 and 4, due to several factors: the figures show disposable income, whereas the respondent also included housing costs. In her case, the housing costs were lower than the normative limits used for the modelling.

models.

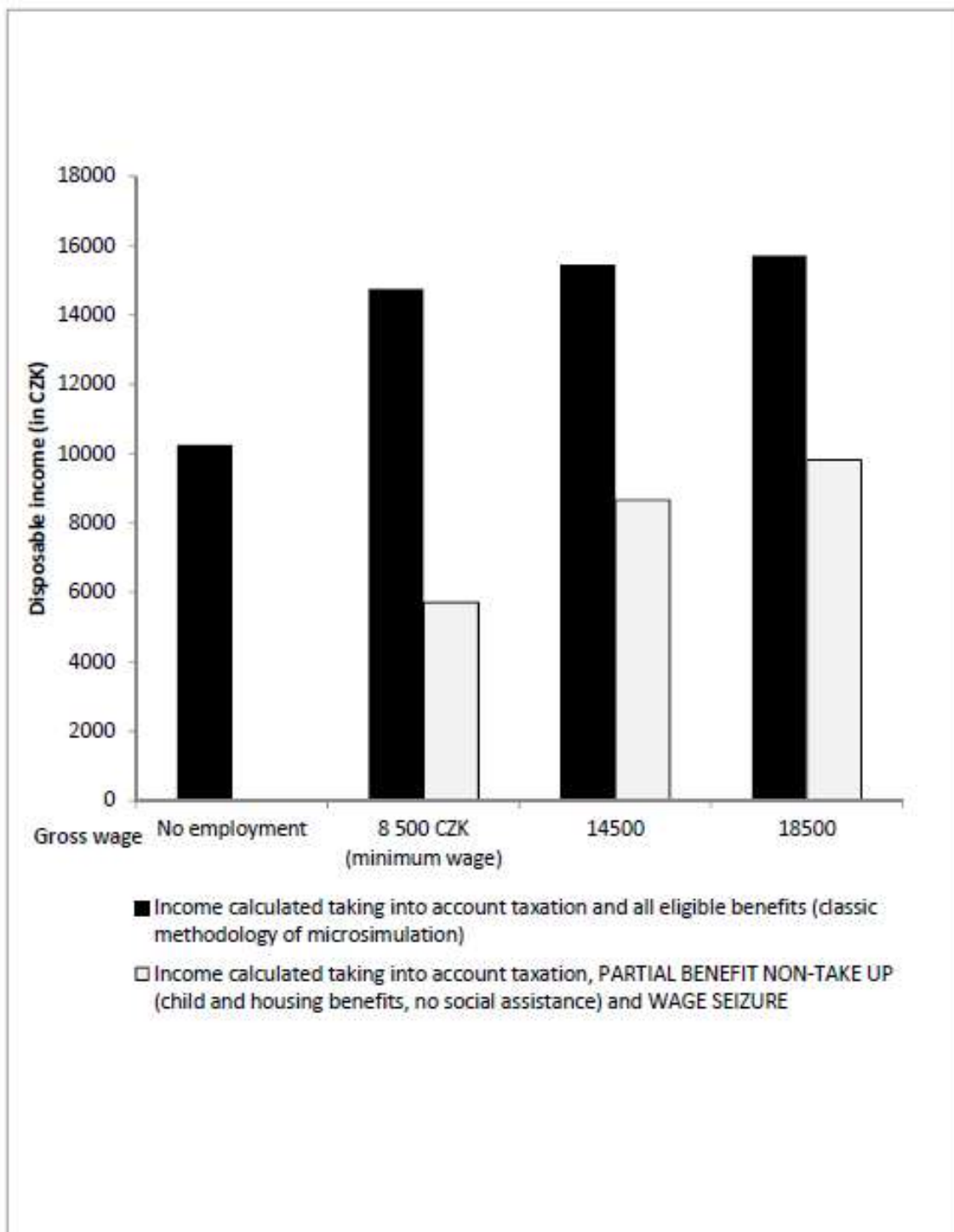
Figure 31: Impact of over-indebtedness on disposable household income (2 adults plus 2 children)



In order to explain the situation of over-indebted households, we need to further take into consideration that the effects of indebtedness are especially problematic in combination with the other factors mentioned previously. This could concern short-term employment illustrated in Figure 18, where wage seizure in those months with high income could dramatically reduce income. As indebted families do typically live without any financial reserves, accepting employment can thus turn into a highly risky option. Figure 4 illustrates the combination of wage seizure and non-take up of social assistance. Even though working families with income below living costs are entitled to social assistance, many people are not aware of this fact.

While we demonstrated already in Figure 2 how benefit non-take up increases vulnerability, this effect further increases when it is combined with wage seizure. When accepting employment at minimal wage without applying for social assistance, the household income is drastically lower (5709 CZK) than in the case of families living from social benefits without employment (10,250 CZK). While the family income rises with the increase in salary, it is still, even in the case of the highest wage category included in the figure (a gross wage of 18,500 CZK), lower than the income of a household whose members do not work. One result of this is extreme poverty, which often leads to new debts or the loss of housing. Another is a preference for semi-formal or informal employment.

Figure 4: Impact of indebtedness and benefit non-take up on household disposable income (2 adults; 2 children)



On the other hand, the possibility of entering into the process of debt relief, which is conditional upon the ability to pay 30% of debts over five years, creates an important motivation for employment. For those with lower debts, even low-rewarding (though not temporary) employment may open the way to debt relief:

If I had a proper job, with a wage of 20 or 25 thousand, I'd pay off the execution and we could live a normal life...That's what a neighbour of mine did. When he was young, he fooled around with some loans as well, but now he has a salary of 35,000. It took him five years to pay off the debt, but now it's all settled.

(man, couple, 2 children)

Given the extent of indebtedness in the Czech Republic and its concentration in the poorest households, these cases are not negligible. The level of over-indebtedness is one of the highest in the Europe (Angel and Heitzmann, 2015). According to data from the Chamber of Bailiffs published in 2016 by research institutions and NGOs on a specialized website, one in ten Czech citizens live in an over-indebted household. Further, individual debts rapidly grow in time due to the inability to pay multiple loans from different creditors and high debt-collecting fees. The data shows that the problems of over-indebtedness are more concentrated in post-industrial regions with higher unemployment rates and among the poorest groups of the population reaching between 18% and 33% in most places (Hábl 2017). The experience of over-indebtedness throughout the country is very common among those on the margins of the regular labour market.

Whereas we have previously pointed to certain limitations in modelling employment motivation, indebtedness, or more particularly the over-indebtedness of households, brings in new factors that are overlooked in the microsimulation models. However, these factors are central to the employment strategies of over-indebted households.

Conclusion

The principle of 'work must pay' has influenced the formulation of social policies in the last two decades. Various policies were introduced to ensure that people who work are better off economically than those who do not work. The promotion and design of such policies is often based on microsimulation models which aim to calculate the difference between income from work and social welfare.

Focusing on the case of the Czech Republic as an example of a low-wage economy, in this article we aimed to compare the models of financial incentives for employment with the real experience of people who live on the border between employment and welfare support.

Conducted in two disadvantaged regions, the interviews were realized with a relatively small group of people who had been identified by social service providers as making their livings along this borderline. Even though the size of the sample and the selection method does not allow us to consider our findings fully representative of the situation of this group in the Czech Republic, it is possible to draw a number of important conclusions that are of great relevance. The interviews revealed first that the Czech labour market has seen in recent years a rise in

precarious forms of employment in the low-skill sector, corresponding to the processes of dualization/segmentation of the labour market described in other countries.

The interviews further revealed that the calculations of financial incentives for employment do not often work in the way predicated by the mathematical model. Why do the models fail to represent this type of situation properly?

In order to understand the limits of financial incentives for employment models, we must first return to their presumptions. Even though this is not always explicitly said, existing policies that were influenced by the 'work must pay' idea seem to derive from the notion of a *dichotomy between unemployment*, on the one hand, and *permanent full-time employment* on the other hand. Similarly, the models calculating financial incentives are usually based on regular full-time employment. The financial incentive is expressed as the difference between the household income before and after the acceptance of these types of employment.

The household simulation techniques are based on models assuming rational choices about stable, long-term employment. This implies we expect that (a) an individual (or a household) is *deciding between unemployment and acceptance of employment* (entering the formal labour market), and (b) that his or her financial motivation is shaped by the *difference of income* in these two situations. Yet, if we aim to capture the situation of low-income households who find themselves in a precarious position on the labour market, both of these presumptions are problematic.

First, whereas permanent full-time employment is still prevalent in the Czech Republic, accessible employment opportunities for welfare recipients in disadvantaged regions do not often fit into the categories used in the modelling of financial incentives for employment.

This not only means that their income is taxed in different ways, but also that employment might bring additional costs (such as a need for the payment of health insurance) and/or that part of the reward might be paid outside of the formal agreement. Furthermore, households might not profit from in-work benefits targeted to low-income households (such as the child tax benefit) used in the modelling.

The accessible forms of employment led to a blurring of the borders between reliance on welfare support and employment as a main source of income. The respondents were moving back and forth between employment and welfare support as a main source of income. With different timeframes used in the evaluation of a household's eligibility for different types of benefits, the measurement of the financial impact becomes further complicated.

Second, recipients of benefits are often unable to predict correctly how a change in their employment status will affect their household income. The reasons for this are the system's complexity and the state's reluctance to inform citizens proactively about their rights to social assistance. This could result in non-take up of benefits, which worsens the social situation of vulnerable families. Particularly in the context of the precarious character of accessible employment, the complexity and limited knowledge could also discourage unemployed people to actively seek employment, as changes tend to result in periods of financial instability.

Third, and maybe most importantly, it might be reductive to express the financial incentive by the difference between income before and after employment. In the households we interviewed, neither low-wage employment nor benefits offered adequate income to cover the expenses of a household.

The respondents were combining income from employment and/or welfare benefits with informal employment, support from wider family and loans, finding themselves in a vicious circle: The sources of income changed but employment did not allow them to escape poverty. It also did not allow them to avoid dependency on social support, which comes with strict obligations, monthly visits to the labour office and the possibility of controls.

This economic situation has led to the development of strategies beyond the reach of formal regulatory frameworks, contributing to a reproduction of irregularity resulting in growing informalization. For people in such situations, restrictive types of 'work must pay' policies that further complicate access to social support are not motivating yet increase the risk of social exclusion.

Fourth, there is the issue of over-indebtedness, which introduces a different logic to both the perception of financial incentives for employment and its economic impact on household income. A large proportion of welfare recipients face multiple property seizures that strongly shape their economic strategies and which could contribute to the preference for employment on a precarious and/or informal basis.

The mathematical modelling of financial employment incentives and public policies, which were put into place on the basis of such calculations, do not correspond well with today's reality of precarious work. Is it not possible to come up with improved models? Ones which would more closely reflect the reality of low-income households in disadvantaged regions?

While it is certainly possible to construct more complex models, which are able to deal with the combination of social security dependence and the semi-informal short-term work typical in the case of our respondents, it is less clear if it would be possible to 'fine-tune' the existing mechanisms of the social state in a way that would be much more motivating. Based on the research findings, the 'work must pay' approach might be criticized for focusing on the wrong question. A truly functioning financial incentive would need to focus not solely on the difference of income between those who work and those who do not work, but also analyse what type of arrangement would allow working households to *rise permanently above* the poverty line.

However, being able to calculate this difference would still be useful for people who consider how the acceptance of a temporary job might affect the financial situation of their family. While the 'work must pay' approach is too simplistic to offer good guidance for the formulation of public policies, developing more complex (user-friendly) models, which would allow citizens both to check their current entitlements and predict the impact of changes, could be useful on a practical level and strengthen the awareness of people in vulnerable situations.

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UNCERTAIN IMPACT:
**HAVE THE ROMA
IN SLOVAKIA
BENEFITTED FROM
THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND?**

FINDINGS FROM AN ANALYSIS
OF ESF **EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION** PROJECTS
IN THE 2007 – 2013 PROGRAMMING PERIOD

Uncertain impact: Have the Roma in Slovakia benefitted from the European Social Fund?

*Findings from an Analysis of ESF Employment and
Social Inclusion Projects in the 2007 – 2013 Programming Period*

Roma Inclusion Working Papers

UNDP Europe and the CIS,
Bratislava Regional Centre



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Executive Summary

“What has the money invested in Roma inclusion achieved?” is a question that haunts many decision-makers, both in Brussels and in other EU capitals. It is difficult to answer for a variety of reasons. On the one hand, not all outcomes are easy to quantify. On the other hand, many projects have multiple outcomes and the causality links are not easy to establish. Any successful project has many ‘parents’, but a failure is always an ‘orphan’. Finally (or maybe primarily), not everyone involved in project and programme implementation would be happy with rigorous monitoring and evaluation – simply because it might make it easier to expose lack of results. Keeping the results vague makes possible the selling of fake approaches that could be useful for ‘ventilating money’ in the ‘development business’.

Roma projects are a case in point. The magnitude of exclusion is extreme, as are the complexity of the related challenges and the overlap of a number of vicious circles which lock the Roma in. With the economic crisis deepening and xenophobic attitudes on the rise, the public’s sensitivity to how the resources used on Roma inclusion are being spent is also increasing. This is why addressing the issue of outcome-level monitoring and evaluation is an economic, statistical and political challenge.

This report is an attempt to make answering the above question easier in the future. It has been elaborated in the framework of the pilot project funded by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy on new approaches to monitoring and evaluation, and the project on the statistical monitoring of living conditions of Roma in Slovakia, funded by the Ministry of Labour, Social affairs and Family in Slovakia. The authors believe that, indeed, new approaches are necessary so that the resources devoted to Roma inclusion (and social inclusion in general) in the next programming period have better returns in the form of real improvement of the lives of those most in need.

The analysis focuses on the use of Slovak European Social Funds (ESF) reported as having been ‘spent in favour of the Roma’ from the perspective of the real purpose of the funds. The report builds around the question: ‘Were the moneys, reported as devoted to addressing the challenges of marginalized Roma communities, actually spent on those needs, as claimed?’. It builds on three strands of data. One is information on the projects funded under the second priority axis Operational Programme ‘Employment and Social Inclusion’ (in support of social inclusion). Under this strand the available information (like the applications and their assessment’s internal and external evaluators, and intermediary and final monitoring reports derived from the Informational Technological Monitoring System - ITMS - database) was consolidated into an electronic data base and analysed. The second strand comprises site visits in one of the priority regions for the Operational Programme, the

Prešov Region. Under the second strand a number of interviews with local actors involved in the implementation of the projects funded was conducted (representatives of the local administrations, of the organizations implementing the projects and the ultimate beneficiaries – people from the Roma communities). Under the third strand the resulting data was analysed against the background of other data relevant in the context of Roma inclusion (namely the Atlas of Roma Communities in Slovakia and secondary research).

Major findings

Adequately defining the target of the interventions is problematic

The analysis of the available project data suggests that it is difficult to establish a clear link between inputs and outcomes, and even outputs in the case of most of the projects. The situation is different for the two measures, Measure 2.1 (Support for the social inclusion through the development of social services, with particular focus on marginalized Roma communities) and Measure 2.2 (Creation of equal opportunities in access to the labour market and support for the integration of disadvantaged groups on the labour market, with a specific focus on marginalized Roma communities). The differences, however, are related purely to definition.

The projects undertaken in Measure 2.1 stand much better in regards to this link, because their very purpose (and expected 'output') is providing field social work. The presence of social workers in the field is already an output, and, from a purely formal perspective, is easily accountable. As regards outcomes, the situation is vague. One of the primary purposes of field social work is similar to any social assistance – preventing the vulnerable communities from sliding into deeper marginalization. Lifting them out of poverty requires a broad variety of approaches, interventions and funding tools. Such tools ideally should have been provided by the interventions under Measure 2.2.

The available data, however, suggests that interventions under both measures were designed and implemented in parallel with no clear link between the two. This is a missed opportunity, because field social workers could have been used as a resource for the identification of reliable partners in the communities, facilitating the project formulation and supporting the monitoring of the implementation.

Another important reason for the difficulty in establishing a clear relationship between project inputs and outputs is the quality of project-related data that is collected, and the way it is maintained. The current system (both application and monitoring forms) generates information, but not data. In most cases, this information is interesting, but not useful for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

The measures do not reach those most in need

The paper suggests that the definition and usage of ‘Marginalized Roma Communities’ as a category for policy targeting is relevant and useful. It does not target Roma who are integrated or who live in non-marginalized communities, but those that are most in need.

The problem is the next step – are those groups targeted by interventions once identified as ‘most in need’? The answer is ‘not sufficiently’.

The ESF programme has proven less successful in territorial targeting. Despite the existing regional disparities, the ESF structure possesses no systematic instrument for steering investments to the regions or municipalities that are most in need of support. The analysis suggests that, on the contrary, people in such locations benefit from ESF grants even less than the inhabitants in average localities. Using spending per Roma inhabitant as an indicator, the investments were highest in some districts of western Slovakia, suggesting that factors other than real needs influence the allocation of ESF funding. The chances to benefit from ESF support also positively correlate with the size of the municipality – the smaller it is, the less likely it is to be targeted by ESF funding.

This has direct implications for Slovak Roma. The majority of them live in the less-developed eastern and southern regions of Slovakia, which are, according to the existing ESF rules, fully eligible for ESF funding. If investments supported from the structural funds are to reach the Roma communities in greatest need (and not just those that happen to live in eastern Slovakia), eligibility criteria need to be developed on the basis of mapping the concrete conditions within the specific locality where the Roma community lives, and not on the basis of the general data on socio-economic conditions.

Interventions have a marginal impact on improving Roma people’s chances of finding employment

While the ESF continues to finance programmes aimed at vulnerable groups, the priority of the current programming period is investment in the adaptability of workers and businesses. But in the case of the Slovak Operational Program ‘Employment and Social Inclusion’, by far the largest share of resources was invested in the framework of the first priority axis ‘Employment Growth’, and a large share of the resources went to private companies that sought to expand their staff or increase the skills of their workforce. Roma are underemployed and thus benefited little from the projects realized under this priority axis. A few projects are listed as relevant for marginalized Roma communities, yet this relevance is based on the fact that a single employee is from this group. In addition to this, the documentation did not explain whether any Roma were, in fact, employed.

Given the fact that the Slovak Roma minority is largely excluded from the formal labour market, it is not surprising that Roma are not benefiting from projects that seek to improve the skills of those that are already employed. Theoretically, the Roma and other vulnerable groups might benefit in the future from the positive impact of such projects on the targeted regions' economic performances. However, it is unclear whether such a 'trickle-down effect' would reach the Roma at all without complementary and targeted forms of intervention.

The ESF programme in Slovakia puts particular emphasis on the inclusion of Roma in the labour market, but the documentation we were able to access did not allow us to establish how many of the beneficiaries were indeed Roma. In order to study the impact of training and employment projects that were realized in municipalities with large Roma communities, research was undertaken in the Prešov Region. The sobering finding was that only a very small number of the intended beneficiaries of the projects in question ended up employed in the formal labour market. As a result of this disappointment, a significant number of the Roma interviewed assessed the training projects as a 'waste of time', saying that the only people who benefited from them were those who provided the training.

These findings also suggest that such training projects should be explicitly skill-development oriented. No doubt, the low educational background of Roma and the lack of formal employment records are important factors that impede their access to employment. But the exclusion of Roma from the labour market cannot be explained by educational deficits alone. Prejudice plays a role, and should be addressed. Repeatedly the research team members were assured by mayors that following training many of the beneficiaries would be very employable, but that they would nevertheless have no chance on the labour market because they were Roma. In this context it seems remarkable that the summary of the Slovak ESF goals used by the European Commission avoids the term "discrimination".

Recommendations

Results orientation will be a major eligibility and assessment criterion for the next programming period. The results of the study suggest that much can be done in this direction, and at relatively low cost.

Simplify procedures

Difficulties with the administration of the funds may lead – and in fact, does lead – to massive problems that not only affect the projects' implementation negatively, but in many cases threaten the future existence of the institutions that were awarded the grants. Due to the complexity of the administrative rules, many poten-

tial applicants either lack the capacity to apply for ESF funding or are able to manage ESF grants only with professional support, which significantly increases the costs of the actions.

Thus it is strongly recommended that the entire process be revised in order to minimize problems. It is also advisable to use an independent third party (e.g. an ombudsperson or appointed mediator) to oversee the communication between the ministry and the project-implementing organisations – the ESF grant beneficiaries.

Another problem is that the applicants for the ESF grants (the project-implementing organisations), are not necessarily experts in the field of Roma inclusion, but in the administrative side of project realization. While this form of specialization might help to minimize administrative difficulties, it seems unlikely that this type of recipient of the grant is well-disposed to realize the project in the very specific environment of the Roma community, or indeed to achieve interventions with long-lasting results.

Introduce ways of smart reporting and monitoring that generate meaningful data

The monitoring and evaluation infrastructure can be made more effective through improving administrative procedures, reporting formats and the scope of responsibilities of the structures that already exist (namely, the field social workers). Such changes would not require huge investments or fundamental changes in the existing procedures, thus they could be operationally feasible and cost-effective.

One issue that could be addressed immediately is the modification of project application and reporting forms, so that the targeting of funds (“Marginalized Roma Communities - relevant”) is improved. Applicants claiming that their project would contribute to the horizontal priority “marginalized Roma communities”, should be asked to provide an explanation of how exactly these communities would be targeted and how many people would benefit. One way of doing this would be to create a form that linked information on the beneficiaries (sex, Roma, long-term unemployed, disabled, etc.) with information on the type of assistance proposed (training, job creation, user of services).

Another important area is better tracking of the outputs of project activities. On the one hand, this could be done in a cost-efficient way through improving the administrative reporting forms. On the other, the outcome-focused monitoring and evaluation infrastructure could be improved through involving the beneficiaries and the field social workers in the process.

Actively involve the Roma communities in project implementation and the monitoring and evaluation cycle

The involvement of the beneficiaries in outcome-level monitoring and evaluation could bring huge benefits beyond mere data. A broad range of community-level observation and reporting techniques exist, making it possible to involve those targeted. Information and communication technology hugely expands the scope of such techniques. Institutionalizing this role and including it as part of the conditions of the ESF could provide powerful leverage for increasing the responsibility of the organisations implementing projects targeting Roma (ESF funding beneficiaries), and at the same time, would provide an opportunity for constructive feedback on the relevance of projects. Active Roma involvement could also be a building block for their transformation from a 'target group' into empowered actors. This would contribute to overcoming the dependency culture and social marginalization, and thus in the long run increase the long-term impact of the implemented projects.

Redefine the role of field social workers

The field social workers do tremendously important work, but unfortunately the work is too biased towards social assistance. Often they provide a basic social safety net to people facing the real challenges of exclusion and marginalization. The authors believe that efforts are necessary to boost both the development aspect and the inclusive aspect of this work.

One idea would be to boost the field social workers' role in monitoring and evaluation, and thus contribute to the results orientation of individual interventions. They are currently underused in this regard, but have huge potential to contribute. They are present in the field and have first-hand information both on the status of the community and on the available social and human capital, and they know (or should know) who is who in the communities and could liaise with them. They could also play a more explicit role as information sources on the status of communities. In addition to playing a greater role in monitoring and evaluation, the field social workers should play a bigger role in the design of the projects targeting employment and income generation. They should not be part of the implementing structures, but should be used as a resource and a source of knowledge on community dynamics, possible internal conflicts of interests and other elements that could have an impact on the projects' success.

Blend mainstreamed and targeted approaches

An oft-asked question is “Shall we prioritize targeted or mainstream approaches?” Analysis suggests that the answer is: “Both, depending on the specific circumstances”. Different communities are facing different challenges, and blending both approaches is the key to successful and sustainable inclusion of the Roma populations.

Specific focus on segregated communities can be achieved in a variety of ways. One way is through applying the segregation index (tested in the current analysis) or a similar instrument for both targeting projects and evaluation of their outcomes. Another is to develop tailor-made funding schemes for different types of Roma beneficiaries. Members of highly segregated communities with the lowest chances of being integrated into the regular labour market would benefit most from employment through activities linked to the upgrading of their settlement (housing, roadworks, water supplies, infrastructure, etc.); for those living in less segregated locations interventions aiming at their inclusion in the regular economy would be more appropriate.

To summarize, ESF – and any other structural fund – funded interventions should be driven by common sense and the question, “What works?”. Clear results orientation is a must. This idea, though obvious, is the overarching conclusion of the entire study.

1

Introduction

1.1. The need of outcome-level monitoring and evaluation

“Europe 2020” strategy puts particular focus on results-oriented approach to cohesion policy. This is a fundamental shift from the earlier input-oriented approach. Nominally this is common sense. Policies and individual projects are supposed to lead to results/outcomes. However, it is usually difficult to achieve this in practice.

The difficulties stem from variety of reasons. On the one hand, not all outcomes are easy to quantify in numeric indicators. It is not impossible, but requires statistical (or rather data) literacy and culture that is often missing at the local – project implementation – level. On the other hand, many projects have multiple outcomes and the causality links are not easy to establish. Using a quote from project implementers’ jargon, “any successful project has many parents but a failure is always an orphan”. Finally (or maybe primarily), there are some indications that there is implicit resistance, among various policy levels, to rigorous monitoring and evaluation. This cannot be quantified and it is difficult to find arguments in official documents – but interviews with various actors involved in project design and implementation suggest that anything that can be robustly monitored and evaluated brings the specific intervention (and its implementers) closer to accountability, thus making it more difficult to camouflage the lack of real results. Keeping the results vague makes possible the selling of fake approaches that could be useful for “ventilating money” in the “development business”.

Roma projects are a particular case in that regard. The magnitude of exclusion is extreme, as are the complexity of the related challenges and the overlap of a number of vicious circles the Roma find themselves locked into. With the economic crisis deepening and the xenophobic attitudes on the rise, the sensitivity of the public to how the resources used on Roma inclusion are being spent is also increasing. This is why addressing the issue of outcome-level monitoring and evaluation is both an economic, statistical and a political challenge. This is also the reason why the orientation on results should be at the core of the attention during the next programming period.

One “low hanging fruit”, in regards to data on results-oriented M&E, is the project level data and indicators. Currently most of the interventions at the local level are heavily focused on inputs. They are easy to quantify and report. Project proposals however rarely monitor outcomes – and that is what really counts.

1.2. The European Social Fund in Slovakia

The situation of the Roma minority represented one of the most serious challenges during the negotiations for EU membership of Slovakia and other Central and Eastern European countries. While during the EU accession process the country was under significant pressure to develop policies aiming at full integration of Slovakia's Roma today, eight years after Slovakia joined the Union, the space for external intervention on behalf of the Roma is more limited than during the negotiation process. However, while the European Commission's possibilities to intervene directly into domestic policies are limited, it possesses a powerful indirect tool in form of financial instruments such as the European Social Fund (ESF). The Commission explicitly lists "inclusion of Roma into mainstream education, the mainstream labour market, mainstream housing and society in general" as one of the overall goals of the ESF.¹

Even though Slovakia and the European Commission did not agree any final numbers, it was mutually understood that a significant share of these resources would be used for activities in favour of marginalized Roma communities. In addition total 200 million Euro has been guaranteed from selected OPs (both ESF and ERDF financed) on the so called "complex approach" to support Roma communities. According to the top managers of the ERDF, ESF and the SDF (Social Development Fond, a state body that administrates part of the ESF-resources), this goal is also widely accepted within the Slovak state administration and reflected in a large number of Calls for proposals issued by ESF/SDF.

Slovakia did not establish a formal benchmark concerning the share of Roma among ESF's ultimate beneficiaries². However Slovakia has explicitly defined "Marginalized Roma Communities" (hereafter: MRC) as one of the horizontal priorities of the National Strategic Reference Framework for the period of 2007 – 2013. The governmental information system ITMS,³ accessible from the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, which is the implementing Agency of this Operational Programme (hereafter: OP) keeps track of the projects targeting MRC. In April 2012, when the data for the research was provided by the Ministry, 691 projects were listed as being "relevant for the aims of the horizontal priority Marginalized Roma

- 1 Quoted after: Website of the DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities: The ESF and the Roma. Accessed 10.4.2012, URL: <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=63&langId=en>.
- 2 It is important to introduce one terminological clarification. From the EC perspective, the organization implementing the ESF-funded project is a "beneficiary". In the context of this study, the "beneficiaries" are the people who were expected to ultimately benefit from the project and its results. Those are the Roma at the receiving end of every project. In order to avoid confusion, we use the term "ultimate beneficiaries" to denote the people targeted by the projects. We deliberately stay away from the term "target group" because in our understanding a group can be targeted by an intervention, which does not necessarily mean it benefits from it.
- 3 ITMS is an information system that is used to provide a uniform method of recording, processing, exporting and monitoring data on programming, project and financial management, control and audit of interventions financed by the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund.

Communities” with a contracted total value of more than 132 million Euro by the period, in which this research was conducted. This constitutes 43 per cent of all Slovak ESF-funded projects selected within this OP.⁴ Due to the relative small financial volume of many Roma-targeting projects; their share in the overall volume of the funded projects is significantly smaller (13 per cent). At the time of writing, these 691 projects were in different phases of realization:

- 236 projects regularly finished,
- 35 have been terminated before the completion of the project,
- 420 were in realization

In addition, at the time of writing, there were 20 new MRC-relevant projects in preparation..⁵

The purpose of the present study is to contribute to answering the question **to what extent the practical implementation of the ESF Operational programme “Employment and Social Inclusion” is conducive to the specific needs of the Roma social inclusion in Slovakia.** The analysis of this question is guided by one major and more narrowly focused objective – investigate **to what extent the existing ESF-funded projects reporting framework generates the necessary data to make basic requirements for results-based (outcome-based) monitoring and evaluation possible** and to allow assessing the results of the actions under the OP “Employment and Social Inclusion”. In order to address this major objective, four central questions are being answered:

- Are the interventions under the OP (that are supposed to be reaching Roma communities) indeed reaching those communities?
- Are the funds nominally allocated for Roma inclusion indeed spent on addressing the vulnerability of the Roma?
- Did the allocation of the financial resources match the territorial distribution and the scale of challenges in the country, namely, the distribution and density of the Roma population?
- Do those interventions, which reach Roma, improve the chances of the Roma to obtain employment?

4 The second Operational Programme, “Education”, is administered by the Slovak Ministry of Education. About 70 per cent of all Slovak ESF funds are earmarked for the first Programme, 30 per cent for the second. The projects realized within this framework are not the subject of the present study.

5 All data refers to the programming period in the years 2007-2013 and is based on evidence from the ITMS database (generated on 05.01.2012).

- Answering these questions leads to additional, more specific questions:
- What share of Slovakia's Roma population was reached by the projects funded from the OP?
- Which measures contributed to achieving the general stated objectives of integrating of the Roma in the labour market?
- To what extent was the volume of the invested resources relevant (and corresponding) to the scope and magnitude of the challenges the members of marginalized Roma communities face?
- How many Roma were benefitting from the projects (directly and indirectly)? How can this be quantified, and are the existing reporting frameworks and project implementation procedures capable of generating the data necessary for answering such questions?
- How many Roma found employment as a result of the projects? How many of them found work in the implementation of the projects?
- What are the experiences/perceptions of the project implementing organisations (the project-implementing organisations) and the ultimate beneficiaries and what impact did the projects have on both groups?
- Are the project results sustainable, measurable and possible to monitor?

The questions outlined above are increasingly important in the context of the discussions on the guiding principles of the next programming period (2014-2020). The entire "Europe 2020" strategy is underpinned by the awareness of how significant it is to focus on the results and how urgently sound M&E frameworks are needed. Without such frameworks, it would be simply impossible to quantify and assess the results of the interventions and to answer the question "Where does European taxpayers' money go?" In the context of economic austerity, answering this question has a broader significance than just research or auditors' curiosity.

The current research should be seen in this broader context. It is piloting some simple approaches to the project-level M&E using the example of (and data from) the Roma-targeted ESF-funded projects in Slovakia. The approach tested is economically efficient and procedurally easy to implement. The "only" precondition is the willingness of the respective national governments and managing authorities to provide access to the data that already exists. In that regard, the study is close to a "forward looking evaluation" of the OP. It summarizes the experience and gaps, in that regard, in the Operational Programme "Employment and Social Inclusion" in Slovakia pertaining to MRC, and suggests possible improvements for the next programming period.

1.3. The objective of the current study

The current analysis seeks to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the ESF contribution to improving the living conditions of the Roma. It does this through an integrated evaluative perspective, which takes into account the combination of a statistical approach with that of a qualitatively oriented inquiry.

This analysis is not the only one that focuses on the issue of assessing the impact of public policies and public funds to strengthen Roma inclusion in EU (new) member states. In addition, this is not the first attempt at evaluation of ESF operational programmes. In 2010-2011, a number of assessments of the impact of structural funds in the new Member States had been conducted. Two of them had explicit focus on the Roma.⁶ The evaluative strategy of these reports draws on the secondary data presented in country reports on the targeting and distribution of resources as registered and reported in the Managing Authority of the OP. In addition, the second important source of information were the statistical data and aggregate quantitative information on projects' results and achievements **at the programme level**, as reflected in the managing structures and authorities. Such intermediated information is further on relayed to Brussels. Based on these data, policies' and OPs' impact is being evaluated.

We believe that such an approach – the only one possible from the EC perspective – could be flawed. It is based on the assumption that the aggregated data at the disposition of the managerial authority reflects adequately the reality on the ground. In other words, it assumes that X million EUR reported as devoted to Roma inclusion has been indeed devoted, and their outcomes have improved the status of Roma communities. This assumption is not necessarily correct, and investigating it is one of the goals of the current study.

One cannot expect from evaluators of an OP to go digging into the individual project documentation and visiting project sites. On the other hand, relying solely on intermediated data bears obvious risks. That is why the team adopted a complementary approach. The study still relies on secondary data – however by individual projects. The picture is not as precise as it would have been if we had adopted the prohibitively expensive approach of complementing each and every project package (application forms, monitoring reports and evaluations) with on-site visits to observe the real outcomes and their sustainability. We stop at the level of analyzing the secondary data and complementing it with a number of selective field visits.

6 Those are: Bernard Brunhes International (BBI). The European Social Fund and Roma. Background report, 2010. http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf/docs/esf_roma_en.pdf; Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services, Evaluation of the ESF support for Enhancing Access to the Labour market and the Social Inclusion of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities. Roma thematic report. May 2011, <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/BlobServlet?docId=228&langId=en>.

In that regard the study (to the extent possible within the limited time and resources available) **fills in the gap between individual project-level and aggregated programme level evaluations**. It can be seen as an in-depth extension of the dominating approaches in regards to ESF evaluation. It attempts to complement the missing link in the existing approaches – the link to the reality on the ground.

The study approaches these questions through a combination of two research methods. The first pillar of the chosen methodology is a statistical analysis of internal project documents from a sample of 298 projects that was merged with the database of the Atlas for Roma Communities in Slovakia (2004), which provides very detailed information about 1,643 locations (municipalities, Roma settlements, ethnic concentrations within municipalities, etc.). The combination of the data from these two datasets did allow for assessing the distribution of the resources both in geographical terms (correlations with geographical distribution of the Roma population, differences between regions) and social terms (level of development, unemployment, segregation).

While this statistical approach was well-suited to analyse the distribution of the invested resources, the method is insufficient for understanding how the invested resources affected the targeted communities. In order to complement the picture emerging from the statistical analysis with the experiences of those who participated in ESF-funded projects as managers or ultimate beneficiaries, the research methodology's second pillar is a number of visits to project sites, which were realized in Eastern Slovakia's Prešov Region during March 2012. The findings from the interviews with project managers, local authorities and targeted members of the local Roma communities led to very valuable insights, which were relevant also for the steering of the statistical analysis and the interpretation of its results.

The authors of the current report sought to integrate the key findings from both research approaches in a comprehensive way. Introducing this study's conceptual framework and the methodology of the research, the purpose of the second – methodological – chapter is mostly practical: in combination with the dataset in the appendix to this report, the introduction of the dataset's structure and the applied research methods should allow the reader both to verify the calculations, and conduct his/her own calculations. The methodological chapter is followed by an introduction into the structure of the ESF funding in Slovakia, which explains the position of the MRC-relevant projects within this overarching structure. The fourth chapter provides an analysis of the 298 projects of the analysed sample of MRC-relevant projects, to be followed by the case studies of ESF-funded projects in the Prešov Region (chapter 5).

This report is concluded with three sets of recommendations. The first set of recommendations (section 7.1) deals with the implementation structures and the procedures for monitoring and evaluation of future project activities. It calls for sim-

plifying the ESF application procedures, modification of the monitoring and reporting forms into useful tools for meaningful data generation and for active role of the Roma in the entire project implementation and M&E cycle. The second set of recommendations (section 7.2) opts for reconsidering the functions and the role of the field social workers, so that they play a more effective role in results-oriented M&E and as development actors in the field (going beyond social assistance). The third set of recommendations provides inputs to the discussion on “mainstreaming vs. targeting dichotomy” and calls for a blended approach, taking into consideration the specifics of each individual community. In some cases, targeting is necessary (like in the case of segregated communities), in others, mainstreaming should play a leading role. The decision in each individual case should be driven by pragmatic criteria – what works for the people, yields tangible results and lifts them out of poverty and marginalization.

2

The research methodology

2.1. The current ESF programme in the context of outcome-level monitoring

The 1.7 billion Euros of the European Social Fund available for the period 2007 – 2013 represented a major opportunity for Slovakia to address key social problems such as **regional disparities in employment**, long-term unemployment and the exclusion of Roma from the labour market. As the current programming period is approaching its end, and the principles for a new programming period are being planned, it is important to ask whether the programme can be considered an effective tool for addressing the problems of Roma on the labour market. In order to do that, one needs robust methodologies for defining and quantifying the anticipated results (outcomes) of the intervention, and be able to compare the anticipated with those achieved.

This is the essence of the outcome-level monitoring.

Ideally, any kind of evaluation should be based on quantifiable inputs, outputs and outcomes. In reality, this is not always the case. This is due to the fact that inputs are usually the easiest to account, because usually they can be reflected in quantifiable form (most commonly, as money devoted to certain activity or inputs in kind). The outputs are more difficult, but still possible to quantify (numbers of trainings that were conducted, the number of people re-qualified, publications printed, etc.). Quantifying the outcomes – what actually has been achieved in the long run (after having spent the inputs and produced the outputs) is much trickier. An unemployed person could have attended a vocational training (an output in an employment-generation project), but this does not necessarily mean that he/she will find a job (the desired outcome of such a project). Establishing the causalities is even trickier – if a retrained person finds a job, was it as a result of the training and the new skills acquired, or was it simply due to the change of the economic environment, which has improved in the meantime?

All this makes outcome-level monitoring and evaluation extremely complex and often prohibitively expensive. This is a siren call for not going into such exercises at all – and an excuse for sticking to the easily accountable and quantifiable inputs - or output-level evaluation. However, keeping the projects and their outcomes vague

usually means keeping them fake. Moreover, this approach fundamentally distorts the set of incentives, and the long-term implications of development interventions. This leads to increasing the overall costs (assessing the success of a project by its inputs – or resources spent – is implicit incentive for increasing those inputs). Finally, the output-level M&E undervalues the positive externalities of interventions, which are often even more important in the long run than the immediate outputs.

This report focuses on the analyses of the usage of Slovak ESF funds reported as “spent in favour of the Roma” from the perspective of the real purpose of the funds. The report builds around the “simple” question: “Were the moneys, reported as devoted to addressing the challenges of marginalized Roma communities, actually spent on those needs as claimed?” With that objective, the analysis behind this report is firmly rooted in the principles and the general objectives of the European Social Fund defined by the European Commission, which represent the guidelines for the usage of the funds by member states.⁷ The most relevant to the scope of the current analysis are the following (bold fonts were added):

- “The European Social Fund (ESF) is one of the EU’s Structural Funds, set up **to reduce differences in prosperity and living standards across EU Member States and regions**, and therefore **promoting economic and social cohesion**. The ESF is devoted to **promoting employment** in the EU. It helps Member States make Europe’s workforce and companies better equipped to face new, global challenges. In short:
- Funding is spread across the Member States and regions, **in particular those where economic development is less advanced**.
- It is a **key element of the EU’s 2020 strategy for Growth and Jobs** targeted at improving the lives of EU citizens by giving them **better skills and better job prospects**.
- Over the period 2007-2013 some €75 billion will be distributed to the EU Member States and regions to achieve its goals.

The ESF still addresses employment issues, ensuring **accessibility to and promoting participation in the labour market**. In addition, it also works to **prevent social exclusion and combat discrimination by ensuring the access and inclusion of “disadvantaged workers”**.[...]

On the same website, the European Commission summarizes the strategic objectives for Slovakia’s ESF funding for 2007 – 2013 as being to increase the **competitiveness and performance of its regions and of the economy as a**

⁷ See <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=35&langId=en>.

whole. This should be achieved by **measures to address structural unemployment and regional disparities in employment** throughout the country.

In regard to the Operational Programme “Employment and Social Inclusion” examined in this study, the website describes the programme objectives as the following:

“Higher employment will be supported by measures to **invest in the workforce and reduce unemployment and long-term unemployment. Improving skill levels, particularly amongst vulnerable sectors of the population, will foster social inclusion, with particular reference to the Roma communities.** This will have the effect, inter alia, of **reducing intra-regional disparities in the unemployment level.** Priorities include:

Supporting employment growth

The creation and sustainability of jobs will be promoted by **increasing the adaptability of workers, businesses and the promotion of entrepreneurship.** Concrete actions could include, for example, providing **tailor-made courses for the long-term unemployed** in areas currently short of labour, thus diminishing structural unemployment in remote regions.

Supporting social inclusion

The **programme will promote equal opportunities to access the labour market,** and the **integration of disadvantaged groups, with particular reference to marginalised Roma communities.** In addition, it will support actions addressing work/life balance and childcare needs – to aid the integration and reintegration of parents into the workforce.”⁸

In addition to the priorities on the country level, the website of DG for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion contains a description of the ESF’s relevance for the Roma. Even though this text is of more general character than the two texts mentioned before, we suggest using it as the third set of stated objectives:

[...] The European Union aims to promote the full inclusion [of Roma] into society and their participation in the economy, in the labour market, in cultural life and in decision-making. Roma inclusion is both a political and moral obligation of the EU and an economic priority: the exclusion of Roma entails important economic consequences in terms of direct costs for public budgets as well as in terms of opportunity costs through losses in economic activity and taxes.

8 There were two additional sub-priorities “Supporting employment, social inclusion and capacity building in the Bratislava Region” and “Building capacities and improving the quality of public administration”. However, none of the projects realized within these sections is listed as MRC-relevant.

Roma inclusion is **not dealt with as a separate policy, but instead it is 'mainstreamed'**, meaning that special attention is paid to the particular situation of the Roma within all EU policies that aim at improving the economic situation, health, living conditions, employment opportunities, cultural understanding and education of all Europeans. The Commission's role is to enforce relevant legislation, support and coordinate Member States' policies and facilitate co-operation between all stakeholders. [...]

Full participation of Roma in society is supported through the European Union's financial tools, such as the European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, as well as specific Community programmes that support national policies. The overall objective of projects and programmes supported by Community funding are the **inclusion of Roma into mainstream education, the mainstream labour market, mainstream housing and society in general.**

The European Social Fund contributes to the integration of Roma through various projects that help the Roma community in **areas such as health services, counselling, education, training and guidance for self-employed.** (...)

Nobody seriously questions the relevance of the basic guiding principles and the general objectives of the European Social Fund. The real question is how to make sure that the individual interventions are actually producing results, and are getting us closer to achieving those general objectives. The fact that "Europe 2020" strategy puts particular focus on results-oriented approach to cohesion policy is just one of the many indicators of the awareness of how serious this issue is.

In fact, the Commission is moving towards a new approach to monitoring and evaluation. It is calling for multi-level governance partnerships - local/internal and national/international/external in order to guarantee the proper use and inferences from the indicators. This entails certain 'democratization' of the M&E process. As clearly stated in a study commissioned by the Committee of the Regions,

"The Commission will have to have the capacity to assess all this in detail at the *ex-ante* and the *ex-post* phase. For the implementing authorities this will require a very detailed monitoring and evaluation framework, with key stages independent of the Managing Authority to ensure that results are collected and analysed objectively"⁹.

9 What is the role for local and regional authorities in the post-2013 budgetary framework? A territorial perspective on the interrelation between the Europe 2020 strategy, the Multiannual Financial Framework post-2013 and new EU economic governance, http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_1354_what_role_for_local_and_regional_authorities.pdf

For that purpose, the Commission will not be imposing new sets of indicators. It will be providing guidelines on how actors, involved in the implementation of individual Operational Programmes, measures and projects, should build the indicators that would fit the purpose of the specific intervention, how to establish data collection infrastructure to feed those indicators and how to make sense of them (understand what actually the figures are saying from the policy perspective). It will also introduce rigid conditionalities on how the funds are being used and what their implications are for the socially excluded – and explicitly for Roma. Although a number of conditionalities, e.g. on gender, disability and anti-discrimination proposed by the EC were subsequently deleted by the Council, the Roma conditionality remained.¹⁰

In practical terms, this means that for the next programming period the Commission will be increasingly sensitive to how the EU funding is being spent and what results are achieved:

It is therefore important to maximise the effectiveness of all structural instruments in terms of delivering objectives and targets set in programmes and optimise synergies and efficiency of the different instruments. This will be achieved through sound policy, regulatory and institutional framework conditions for the funds, an increased focus on results and monitoring progress towards objectives and targets agreed in programmes as well as the harmonisation, to the extent possible, of implementation rules and control requirements.¹¹

The revised note submitted to the High Level Group Reflecting on Future Cohesion Policy by a broad team of international experts explicitly calls for using outcome indicators – both at the level of Operational Programmes and of individual projects:

Member States and Regions would commit in the Operational Programmes that each project will be required to have one or more outcome indicators and, whenever possible, the corresponding outcome targets... For any project more than one indicator may be needed, for two reasons: first, as stressed above, for a given outcome it may be appropriate to focus on more than one aspect; second, integrated, place-based projects aiming at more than one outcome call for different indicators... The lack of available data may represent an obstacle for the choice and measurement of appropriate indicators. This is one more reason

10 Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund covered by the Common Strategic Framework and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006, p. 148. www.ec.europa.eu/esf/BlobServlet?docId=233&langId=en.

11 Ibid, p. 2.

why it is essential for the selection of outcome indicators and the identification of data requirements to be embedded in the project design”¹²

This is the policy background of the current analysis, and makes it potentially relevant for discussions on the structure and reporting mechanisms of the next programming period.

2.2. Methodology of the Statistical Analysis

Processing of documents made available to the authors

During an initial meeting with employees of the Slovak Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the research team was introduced to the documentation of project data in the ministry’s electronic database. While parts of the project documentation exist only on paper in files of the ministry, the following documents are accessible in electronic form (the underlined were used for the analysis):

- application without appendixes
- application assessment reports by (internal or external) evaluators,
- minutes of controls by ministry employees,
- intermediary monitoring report (requested only in cases where project is not concluded)
- final monitoring report.

Unfortunately, the ITMS data system allows only generating tables with data from a larger group of projects, in case of very basic information. Therefore it was necessary to generate a table with more detailed information manually, on the basis of project files that were made available to the research team in form of pdf documents.

Despite the considerable volume of these documents, the researchers faced a number of constraints, which did not in all cases allow gaining a full picture of the character of project activities.

12 Outcome indicators and targets. Towards a new system of monitoring and evaluation in EU cohesion policy, pp. 10-11. http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/doc/performance/outcome_indicators_en.pdf

The first of these constraints is the predominantly technical character of the documentation. This is true also for the protocols of controls in the field, which focused mostly on the accounting of the activities. According to the ESF managers interviewed, due to the complexity of the administrative agenda, the ministry has not yet developed a system to monitor and assess the outcome of the realized activities.

In addition to this, it was noticed that a large number of applications – mostly municipalities – were based on standardized texts, which were used in applications by various applicants.

Quite surprisingly, many project-implementing organisations did not provide in their reports explanation for substantial – in many cases drastic – changes, such as a huge difference between the contracted budget and the realized budget. Possibly, such explanations would have the form of written correspondence between the project-implementing organisations and the Fund managers and could be found in the project archives. Due to the large number of analysed projects, it was not feasible to include also these kinds of archive materials in order to clarify questions, which could not be answered from the documents.

The generation of this table was also complicated by the fact that there are differences both in the structure of the documents and in the choice of indicators. Some information (e.g. percentage of Roma among the ultimate beneficiaries) would have been extremely valuable, yet were provided only in a fraction of the projects, which made it difficult to draw general conclusions.

The definite version of the table generated by the project team, which was at a later point merged with the existing table of the Atlas of Roma Communities, contains the following categories:

Table 1: Project attributes included in project table

Categories	Variables	Source of information
Project number	Number	Name of file
SK NACE of the recipient of the grant	NACE code	Project application For meaning of codes see: http://www.statistics.sk/pls/wregis/ciselniky?kc=5205
Project location	Municipality or district or region	Project application

Categories	Variables	Source of information
Project number	Number	Name of file
Programme Priorities	2.1 or 2.2	Final monitoring report
Status of project	1: Regularly completed; 2: Terminated before its completion; 3: Still in realization	The files were provided clustered depending on the status of projects Remark: The category “still in realization” does not necessarily have to mean that the project is still active as the ministry lists projects as completed only after the accounting has been concluded within the ministry
Type of project	1: Social field work 2: Communal social work 3: Employment 4: Study	Analysis of project content In fact, all projects of priority 2.1 belong to categories 1 or 2, whereas projects of priority 2.2 belong, with a few exceptions (studies), to category 3.
Spatial focus	1: Roma settlement outside of municipality; 2: Municipality; 3: District; 4: Region.	Project application. In cases where projects targeted a number of municipalities (districts, regions) at the same time, the project data were divided and the relevant data (budget, number of ultimate beneficiaries) were attributed proportionally.
Project start	Date	Final (intermediary) monitoring report
Project end	Date (if available)	Final monitoring report
Contracted budget	Sum	Final (intermediary) monitoring report
Realized budget	Sum (if available)	Final monitoring report
Budget - Trainings	Sum (if available)	Final monitoring report
Budget - Social work	Sum (if available)	Final monitoring report
Budget – Project management	Sum (if available)	Final monitoring report
Budget – PR	Sum (if available)	Final monitoring report

Categories	Variables	Source of information
Project number	Number	Name of file
Total number of ultimate beneficiaries - Roma	Number (if available)	Some projects in 2.2 provided this number as a performance indicator related to the project's MRC-relevance. However, while highly informative, it is difficult to use the indicator in statistical analysis, as its definition differs from project to project (e.g. number of work places, number of Roma reached).
Number of members of target group involved in project activities - men	Number (if available)	Final monitoring report
Number of members of target group involved in project activities – men and women	Number (if available)	Final monitoring report
Target group – number of persons who made use of offered services	Number (if available)	Final monitoring report (It is not exactly clear how this category differs from the one above)
Jobs created (social workers or work places for the ultimate beneficiaries)	Number (if available)	Final monitoring report (It is not exactly clear how this category differs from the one above)
Types of project activities 1: Trainings	1: Yes	Project application
Types of project activities 2: Community mobilization	1: Yes	Project application
Types of project activities 3: Social work	1: Yes	Project application
Types of project activities 5: Community centre	1: Yes	Project application
Types of project activities 6: Employment	1: Yes	Project application

Definition of project sample

With two exceptions, all of the Roma-targeting ESF projects in Slovakia, which were realized within OP Employment and Social Inclusion and are included in the sample analysed in this study, were realized within the so-called 2nd priority axis – Support of Social inclusion. Within this priority, the projects are divided among two measures:

- **Measure 2.1:** Support of the social inclusion of persons being socially excluded or threatened by social exclusion through the development of social services, with particular focus on marginalized Roma communities.
- **Measure 2.2:** Creation of equal opportunities in the access to the labour market and support of the integration of disadvantaged groups on the labour market, with a specific focus on marginalized Roma communities

As mentioned in the introduction, the research was focused only on MRC-relevant projects (691 as per Ministry data) for the current programming period (2007 – 2013). The initial idea was to focus only on completed projects, so that it would make it possible to compare some basic quantitative indicators for results and outputs used in the projects (for example, realized budgets, total number of Roma targeted, etc.). In the process of the analysis, it turned out that most of the projects that are completed fall under Measure 2.1 and those, which are under 2.1, are in progress (not completed).

The projects under Measure 2.1 are not at the centre of the study, because the authors believe that field social work interventions are just an “introduction” to inclusive measures. They provide emergency support and basic social assistance, could prepare the conditions for the Roma to find decent jobs, but in themselves are not directly creating such jobs. In that respect they are closer to an extension of the basic social safety nets than to inclusion policies and interventions. These are measures that were financed by the Government from the state budget. Later on, these competences were transferred to the municipalities (in the process of decentralization) and the municipalities were using ESF as a source of funding on a project level basis. In addition, the social field work funded interventions under Measure 2.1 were already scrutinized in earlier evaluations¹³.

Activities under Measure 2.2 on the other hand are focused on the access to the labour market. This is the measure that logically builds on 2.1, and has the poten-

13 See: Hrustič, Tomáš et al (2009): Výkon terénnej sociálnej práce v marginalizovaných rómskych komunitách. Záverečná výskumná správa Ústavu etnológie Slovenskej akadémie vied (ÚEt SAV) pre Fond sociálneho rozvoja (FSR).

tial to create jobs and incomes. The authors of the study anticipated to find in those projects measurable indicators that would provide space for comparison and evaluation – how many, how much, for how long.

This is why ultimately the decision was taken to include in the analysis, also the projects under Measure 2.2 that are registered in the Ministry's database as being still in realization. As mentioned above, being "in realization" does not necessarily mean that there are still activities taking place. The analysis of the project data showed that in a large number of cases the projects are in fact concluded, but the final accounting has not been closed within the Ministry. The documents provided by the Ministry included also projects that were terminated before their completion. However, the documentation for these projects did not allow them to be integrated in the table, as most key indicators (such as contracted budget) were missing.

It is also important to notice that the group of the so-called national projects, which are realized by state institutions and differ considerably from the projects realized by municipalities, NGOs and private companies, were excluded from analysis. The reason is that their implications for the ultimate beneficiaries are highly intermediated. They are largely focused on building or improving policy frameworks and interventions. The specific projects targeting those groups directly are "projects of a secondary level" – a kind of "projects under the national projects". The outcomes of the latter are an aggregate outcome of the former. Thus, in order to assess the impact of the "national projects", it would be necessary to evaluate each of their components (each individual intervention and project implemented under them), which is not possible in the framework of this analysis.

In the course of the analysis, it turned out that 14 projects included in the sample might be listed by mistake as "MRC-relevant". In all of these cases, the applicants did not claim in the beginning that the project would be "MRC-relevant". Accordingly, no performance indicators were provided. However, in the final report (and in the ministry's data system) the project is categorized as "MRC-relevant", without any explanation being made or indicators provided. It was decided not to include these projects in the table.

Structure of the Atlas 2004 dataset

As outlined in the introduction, one of the key objectives of this study was to link the project data with data on the socio-economic condition of the targeted municipalities. As most statistical data are not available for the level of communities, the best way to achieve this goal was to use the dataset of the Atlas for Roma Communities in Slovakia. Created in 2003/4 as the result of a large-scale mapping effort, the

Atlas contains detailed data on all locations in Slovakia that were identified by the authors as being inhabited by Roma.¹⁴

Even though the data were gathered several years before the start of the implementation of the earliest projects, the usage of the Atlas offers considerable advantages, to allow not only analyses within the targeted locations, but also, maybe more importantly, between locations that were targeted and those that were not targeted.

In eleven cases (Dunajská Streda, Beluša, Horná Kráľová, Banská Bystrica, Brezno, Lučenec, Ozdín, Utekáč, Hnúšťa, Rimavská Seč, Žakovce, Rožňava), the locations targeted by ESF projects, which are listed as MRC-relevant, were not included in the Atlas. In some of these cases, the municipalities are larger cities, which tend to be incompletely represented in the Atlas; in other cases the number of Roma is probably very low. The eleven missing locations had to be included into the table by the research team. For this purpose, the municipalities' number of inhabitants was taken from the 2001 census. Unemployment data was not accessible at the municipal level and for that reason the unemployment rate on the district level from 2004 was used instead.¹⁵ These data are closest in terms of comparability to the data from the Atlas. Due to the lack of data, it was, in these cases, not possible to provide data on the socio-economic conditions of the local Roma. It can however be assumed that the share of Roma is small in the case of these municipalities.

One important feature of the Atlas, which can be confusing when working with the dataset for the first time, is the distinction between the level of municipalities and the level of localities. In cases, where there is more than one Roma-inhabited settlement or neighbourhood within one municipality, the information concerning the municipality is divided in three (or more, if there are more than two Roma locations) lines. While the first line contains data that concern the municipality as a whole (e.g. number of inhabitants, local unemployment rate, share of Roma of the total population) and the local majority population (e.g. access to gas, sewage system), settlement specific data (e.g. number of inhabitants of specific settlement, access

14 Socio-geographic mapping of Roma communities in Slovakia ("ATLAS") was carried out in 2004 with support from a consortium that included state administration bodies (the Plenipotentiary of the Government of SR for Roma Communities), non-governmental organizations (S.P.A.C.E., IVO and the Regional Centre for Roma Issues) and supranational institutions (the World Bank). The mapping included 1068 municipalities and 1573 Roma settlements and identified four types of housing situations of the Roma population vis-a-vis the majority: integrated – scattered (Roma residents are scattered among the majority within a municipality); integrated – concentrated (Roma residents live within a municipality but are concentrated in a certain part or parts); in outskirts of municipalities (Roma residents are concentrated in the outskirts of a municipality); and completely outside of municipalities (separated by a barrier). The mapping covered also data on municipality and settlements' infrastructure, demographics, public services, labour market, political and civic participation of inhabitants.

15 Website for Regional Statistics of the Slovak Republic's Statistical Office. Accessible on URL: <http://px-web.statistics.sk/PXWebSlovak/>

to infrastructure, existence of spatial barriers) are found in the lines below. In cases where a municipality contains only one settlement or where Roma live amidst the majority population, all information is found within the first line. This structure can lead to complications when analysing the data. Without using complicated functions, which would link information from all lines related to one municipality, it is necessary to decide in each operation, whether data from the municipality-level or the settlement-level will be used. For changes between both levels the filters in field F1 (všetky osídlenia – all settlements) and E 1 (obec vs. koncentrácie – municipality vs. concentration) can be used. To work with data on the settlement level it is necessary to choose in filter F1 the option “*A bez B a všetky B*” (A without B and all B), which means that both municipalities with only one single settlement and all settlements of municipalities with several settlements will be displayed. In order to focus only on municipalities, it is necessary to choose in filter F2 the option “*A_dotazník*”.

Purpose and structure of the final table

As explained before, the final table is based on the dataset of the Atlas, into which the project data were integrated. The new table is envisioned as a potentially growing archive, where also data on other projects (and the planned update of the Atlas) could be integrated. Potentially, this could become a very powerful tool for research and policy-making, at least for two reasons. One: any evaluation of Roma-targeting community development projects would benefit from a “history of earlier interventions” and follow-up initiatives. In many cases, the researchers lack, at the moment, information about these projects. Two: if linked to project data (as envisaged), the updated Atlas would make it possible to conduct research on the long-term development impact of Roma-targeting interventions and longitudinal observations over the extended period of time. It would also open the opportunity for establishing a clear link between research and policy making to promote evidence-based research evaluation and develop the evaluation culture.

Merging both sets of data brought up a number of issues that had to be solved. One issue was how to deal with cases where several interventions took place in the same municipality. To solve this problem, additional lines were added under the lines of the municipalities in question. In these lines, the data concerning the municipality were left blank, with the exception of the name of the municipality, region and district.

A second problem concerned projects that took place in several locations (e.g. several municipalities, whole district, several districts). Here it was decided to divide the project information while attributing figures concerning the budget and the ultimate beneficiaries proportionally. In order to recognize that the project appears several times, the letters A, B, C, etc. were added to the project code. It is important to realize that, as a consequence of this operation, there are more projects included

in the table than were actually included in the table. If the table is used to determine average project attributes, such as mean budgets, the result will refer to the projects/project parts realized in one municipality (district).

2.3. Methodology of the Case Study of Prešov Region

Selection of visited projects

Even a very general analysis of the project files revealed that the nature of these two packages of projects differs considerably. With a few exceptions, the 2.1 projects were proposed by municipalities, for which the ESF funds provided an opportunity to continue the employment of social field workers, which had been introduced several years before by the Government Plenipotentiary for the Roma Communities and which had since then been financed from a variety of sources outside the regular state budget. One immediate conclusion that pops up is that the Government simply used the EU funding to maintain a service, which it recognises as being necessary to be maintained, yet is not willing to finance from the regular state budget.

While the size of the project budget varied, depending on the target group's size, the financial volumes of the projects tended to be significantly lower than in case of the 2.2 projects. The 2.2 projects are training or employment projects or a combination of both. As the social field work programme had already been scrutinized by another evaluation at an earlier point, when the local programmes were financed from another source, the decision was made to focus, in the study visit, primarily on the training and employment projects.

The limited amount of time available for the field visits did not allow obtaining a fully representative sample – and this was not the purpose of the analysis. The organisations to be contacted were chosen in a way that would allow gathering the experiences of projects that differ in regard to their methodology and the chosen implementation arrangements. In addition to this, the decision was made to limit the selection to projects of the Prešov Region in Eastern Slovakia, which is one of the two Eastern Slovak regions with a very numerous Roma population and a large number of segregated Roma settlements. A third consideration that influenced the selection was a specific interest in locations, where 2.1 and 2.2 projects were realized in parallel or subsequently.

Together with practical issues, such as the need to arrange interviews in a way that would lead to a geographically feasible travel plan, and difficulties in the establishing of contacts in the case of several non-governmental organisations, which did not always prove to be well-established entities, the outlined preferences led to a list of eight 2.2 projects, which represented an interesting mix of settings, implementation arrangements and approaches (Table 2)

Table 2: Attributes of projects visited during field study

> target group	Ethnicity of beneficiaries		Parallel/ earlier 2.1 project in same location		Spatial focus		
	Beneficiaries are Roma	Mixed group of beneficiaries	Yes	No	Within institution	Local	Regional
Project developed and realized by municipality (2)	1	1	2	-	-	2	-
Municipal project developed by a private company and implemented with support of this company (1)	1	-	1		-	1	-
Municipal project developed by a private company and directly implemented by this company (1)		1	1		-	1	
NGO linked to a state-run institution (1)	1		1			1	
local/regional NGO (2)	2	1	-	2	2		1

2.4. Anonymization of interview partners' identity

As will be explained below, a number of interviews revealed an unusually high level of tensions between project-implementing organisations¹⁶ and the Fund's administration. The most common cause of these tensions were the very complicated rules for the administration of the grants, which resulted in payment delays and non-recognition of expenditures, which had brought, especially some of the NGOs who lacked alternative sources of income, into an existential crisis. These deep problems affected, to some extent, also the interviews, as some interview partners expressed concerns whether statements made in the interviews could affect their dealing with the Fund. As the purpose of this study is not to control or assess the performance of individual projects, but to identify and discuss broader issues, the interview partners were assured that the study was being realized independently and that information provided would be used in the report without revealing the sources. For this reason, the authors refrained from using in this report the names of persons interviewed and locations and projects visited.

Interview strategy and structure + approaching of potential projects' ultimate beneficiaries

Where the availability of interview partners allowed doing so, the visit of a location started with an interview with the recipient of the grant or the project manager. In the case of municipalities, this was always the mayor of the municipality, in many cases accompanied by the manager of the project. The interview was conducted in a semi-structured way. The interview partners were given sufficient opportunity to bring up own issues, while at the same time it was ensured, through a checklist, that a number of basic questions would be discussed. The usual time for these interviews was 1 – 1½ hours. In addition to this, some of the interview partners were so kind as to show us also the project site, which could take another hour or longer.

16 Similarly to the definition of the "ultimate beneficiaries", terminological clarity is important in the case of the organizations that applied for, received and are implementing projects funded from the OP. In the commonly-used terminology for EU funds reporting, those organizations are "beneficiaries" because they benefit from the EU funding. This approach has its merits from the perspective of the European Commission (namely DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, who acts as a "donor" vis-à-vis the national government agencies implementing the structural funds. In practice, the "beneficiaries" implementing the EU funding are working for the benefit of the communities they are targeting. Those communities (in the particular case – the Roma and other vulnerable or socially excluded populations) are – or at least should be – the real (ultimate) beneficiaries. The organizations working for their inclusion are just "project-implementing organisations". Indeed, in some cases they are benefitting even more than the groups they are supposed to serve but this travesty in the authors' view is not sufficient to justify the use of the term "beneficiaries" in regards to them. This is why throughout the text we use the term "recipients of the grant" to denote the organizations that are implementing ESF-funded projects (and which are "beneficiaries" from Brussels jargon perspective).

In the majority of cases, the information from the project-implementing organisations was matched by the perspective of the ultimate beneficiaries of the project from the Roma community. As the selection of beneficiaries within the community can be a critical issue, the interviews within the Roma community included also some of those Roma who did not participate in the project. With the exception of one case, these interviews were realized in the absence of the recipient of the grant. The building of trust towards the research team was eased by the fact that one of the research team members speaks Romany (which, to some extent, allowed having “non-supervised” conversations, even in the one case when the recipient of the grant was present). The interviews with the members of the Roma community were in most cases agreed upon spontaneously during a visit of the local Roma neighbourhood and were realized in front of people’s homes. Being less structured than in case of the interviews conducted with the project-implementing organisations, the choice of topics was, to a large extent, determined by the information obtained earlier from the latter.

3

ESF funding and the Roma in Slovakia

The theme of this study is the impact of ESF-funding on the Slovak Roma. In the study's centre are therefore projects that were labelled as being "MRC-relevant". In chapter 3, we will analyse to what extent the geographical distribution of these projects matches the distribution of the Slovak Roma population. However, in order to consider whether Roma can be considered to be represented adequately in the group of ESF ultimate beneficiaries (the people who actually benefit from the implemented projects and their activities), it is important to look onto these projects not as isolated, but in the context of the entire operation programme. This is the purpose of the present chapter. It will first explain in which way a project is classified as being "MRC-relevant". Then the analysis looks at the share of MRC projects among all projects funded within the OP "Employment and Social Inclusion".

3.1. Structure of the Slovak ESF programme and limits of this study

In the on-going programming period 2007 – 2013, Slovakia is able to spend 1.76 billion Euros from ESF. This is up to 324 Euro per capita. Out of this sum, 1.5 billion are funds from the European Union, whereas 264 million is co-financed from Slovakia's state budget.

As already explained earlier, the ESF resources in Slovakia are divided among two operational programmes, "Employment and Social Inclusion" (70% of resources) and "Education" (30 %). In the present study, only projects realized within Measures 2.1 and 2.2 of OP "Employment and Social Inclusion" were analysed. Another characteristic of the study is related to the territorial distribution of the funding, stemming from the different level of development of Slovakia's NUTS 2 regions. Slovakia's most-western Bratislava Region is not considered a convergence region. The present study deals only with programmes in less developed NUTS 2 regions. This is why the sample of the projects analysed does not include any from the Bratislava Region, for which a separate funding scheme has been established.

Another important division is the one between projects, which were contracted on the basis of calls for proposals (so-called "Dopytovo orientované projekty"), and the so-called national projects, which were implemented by state institutions. The

national projects had considerably higher budgets and were, due to their very specific character, not included in the sample for reasons already described above.

3.2. What means “MRC-relevant”?

“Marginalized Roma Communities” are one of the so-called horizontal priorities of the National Strategic Reference Framework in Slovakia.¹⁷ Applicants for SF funding, including ESF, are asked in the application form whether their project is in accordance with this priority. The applicants fill in the respective boxes, and the only mechanism to check the relevance of the self-reported data is at the level of application assessments. However the very definition of “relevance” is vague, and from certain perspective, any activity for improving the infrastructure or the access to social services in a municipality is “relevant” for the Roma living in that municipality.

In the evaluation process of project applications, the project’s MRC-relevance is among the aspects assessed by the (partly internal, partly external) evaluators on a rank of 1 to 4. As the labelling of a project as being MRC-relevant is linked to a bonus in the selection process, it can be assumed that most applicants with projects that were only, to some extent, relevant for Roma (e.g. Roma were represented among persons targeted) chose to label their project as being “MRC-relevant”. This has two implications. One: the reported (and recorded in the database) “MRC-relevant” nature is loosely related to the projects’ real relevance for the Roma. Two: the criterion can be used for additional boost of the project’s chances to obtain funding (as it is the case in a number of projects). Given the additional points a “MRC-relevant” project gets, it is also highly unlikely that any significant number of ESF projects that were indeed relevant for the marginalized Roma communities had not been labelled as such. The national projects run by state institutions, which are not the subject of the present study, could be a likely exception to this.

If applicants decided to label their project as “MRC-relevant”, applicants were asked to choose from a list of indicators that should measure whether the project did indeed reach this goal. Apparently, the catalogue of suggested indicators changed over time. In case of projects with earlier registration (registration numbers were issued chronologically by the ministry) the majority of applicants chose one indicator with no or very limited informative value. For example in case of the 2.2 projects included in the sample, 26 of the 71 projects (and almost all of the projects with lower registration numbers) used as indicator:

- number of projects targeting the Roma community (target value: 1),

17 The other horizontal priorities are: Information society; Sustainable development; Equal opportunities.

which represents an example of circular reasoning, as the applicants refer to their project as a whole, circumventing thereby the need to provide any information about the percentage of Roma among the ultimate beneficiaries.

In the context of this study, one basic difficulty is that the available documentation does not, in most cases, allow us to exactly quantify the number of Roma reached. First, there are two similar data fields (“number of Roma reached” and “number of Roma benefitting”). There is no methodological guide describing the difference between the two. Second, in most cases the project-implementing organisations were filling in the available demographic data on the respective Roma community or settlement. On a very general level, those can be indeed considered as “Roma reached” and “Roma benefitting”, but such data is useless from the perspective of project implementation and outcome-level evaluation. This is especially the case in many of the training and employment projects realized within the framework of Measure 2.2. While a great number of applicants chose such meaningless indicators as the one mentioned above, we know from the 39 projects with better indicators that the share of Roma differs greatly among projects. On the one hand, there is a large number of “ethnic projects”, where all ultimate beneficiaries are Roma; on the other hand there are projects where only a tiny fraction of the ultimate beneficiaries – for example 1 person among a group of 25 - are Roma.

It should be clarified at this point that we consider this, in this context, as a problem for our research, which should not be misunderstood as an automatic degradation of projects where Roma were in the minority. It would certainly be wrong to conclude automatically that a higher share of Roma among the ultimate beneficiaries is “better” because, depending on the local context, ethnic projects might be perceived as inappropriately segregative, while ethnically mixed projects might, at the opposite end, lead to better results. On the other side, it seems questionable whether “MRC-relevance” is indeed a telling indicator, if this label can be used for a project realized in a municipality where 50 per cent of the inhabitants are Roma, and which provides employment for 3 Roma and 17 Non-Roma.

“MRC-relevant” projects within OP “Employment and Social Inclusion”

The available budget of the operating programme for the funding period 2007 – 2013 is 1.037 billion Euros. At this point, this sum is almost exactly the total volume of the 1600 contracted projects (1.024 billion Euros). As the project budgets were not always fully utilized and some of the contracted projects were cancelled, not all of money assigned to the contracted projects will actually be spent. This opened the opportunity for the preparation of additional projects and the launching of additional calls for proposals.

In order to be able to provide at least an estimate of the share of Roma among the ultimate beneficiaries of the employment and training projects, the average share

of Roma among the ultimate beneficiaries (persons employed) covered by those projects, was calculated where possible. In the case of these projects, Roma benefited from slightly less than half (49%) of the created work places. If the share of Roma was similar also in the case of the other 2.2 projects, whose indicators did not allow us to identify the number of Roma among beneficiaries, out of the 541 (usually temporary) jobs that were created by the 71 2.2 projects included in the sample, 265 jobs would be provided for Roma. It should also be noticed that many of the 2.2 projects have additional types of ultimate beneficiaries, who were not employed yet participated in trainings. In regard to these groups, the indicators of all projects provide no information about the share of Roma among the people reached.

Of the 1600 projects, 691 or 43.16% of the total are labelled as “MRC-relevant”. The total financial volume of the “MRC-relevant” group is 132.79 million Euro or 12.97% (due to the relatively smaller financial volume of the individual projects). This figure however does not provide an accurate idea of the volume of the resources devoted to marginalized Roma communities. As mentioned earlier, the analysis of the projects, included in the sample, indicated that in the case of the 91 MRC projects supported within priority axis 1 (constituting fourteen per cent of all projects supported within this priority axis) it might be questionable whether the projects are categorized correctly. In addition, there are a large number of measure 2.2 projects where Roma made up only a fraction of the ultimate beneficiaries. The available data does not allow us to exactly quantify this phenomenon.

The analysis of the available data suggests some interesting observations. First, almost half (45.6%) of all projects contracted under priority axes 1-4 are labelled as “MRC-relevant” – but only 18.3% of the funding was devoted to such projects. This was due to the fact that initially social field work projects were projects with small budgets announced on the ‘call for proposal’ basis. Second, most of the “MRC-relevant” projects are concentrated in priority axis 2 (“social inclusion”) and not priority axis 1 (“Supporting Employment Growth”) – both in terms of number of projects and volume of funding. Only 14% of the projects (and just 6.4% of the funding) under priority axis 1 were labelled as “MRC-relevant”. This may be contributed to the fact that, as explained the ESF manager, measure 2.2. under axis 2. was meant to be specifically established for MRC although its aims were very similar to measures under the axis 1. Access to employment is seen as a major factor for sustainable inclusion of marginalized groups, and the fact that Roma are highly overrepresented among the unemployed – the unemployment rate among Roma at risk of marginalization aged 15-64 is 70% compared to the rate of 33% for non-Roma living in close proximity. The figures for the group 15-24 are even worse – 74% and 54% respectively¹⁸. Even if we assume that the majority of the unemployed are not Roma (the

18 Based on the data from the 2011 Survey of Roma at risk of marginalization and non-Roma living in close proximity realized by UNDP, the Fundamental Rights Agency and the World Bank with the financial support from DG “Regional Policy”

Table 3: Operational Programme “Employment and Social Inclusion”

	Budget available (EUR)			Contracted budget / Number of projects / Average volume of project budget (EUR)			
	EU resources	National resources	Total resources		Total	MRC-relevant	Not MRC-relevant
Priority axis No. 1 Supporting Employment Growth Fund: ESF	567,422,200	100,133,330	667,555,530	All projects:			
				Total contracted volume:	709,909,916	45,616,615 (6.4%)	664,293,302 (93.6%)
				Number of projects:	631	91 (14%)	540 (86%)
				Mean budget:	1,125,055	501,281 (44.5%)	1,230,173 (109%)
				National projects:			
				Total contracted volume:	509,206,737		509,206,737 (100%)
				Number of projects:	23	0	23 (100%)
				Mean budget:	22,139,423		22,139,423 (100%)
				Projects based on calls for proposals:			
				Total contracted volume:	200,703,179	45,616,615 (23%)	155,086,565 (77%)
				Number of projects:	608	91 (15%)	517 (85%)
				Mean budget:	330,104	501,281 (151%)	299,974 (90%)
				Priority axis No. 2 Supporting Social Inclusion Fund: ESF	187,800,000	33,141,177	220,941,177
Total contracted volume:	195,705,240	134,147,332 (69%)	61,557,908 (31%)				
Number of projects:	648	595 (92%)	53 (8%)				
Mean budget:	302,014	225,458 (74%)	1,161,470 (384%)				
National projects:							
Total contracted volume:	137,536,684	83,973,275 (61%)	53,563,408 (39%)				
Number of projects:	11	5 (45%)	6 (55%)				

	Budget available (EUR)			Contracted budget / Number of projects / Average volume of project budget (EUR)			
	EU resources	National resources	Total resources		Total	MRC-relevant	Not MRC-relevant
				Mean budget:	12,503,335	16,794,655 (134%)	8,927,235 (71%)
				Projects based on calls for proposals:			
				Total contracted volume:	58,168,556	50,174,056 (86%)	7,994,500 (14%)
				Number of projects:	637	590 (92%)	47 (8%)
				Mean budget:	91,316	85,041 (93%)	170,096 (186%)
Priority axis No. 3	17,801,578	3,141,455	20,943,033	All projects:			
Supporting employment, social inclusion, and capacity building in the BSR				Total contracted volume:	21,801,363	5,378,063 (25%)	16,423,299 (75%)
Fund: ESF				Number of projects:	70	17 (24%)	53 (76%)
				Mean budget:	311,448	316,357 (102%)	309,874 (99.5%)
				National projects:			
				Total contracted volume:	18,201,486	4,108,236 (23%)	14,093,251 (77%)
				Number of projects:	40	5 (13%)	35 (87%)
				Mean budget:	455,037	821,647 (181%)	402,664 (89%)
				Other projects based on calls for proposals:			
				Total contracted volume:	3,599,876	1,269,828 (35%)	2,330,049 (65%)
				Number of projects:	30	12 (40%)	18 (60%)
				Mean budget:	119,996	105,819 (88%)	129,447 (108%)

	Budget available (EUR)			Contracted budget / Number of projects / Average volume of project budget (EUR)			
	EU resources	National resources	Total resources		Total	MRC-relevant	Not MRC-relevant
Priority axis No. 4 Building capacities and improving the quality of the public administration Fund: ESF	81,734,600	14,423,753	96,158,353	All projects:			
				Total contracted volume:	84,090,115	0	84,090,115 (100%)
				Number of projects:	191	0	191 (100%)
				Mean budget:	440,262	N/A	440,262 (100%)
				National projects:			
				Total contracted volume:	54,120,068	0	54,120,068 (100%)
				Number of projects:	28	0	28 (100%)
				Mean budget:	1,932,860	N/A	1,932,860 (100%)
				Other projects based on calls for proposals:			
				Total contracted volume:	29,970,047	0	29,970,047 (100%)
				Number of projects:	163	0	163 (100%)
				Mean budget:	183,865	N/A	183,865 (100%)
Priority axis No. 5 Technical Assistance Fund: ESF	27,043,200	4,772,330	31,815,530				
TOTAL	881,801,578	155,612,045	1,037,413,623	Total contracted volume:	1,011,506,634	185,142,010 (18.3%)	826,364,624 (81.7%)
				Number of projects:	1,540	703 (45.6%)	837 (54.6%)

Source of data: The ministry maintains two different datasets with project information. One dataset contains detailed information on the projects and was used for the official display of the territorial distribution of all Slovak ESF projects on Google maps (http://www.esf.gov.sk/documents/2012/Mapa_ESF_projektov-12-04-2012.html). Unfortunately, this database does not contain information on horizontal priorities such as relevance for “marginalized Roma communities”. Information on the projects’ MRC-relevance was therefore manually inserted on the basis of another project list generated from the ministry’s second database, which allows filtering by horizontal priorities. In a few cases, projects from the second database are not included in the first one and were also not included in the calculations for this table.

share of marginalized Roma – those falling under MRC category – in the total pool of unemployed in Slovakia is between 32% and 46% depending on the estimates of the absolute number of the Roma population¹⁹), 6.4% of the funding is definitely insufficient, given the magnitude of the problems and their structural nature.

One additional reason for the insufficient inclusion of Roma in the projects funded under priority axis 1 may also be the focus of these projects, which often seek to improve the skills of a company's **existing** work force. Due to the high unemployment among Roma, the Roma will only in exceptional cases be among the ultimate beneficiaries of such projects. This is an example of how a “structural factor” decreases the potential power of the OP to actually meet its stated targets – the support is being channelled towards groups that are easy to be reached or that fall into the “OP’s picture”; the groups that are difficult to reach (and would require more resources and efforts to be reached) or do not match the picture, simply remain out of the OP’s scope.

To make things even worse, it is not entirely clear if the 14% of the projects, with the 6.4% of the funding that were labelled as “MRC-relevant”, are indeed reaching the Roma. The analysis of the projects included in the sample suggests that it is not always clear why they were labelled as MRC-relevant. Hence the question *how* strong indeed is this relevance remains open. According to one report provided by a Slovak NGO, it is quite typical for these projects that only a single working place was created for Roma.²⁰

Analyzed data suggests that the marginalized Roma were indeed benefitting from at least some of the “MRC-relevant projects”. Looking through this prism then one may even conclude it means a *de facto* division of the operational programme into a Roma and non-Roma part. Apparently such a division contradicts the idea expressed on the website of DG Employment, according to which Roma inclusion should not be dealt with as a separate policy, but instead ‘mainstreamed’ within all policies and programmes. However in reality, this division could be justified given the magnitude and the structural nature of Roma unemployment. This could be interpreted as an

19 Own calculations based on the data from the 2011 Survey of Roma at risk of marginalization and non-Roma living in close proximity and the LFS unemployment data for the second quarter of 2011 (the closest to the field work of the regional survey, http://portal.statistics.sk/files/vzps112_publikacia.pdf). The first figure is based on the number of Roma population from the Atlas of the Roma communities; the second is based on the “lower estimate” of the number of Roma in Slovakia by the Council of Europe (Annex to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 (COM(2011) 173 from 5 April 2011)). If the “average estimate of the CoE is used, the share of the marginalized Roma among the unemployed in Slovakia rises to 58%.

20 Magdaléna Grambličková, Juraj Zamkovský: Pripomienky a návrhy k aktualizácii projektových ukazovateľov Horizontálnej priority Marginalizované rómske komunity. Priatelia Zeme-CEPA: no publication date. Accessed online: <http://www.priateliazeme.sk/aa/files/8daeda84bb7a43ab9fe29445a0dd85f3/indikatory.pdf>

implicit “affirmative action” within the framework of the OP. The OP remains *de jure* integrated and the Roma-targeting emerges at a second level of project definition (the populations are targeted because they face a high level of disadvantage due to being marginalized – and only because they happen to be Roma).

Of course, there are downsides to this approach. One problem is related to the degree to which this division is indeed *de facto* – and not just on paper, for improving the chances of a particular project to get funded. Another is related to the possible reinforcement of segregation of Roma targeted interventions. Roma could find themselves “locked” in specific programmes, while their needs are not addressed in the normal programmes, even if the projects are realized in regions with significant Roma representation. Ideally both approaches – the one for integrated and mainstreamed interventions and the one for specific targeting – should be used in parallel and complementing each other. An area-based development framework provides such an opportunity for the blending of both, depending on the specific nature of the challenges in the specific locality.

Another important detail worth closer attention: the projects’ aggregated statistical profiles (namely their average sizes) are strongly skewed by the national projects realized by the headquarters of Slovak labour offices ÚPSVAR. This state institution has been using ESF-resources to finance active labour market policy programmes and other activities. If the 18 national projects are excluded from the calculation, the total financial volume in priority axis 1 shrinks by half a billion Euros from 709,238,289 to 209,086,316 Euro (see Table 4). Given that national projects were not included in the analysed sample, the authors of this report lacked information on how these relate to the status of the final beneficiaries (both in the case of those labelled as “MRC-relevant” and of those, which were not). However, a substantial part of the “national projects” was devoted to temporary employment through the so-called “activation” schemes. Given the high share of Roma among the citizen included in such schemes, it is reasonable to expect that many of the supported activities were indeed relevant to marginalized Roma. The state institutions could have been reluctant to explicitly label them as “MRC-relevant” in order to make sure that those projects are not questioned on legal grounds as violating the “equality” principles enshrined in the Slovak constitution (as was the case of the “positive discrimination” and “affirmative action” case brought against the Constitutional Court by then justice minister Daniel Lipšic²¹).

21 On 18 October 2005 the Constitutional Court of Slovakia ruled that affirmative action in Slovakia violates the country’s constitution. <http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/21321/1/>. In 2008, the Slovak Parliament amended Slovakia’s Anti-Discrimination Act to include provisions for positive discrimination (‘vyrovnávacie opatrenia’). However those can be based on the grounds of social and economic disadvantages and not on racial or ethnic origin. The amendments refer explicitly to elimination of social and economic disadvantages and disadvantages linked to age and disability. The temporary measures can only be introduced and applied by state agencies.

Table 4

All projects						
Priority axis	All			MRC		
	Number of projects	Total contracted volume (EUR)	Number of projects	Share of all projects	Total contracted volume (EUR)	Share of the total volume
1	631	709,909,916	91	14.4%	45,616,615	6.4%
2	648	195,705,240	595	91.8%	134,147,332	68.5%
3	70	21,801,363	17	24.3%	5,378,063	24.7%
4	191	84,090,115		0.0%		0.0%
Total	1540	1,011,506,634	703	45.6%	185,142,010	18.3%
National projects						
1	23	509,206,737	0	0.0%		0.0%
2	11	137,536,684	5	45.5%	83,973,275	61.1%
3	40	18,201,486	5	12.5%	4,108,236	22.6%
4	28	54,120,068	0	0.0%		0.0%
Total	102	719,064,975	10	9.8%	88,081,511	12.2%
National projects excluded						
1	608	200,703,179	91	14.4%	45,616,615	6.4%
2	637	58,168,556	590	46.4%	50,174,057	7.5%
3	30	3,599,877	12	11.8%	1,269,827	2.1%
4	163	29,970,047	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	1438	292,441,659	693	35.8%	97,060,499	6.1%

The analysis shows that MRC projects are on average significantly smaller than the other projects realized within the OP "Employment and Social Inclusion". This is due mainly to the fact that the largest group of MRC projects is comprised of social field work projects which were initially announced on the 'call for proposal' basis ('dopytovo-orientované projekty'). With the exception of municipalities with very large Roma communities, the budgets of these projects tend to be in the range of 30,000 – 50,000 Euros.

4

In-depth analysis of “MRC-relevant” projects

The purpose of the previous chapter was to clarify the category “MRC-relevant” and to show the position of these MRC projects within the OP “Employment and Social Inclusion”. In this chapter, we will provide an overview of the basic characteristics of projects that were labelled as “MRC-relevant”, and analyse them from the perspective of the results they have achieved (or to be more precise – results that were reported). As outlined in the methodology, this analysis is based on a sample of 298 projects. The creation of the sample was described in chapter 2.2.2 of this report. Given that the projects realized in Measure 2.1 are overrepresented in this sample, the characteristics of the projects of both samples will be discussed separately. The more detailed information from the sample will be complimented with basic information from a table generated by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, which contains all contracted projects that are listed as “MRC-relevant”.

4.1. The projects under Axis 2

According to the ITMS, there are 703 “MRC-relevant” projects with a contracted total volume of 185,142 million Euros. This number includes all priority axes and also ten national projects. The average project has therefore a financial volume of 263,360 Euros. If the national projects by the ÚPSVAR (Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family Issues) and the Social Development Fund are not included, the respective sums are 97.06 million Euros total budget and an average project size of 140,058 Euros.

The impact of the atypically large national projects explains to some extent also why our sample includes 43 per cent of all projects, yet only 22% of the financial volume of all MRC projects. Another, however less important reason for this is t projects for social enterprises, which had very large budgets (total volume: app. 30 million Euros) yet were projects that were terminated prior to their completion, and are not included in the sample.

As explained earlier, the vast majority of the MRC projects were realized within the priority axis “Social Inclusion”. This programme section is further divided into two different measures. The goal of Measure 2.1 is to support social field work in the Roma community, whereas Measure 2.2 intends to support training and employment projects. In both of these measures, Roma are mentioned as a priority target

group. The different substantive focus of the two measures explains also the considerable differences in regard to the budget size. While the average budget of the 2.1 projects is 54,935 Euros, it is 255,143 Euros in the case of the 2.2 projects. This is because “social field work” is essentially a service provided by the municipality, namely by the social field workers. As a result it is not surprising that, in the case of the 2.1 projects, about 90 per cent of the project-implementing organisations are municipalities. In the case of the second group, most projects are implemented by NGOs (the share of municipalities is about 30 per cent).

In case of the projects included in the sample, the available data allows distinguishing between the costs for the actual implementation (social field work in case of action 2.1; training and employment in case of 2.2) and costs for the project’s administration and communications strategy (Table 5). For these calculations, only projects where a final monitoring report is available were included. More detailed analysis of the costs breakdown is provided in Table A-1 in the Annex.

Table 5: Projects distribution and costs structure of Measures 2.1 and 2.2 projects* (sample based)

Measure	Number of projects	Realized budget (value in EUR)					Realized budget (shares of the total)			
		Total	Trainings	Social field work	Project management	Public relations	Trainings	Social field work	Project management	Public relations
2.1	213	9,301,076	101,778	8,746,117	312,246	152,751	1%	94%	3%	2%
2.2	74	8,869,572	7,555,435	16,530	1,075,057	222,911	85%	0.2%	12%	3%
Axis 2	287	18,170,648	7,657,213	8,762,647	1,387,303	375,662	42%	48%	8%	2%

Source: Own calculations based on documentation of projects included in the project sample. Only project documentations that include a final report were included in the calculation. The sum in the realized budget is the sum spent by the project owner/recipient of the grant according to the final report. This sum can differ from the expenses that were recognized as eligible by the Ministry.

These differences between the two measures are also reflected in the higher share of the “project management” costs for projects under Measure 2.2. The real picture however might be more nuanced. The interviews with fund managers and municipal project-implementing organisations showed that municipalities do often rely on the help of commercial companies that manage the writing of the applications and the administration of the funds. So the real management costs could be higher,

however it is difficult to determine how much higher. The sometimes pivotal role of these companies in the implementation of the projects is usually not recognizable from the project description, as they tend not to have the status of project partners. During the case study, the interviewed mayors justified the involvement of these professionals with the enormous administrative burden caused by the project. They complained at the same time that these services would consume considerable sums. Quantifying the exact costs of these services on the example of a sample of projects would be an extremely important endeavour, which unfortunately was beyond the capacity of this study.

There are, however, also other examples of partnerships between municipalities and private subjects. As NGOs were not eligible in some of the 2.1 calls for proposals, some municipalities agreed with NGOs to apply on their behalf and use the NGO as a subcontractor. Another interesting example encountered during the case study was the founding of an NGO by the municipalities' political elite, which explained this action as a way of protecting the municipality (and its budget) from potential problems. The same strategy might also be used to circumvent resistance among the members of the municipal council or restrictions concerning eligibility in a particular funding scheme.

The data available in the Ministry's database allows very limited analysis of the projects. The only meaningful figure is the absorption rate – the share of the contracted budget that was actually spent. The data on the number of participants is already shaky, particularly in regards Measure 2.1. The practice of reporting the population of the respective settlement as "benefiting from the project" is massive. As a result calculating indicators like "cost of service per participant" or any other outcome-related indicator is on the verge of impossible with the current level of detail of the project data.

Another problem related particularly to the Measure 2.2 project is related to the meaningfulness of the specific activities. The database could have contained at least some basic description of the type of trainings (basic literacy, computer literacy, business skills development, professional qualification in particular area, etc. Based on such (even general) descriptions, at least a minimum level of qualitative assessment of the individual projects could have been possible by matching the socioeconomic parameters of the localities where the projects were implemented, with the individual characteristics of the participants and the specifics of the projects. Obviously it would not make much sense conducting computer literacy training in a settlement without electricity or training on basic accountancy skill for people with only "primary or lower" education. At this point such analyses would require in-depth evaluations, combined with field visits that are prohibitively expensive.

The average absorption rate of almost 80% is not bad at all (see Table 6 and Table A-2 in the annex for more details). In reality, it is even higher – the average is skewed

by a sizable number of projects, where the realized budget was radically lower than initially planned. In many such cases, however, the projects are reported to have reached the agreed indicators. The project documentation in most such cases does not provide an explanation as to how this was achieved (sometimes with half or even less than half of the initially agreed resources). Asked about this phenomenon, the managers of the fund said that this could be a sign that the initial budget was radically overestimated. The introduction (after the projects had been approved) of new spending guidelines, which defined maximum amounts for certain activities, might indeed have contributed to a reduction of costs. Another (complementary) explanation could be the vagueness of the targets, thus making it possible for virtually any result to be reported as a “success”.

Table 6: Absorption rate and (a kind of) unit costs of individual projects under Axis 1

Measure	Number of projects	Budget			Participants	
		Contracted (EUR)	Realized (EUR)	Absorption rate	Number	Cost per participant (EUR)
2.1	213	11,660,518	9,301,076	79.8%	143,639	65
2.2	74	11,767,958	8,869,572	75.4%	5,490	1,616
Axis 2	287	23,428,476	18,170,648	77.6%	149,129	122

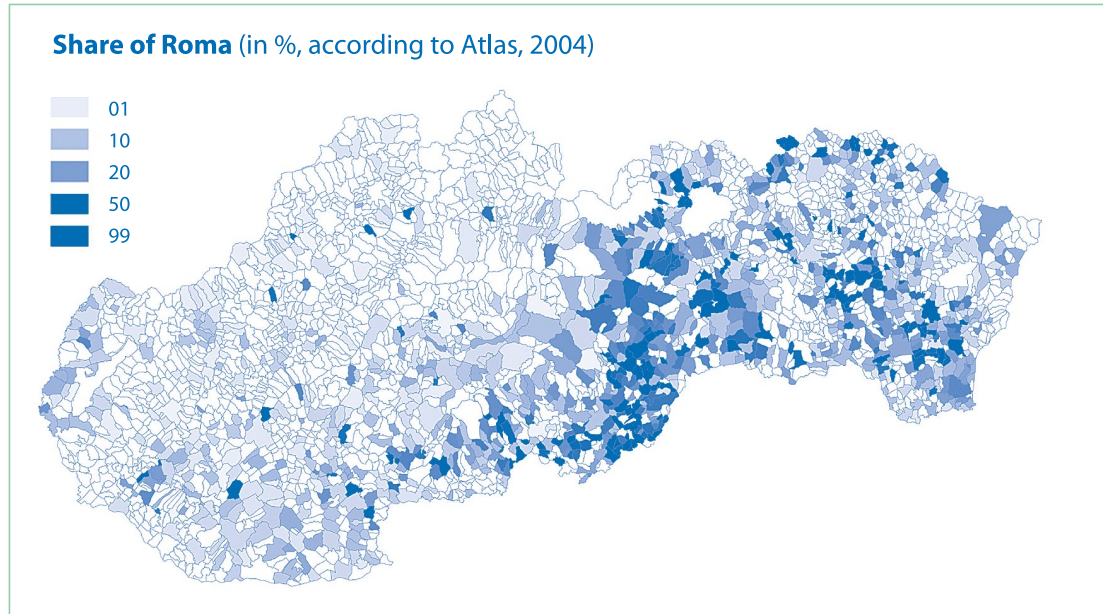
Source of data: Own calculations based on the project documentation included in the project sample. Only project documentations that include a final report were included in the calculation. The sum in the “realized budget” is the total of the amounts spent by the recipient of the grant according to the final report. This sum can differ from the expenses that were recognized as eligible by the Ministry.

Territorial distribution

The official goal of the ESF programme is to “reduce differences in prosperity and living standards across EU Member States and regions”. In Slovakia, the reducing of “intra-regional disparities in the unemployment level” is mentioned as one of the programme’s priorities.

Even though all of Slovakia, except for the Bratislava Region, is considered by the ESF as a priority region, the distribution of project funds within this “convergence regions” is, in the context of this study, highly relevant. One reason for this is the considerable socio-economic disparities within the eligible area, which is characterized by a general west-east divide and a polarization between rural and urban areas. The second reason is the highly unequal distribution of the Roma population, which is mostly concentrated in the Eastern part of Slovakia (see map 1).

Map 1: Distribution of Roma and of Roma-relevant ESF funds compared



Map 2: Distribution of ESF projects

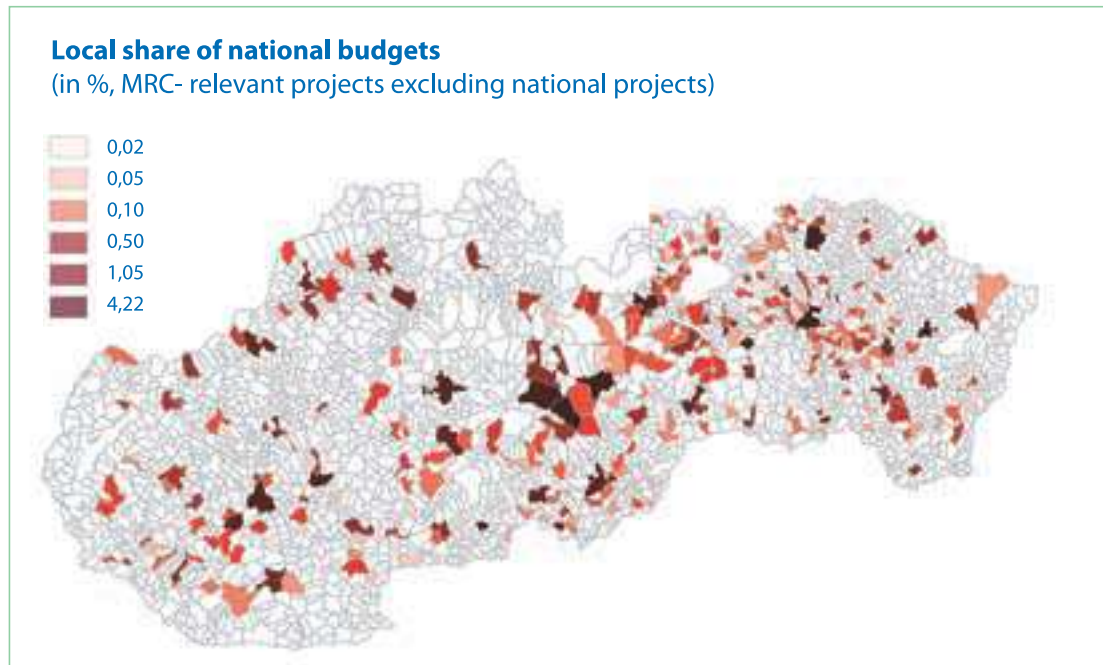


Table 7 informs at the same time about the regional distribution of the ESF funding for Roma-targeting projects and reveals very significant inequalities. Even though the largest amounts of money went into the three regions where the share of Roma is the highest, the results look different when these sums are divided by the number of Roma. Paradoxically, the most money per capita of Roma population was spent in the Trenčín Region, which has the lowest share of Roma among all regions that are eligible for full ESF support.

Table 7: Distribution of Roma and Roma-targeting ESF funds from analysed sample

Region	Total population (2004)	Inhabitants of Roma locations (2003/4)	Percentage of Roma	Financial volume of ESF-support (contracted MRC budgets, in EUR)	Investment per Roma (in EUR)	Number of ultimate beneficiaries	Cost per beneficiary (in EUR)	Share of Roma reached
Bratislava	600,246	3,535	0.59	0	0	0	0	0.00
Trnava	552,641	14,073	2.55	529,939	38	5,161	103	36.67
Trenčín	601,687	4,325	0.72	2,377,416	550	8,433	282	194.98
Nitra	709,381	25,437	3.59	3,124,138	123	5,193	602	20.42
Žilina	693,757	6,295	0.91	487,010	77	2,081	234	33.06
Banská Bystrica	658,701	55,840	8.48	5,485,050	98	31,858	172	57.05
Prešov	795,796	85,697	10.77	11,360,579	133	61,343	185	71.58
Košice	769,969	89,364	11.61	6,161,005	69	34,568	178	38.68
Slovakia total	5,382,178	284,566	5.29	29,525,137	104	148,637	199	52.23

Data on population of regions: Website of the Statistical Office; data on Roma: Atlas of Roma Communities; *Data on project budgets and number of beneficiaries:* own calculations on basis of sample and do not include all MRC-relevant projects.

The example of the Trenčín Region is exemplary in many respects. According to the available project data, the projects reached 8,433 persons. This is almost twice the estimated size of the regional Roma population (4,325). If all of the ultimate beneficiaries would be Roma, 195% of the Roma in the region would be reached! This could have several interpretations. It could mean the (a) all Roma were targeted almost twice by project interventions and/or (b) the reported number of Roma targeted is unreliable. The data summarized in the table could simplify the reality by assuming that all ultimate beneficiaries were Roma. It could well be that in Trenčín

Region the projects reported as "targeting Roma" were simply inclusive for non-Roma as well. Data summarized in Table 8 supports this hypothesis - Trenčín Region is the region with the lowest share of Measure 2.1 projects and funding (by their very design targeting just Roma). The region has the highest share of Measure 2.2 projects dominated the trainings, in which (again, by the virtue of their design) non-Roma are overrepresented. Even though these ultimate beneficiaries are not wrongly reported to be Roma (the available documentation does in many cases not allow establishing the ultimate beneficiaries' identity), the investments into "MRC-relevant" projects are often misrepresented as investments into Roma. Similarly, the highest share "per capita spent on training" under Measure 2.2 (528 Euros) does not mean "per capita spent on the training of Roma".

At the same time, it is important to realize that the real life patterns are much more complicated. In the western regions, the overall share of Roma is low and a few projects can make a large difference. In the Eastern regions, the situation is different. This is why instead of comparing the West vs. the East, it is more meaningful to look into the differences between the Eastern regions. In that regard, the different performance of the Košice and Prešov Regions is truly striking. If per-capita spending for Roma is taken as an indicator, the Prešov Region performed second-best with a (theoretical) value of 140 € per Roma inhabitant, while Košice Region achieved less than half of this value. Whereas in the Prešov Region theoretically up to 72 per cent of the Roma were reached by some sort of intervention, the corresponding value in the Košice Region is 39 per cent. Those differences are less sensitive to the influence of single projects than is the case in the western regions, because both the number of Roma and the number of projects are higher than in the West. Thus the results may indicate a pattern.

In order to understand the causes of the patterns discussed, it is necessary to have a closer look at the data. The first possibility is to distinguish between Measures 2.1 and 2.2 projects, which have a different background and might also have a different territorial distribution; the second is to go one level lower and study the level of districts.

Table 8 reveals that, similarly to the case of Trenčín analysed above, the strong performance of the Trnava Region and, to a lesser extent, the Nitra Region can be attributed to training and employment projects. From a purely statistical point of view, the Roma in Slovakia are roughly equally "served" with social workers – with the exception of the Prešov Region with its 60 € spent on social work per Roma, these amounts do not deviate significantly from the average of 33 € if the two extremes (Prešov with its 60 € and Nitra with its 14 €) are disregarded.

Table 8: Distribution of MRC funding in regions by action (based on sample)

Region, SR	Inhabitants of Roma locations (According to ATLAS 2004)	Financial volume of ESF axis 2-support (contracted MRC budgets, in EUR)	Measure 2.1		Measure 2.2		Per capita spending for Roma (EUR)		
			EUR	%	EUR	%	TOTAL	2.1	2.2
Bratislava	3,535	0	0		0		0	0	0
Trnava	14,073	529,939	237,571	45	292,368	55	38	17	21
Trenčín	4,325	2,377,416	95,516	4	2,281,900	96	550	22	528
Nitra	25,437	3,124,138	349,638	11	2,754,449	88	123	14	108
Žilina	6,295	487,010	151,171	31	334,160	69	77	24	53
Banská Bystrica	55,840	5,485,050	2,805,544	51	2,353,611	43	98	50	42
Prešov	85,697	11,360,579	5,155,656	45	6,122,989	54	133	60	71
Košice	89,364	6,161,005	2,385,746	39	3,721,807	60	69	27	42
Slovakia total	284,566	29,525,137	11,180,842	38	17,861,284	60	104	39	63

Data on population of Roma locations: Atlas of Roma Communities;

Data on project budgets and number of beneficiaries: own calculations on basis of sample and do not include all MRC-relevant projects.

The relative uniformity of the expenditures on social work outlined above could simply reflect the supply-driven nature of the service. The expenditures are determined indirectly by the number of the Roma population in need of support – to the extent that this population determines the number of the social workers deployed. Correlation between “needs” and “supply” definitely exists but the former is not the only driver of the latter. It is indicative that the unit cost of the “social work service” measured by “individual project value by per capita of social worker involved” is remarkably uniform for all the projects. Dividing realized individual project budgets for “social work”, by the number of months of the project duration and by the number of social workers involved, we get the average monthly personal cost of social service provision. For the projects in the sample they are remarkably close – the average is 537 €, suspiciously close to the average salary in Slovakia.

Of course, this does not mean that community social work is not necessary. Just the opposite – it is vitally important for many settlements where the community work-

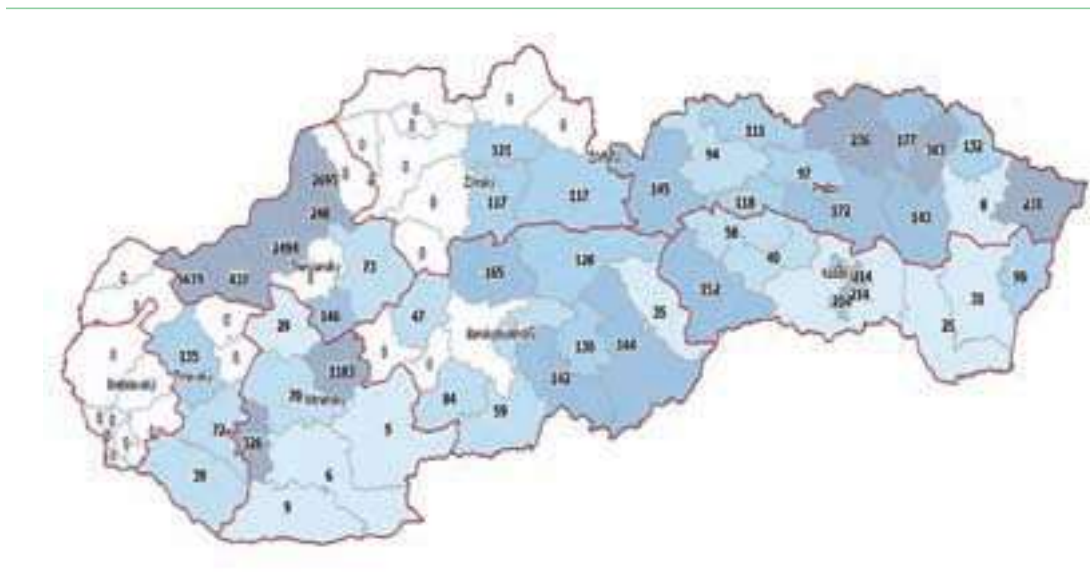
ers are "providers of assistance of last resort". This assistance however is still far from social inclusion, which is the major purpose of Axis 2. Data also suggests that the structure of the Measure 2.1 and the respective M&E frameworks is entirely input-oriented (and not result-oriented).

However, the data of the Košice Region, which is known for a large number of segregated settlements, surprises also in regard to the 2.1 projects. The sample contains 33 of these projects in the Košice Region (Prešov Region has 73) and the amount invested per person and the maximum share of Roma that were (at least theoretically) targeted is considerably lower than in case of the Prešov Region. The same is true also for the 2.2 projects, yet the difference is smaller in case of the latter and most probably for different reasons.

Map 3 allows comparing the distribution of Roma with the distribution of ESF resources (MRC-relevant projects without national projects). While the majority of projects are located in areas where most Roma live, it is possible to identify concentrations of high spending in Western Slovakia along the Czech border and parts of the Nitra Region. In this relatively well-developed and affluent region, the share of Roma is very low. Accordingly, it is the few projects with very large budgets that drive the average sum of money spent per Roma inhabitant in a number of Western districts to very high values, such as Myjava (5,619 €), Púchov (2,695 €), Trenčín (2,494 €) and Zlaté Moravce (1,183 €). The relative concentration of these projects in regions with few Roma (and lower-than-average unemployment) might be explained with higher absorption capacities and related factors, such as a higher educational level, better "project writing skills", greater experience with project management and better access to information. Proximity to Bratislava could also play a role (in some cases projects are developed and implemented by organisations based in the capital with project activities conducted and reported in the Roma settlements). However, all these factors are just "educated assumptions" and need further research to analyse and substantiate.

It is more difficult to explain the stark differences in/between regions with a high percentage of Roma. Due to the incomparably larger size of the local Roma populations, none of the districts of Eastern and Central Slovakia reaches per-head-values as in the Western districts mentioned before. However, there is a noticeable difference between the southern and northern part of Eastern Slovakia. With the exception of the Rožňava District, all rural districts in the Košice Region reach very low values with less than 100 € per Roma inhabitant. In the districts east of Košice these numbers are significantly even lower (Trebíšov 25 €, Michalovce 31 €, Košice Okolie 37 €). In comparison to this, almost all districts in the Prešov Region have values above 100 € (exceptions are Humenné with only 8 €, Kežmarok 94 €, Sabinov 97 €) with several reaching significantly higher values.

Map 3: ESF-spending per Roma inhabitant (in Euro, by district, calculated on basis of sample)



Asked about the reasons for this difference, one of the ESF managers interviewed for this study provided two possible explanations. The first was the very large number of tiny municipalities, which would often lack the capacities to start own initiatives. However, the analysis of the dataset does not allow verification of this claim, as the mean size of villages included in the Atlas is actually slightly smaller in case of the Prešov Region (976 inhabitants as opposed to 1000 in the Košice Region). Still, lacking capacities of the smaller municipalities might nevertheless be an important factor. In both regions, rural municipalities that attracted funding (either directly as applicant or as location of activities by other organisations) were on average larger than the average rural municipalities included in the Atlas. However, this difference is much smaller in the case of the Prešov Region (20%) than in case of the Košice Region, where the targeted municipalities had more than two times more inhabitants than the average municipalities (2242 inhabitants). The second possible explanation offered by the interviewed fund manager is the linguistic border between Slovak and Hungarian speaking areas in the southern parts of the Košice Region. While further research would be needed to verify this hypothesis, it seems not implausible that the language barrier could be one of the factors that make it more complicated for small municipalities from the Southern border lands to apply for ESF-funding.

Profile of the targeted municipalities

The last subchapter of this report introduced already differences on the municipal level. In this subchapter, we will look on the characteristics of the targeted municipalities in a more systematic way in order to find out to what extent the ESF funds were reaching those municipalities where needs were the biggest.

Inspired by the line of research above, the first question to be analysed is the average size of the targeted municipalities in comparison to the average size of all municipalities included in the Atlas. As the situation and governance structure of towns differs considerably from the one found in villages, the data concerning towns were processed separately.

Table 9: Rural Municipalities with Roma Communities

	All municipalities included in Atlas of Roma communities (2004)	Municipalities where MRC-relevant ESF-projects were implemented (all priorities, data from 2004)	Municipalities where MRC-relevant ESF-projects were implemented (priority 2.1, data from 2004)	Municipalities where MRC-relevant ESF-projects were implemented (priority 2.2, data from 2004)
a) Average size	1,136.70 inhabitants	1,467.51 inhabitants	1,448.79 inhabitants	1,536.32 inhabitants
b) Local share of Roma population (according to 2003/4)	17.21%	28.85%	31.59%	16.4%
c) Local unemployment rate (according to Atlas 2004)	20.62%	23.98%	25.58%	17.35%

Concerning the size of rural municipalities, the analysis on the national level confirms the findings from the above-presented comparison of the two regions of Eastern Slovakia. The municipalities where projects were implemented were on average larger (by 30%) than the municipalities included in the Atlas. The most important reason for this is certainly the lacking capacities of the very small municipalities, whose mayors do not always have the skills to apply for funding and administrate the funds in compliance with the complicated rules of the fund, and also do not have the financial resources to hire consulting companies to prepare the project application. Very small municipalities might also have too few potential participants and lack suitable facilities (such as premises for trainings), to be an

attractive location for projects that are implemented by private organisations. While all of this is certainly hardly surprising, it has to be noted that these factors reduce the chances of vulnerable inhabitants of small municipalities to benefit from ESF support. As inhabitants of small municipalities tend, for a number of reasons, to be in a disadvantaged position, the limited access to ESF funding represents an additional disadvantage.

The situation in small villages is further analysed in Table 10, which distinguishes within this group, between three groups defined by the size of their populations. This supports the assumption that the inhabitants of very small villages are seriously disadvantaged in accessing ESF funding. Taken together, about 20 per cent of the municipalities included in the sample were targeted by ESF-funded projects. However, in case of the smallest villages, with less than 300 inhabitants, only 11.3% per cent were targeted.

Table 10: The ESF-projects in smaller-than average villages*

	Number of municipalities included in Atlas of Roma communities	Number of municipalities where MRC-relevant ESF-projects from sample were implemented (share of all municipalities in same category)	Number of municipalities where MRC-relevant ESF-projects (priority 1.1) from sample were implemented (share of all municipalities in same category)	Number of municipalities where MRC-relevant ESF-projects (priority 1.2) from sample were implemented (share of all municipalities in same category)
All villages included in Atlas (2004)	981	191 (19.5%)	161 (16.4%)	28 (2.9%)
a) Less than 300 inhabitants	150	17 (11.3%)	13 (8.6%)	4 (2.6%)
b) 300 – 700 inhabitants	287	42 (14.6%)	39 (13.5%)	3 (1.0%)
c) 700 – 1135 inhabitants	193	43 (22.3%)	37 (19.2%)	5 (2.6%)

Note: * the table does not contain information on villages with over 1135 inhabitants

The two other aspects analysed in Table 9 are the local share of Roma and the level of unemployment. In regard to both of these crucial indicators, we can notice a remarkable difference between 2.1 and 2.2 projects. Whereas the municipalities tar-

geted by 2.1 projects have a disproportional high share of Roma (31.59% in 2004) and are very strongly affected by unemployment (25.59% in 2004), the opposite is true for the 2.2 projects. Here, both the share of Roma and the unemployment rate were lower than in the average of municipalities included in the Atlas dataset. This is more evidence, supporting the hypothesis outlined above, that that large number of the so called "MRC-relevant" projects implemented under Measure 2.2 are reaching non-Roma populations. Even though the unemployment data used is from 2004 was already outdated by the years the projects were started, it can be assumed that the overall findings will be correct, as the relative position of regions and municipalities changes much more slowly than the absolute unemployment numbers.

Table 9 revealed very strong differences between the locations of projects realized in actions 2.1 and 2.2. While the funding under measure 2.1 seems to have targeted municipalities that corresponded with the programme's objectives, the degree to which the support provided within action 2.2 is properly targeted remains questionable. As Table 11 demonstrates, a similar tendency can be observed also in the case of the urban locations. However, in case of the urban projects, it is worth noting that the unemployment rate in the targeted locations was lower than in the total of urban municipalities included in the Atlas.

Table 11: Towns and Cities with Roma Communities

	All urban municipalities included in Atlas of Roma communities (2004)	Urban municipalities where MRC-relevant ESF-projects were implemented (all priorities, data from 2004)	Urban municipalities where MRC-relevant ESF-projects were implemented (priority 2.1, from 2004)	Urban municipalities where MRC-relevant ESF-projects were implemented (priority 2.2, data from 2004)
Average size	16,440 inhabitants	21,126 inhabitants	21,006 inhabitants	17,319 inhabitants
b) Local share of Roma population (according to unofficial estimates of local administration in 2003/4)	5.12%	5.76%	6.29%	2.84%
c) Local unemployment rate (according to Atlas 2004)	14.94%	14.14%	13.73%	9.48%

Factoring in segregation

The dataset of the Atlas for Roma Municipalities contains a broad variety of information that can be used for assessing the extent to which a particular Roma settlement is underdeveloped and segregated, from the areas inhabited by the majority population. In order to measure the degree of segregation and underdevelopment, several such indicators were selected. Transforming the information in the selected columns into numeric values allowed creating a crude but robust index²², which ranks locations on a rank from 0 (least level of segregation and underdevelopment) to 15 (extremely underdeveloped and highly segregated).

The index incorporates information on the following dimensions of the settlements in question:

<p>1. Location of the settlement:</p> <p>Within the municipal limits: 0 Outside of municipal limits: 1</p>	<p>4. Barrier</p> <p>No barrier: 0</p> <p>Any kind of barrier mentioned: 1</p>	<p>7. Public lighting</p> <p>No public lighting: 2</p> <p>Public lighting partly: 1</p> <p>Public lighting: 0</p>
<p>2. Type of settlement:</p> <p>Within the municipality dispersed: 0</p> <p>Within the municipality: 1</p> <p>On the margins: 2</p> <p>Outside of the municipality: 3</p>	<p>5. Land ownership</p> <p>Land owner unknown: 2</p> <p>Otherwise: 0</p>	<p>8. Garbage collection in Roma settlement</p> <p>No garbage collection: 1</p> <p>Garbage collection: 0</p>
<p>3. Distance of the settlement (in metres)</p> <p>No distance: 0</p> <p>Distance: 1 – 499 metres: 1</p> <p>Distance 500 – 999 metres: 2</p> <p>Distance: 1000 – 1999 metres: 3</p> <p>Distance more than 2000 metres: 4</p>	<p>6. Access to electricity</p> <p>Electricity available: 0</p> <p>Electricity partly available: 1</p> <p>No access to electricity: 2</p>	

22 See also: Hurrle, J. (2006): Social Exclusion, External Intervention, and the Local Democracy. A Comparative Sustainability Assessment of Roma-targeting Community Development Projects in Slovakia. Accessible online at: http://aa.ecn.cz/img_upload/79a33131c9c4293e0fceb50bfa263ef/DIPLOM_Final_Jakob_Hurrle2.pdf.

To provide an example of the index application²³, the degree of segregation and underdevelopment of the well-known Roma settlement in Svinia is assessed with this index in the following way:

Municipality	Index	Location of the settlement	Type of settlement	Distance of settlement (in metres)	Barrier	Property ownership	Electricity	Public lighting	Garbage collection
Svinia	7.5	Within the municipal limits	Outside of municipality	100	Creek	Unknown	Yes	Yes	Partly
		0	3	1	1	2	0	0	0.5

Applying this new index to the sample allows comparing the level of segregation and underdevelopment of the targeted municipalities with the average of municipalities included in the Atlas. Even though it is not directly the objective of the ESF programme to address spatial segregation and the lack of technical infrastructure, this indicator is relevant, because various studies have shown that there are close correlations between the level of segregation and social indicators such as income or employment.

Table 12 shows that the distribution of the Roma-targeting projects is, in regard to segregation and underdevelopment, characterized by a similar tendency that has been shown in regard to unemployment. Taken together, the ESF projects included in the sample were realized in localities of higher level of segregation and underdevelopment than the average of locations included in the Atlas. As was the case in regards to unemployment, the projects realized within action 2.1 targeted communities where the needs are above average. This is not surprising, if we take into consideration the nature of the projects under 2.1 – the very purpose and *raison d'être* of social field work is to respond and provide immediate assistance in the most deprived and marginalized localities. The locations of the 2.2 projects, on the other hand, were on average in a better position than the average of locations included in the Atlas. This is not surprising either, if we take into consideration the "built-in" bias towards non-Roma (or at least towards populations that are not marginalized) in the very design of the measure with its focus on training.

23 In order to apply the index, a working version of the main table was created, where the information in the eight above-mentioned columns was transformed as described and two new columns were added. The first of the new columns is used to insert the new index, while the second is used as a working column for the calculation of a weighted average, which reflects the differences in the size of the settlements. This weighted average is calculated in the following way: INDEX*POPULATION OF LOCATION/POPULATION OF ALL LOCATIONS.

Table 12: Segregation and underdevelopment of Roma settlements

Region	Segregation and Underdevelopment Index (mean value weighted by sizes of local populations; lowest value, highest value)			
	All municipalities included in Atlas	All municipalities included in Atlas and targeted by ESF projects	All municipalities included in Atlas and targeted by 2.1 projects	All municipalities included in Atlas and targeted by 2.2 projects
Bratislava	1.68 – 0 – 7			
Trnava	1.01 – 0 – 10	0.87 – 0 – 4	0.95 – 0 – 4	0.31 – 0 – 1
Trenčín	0.78 – 0 – 2	1.75 – 0 – 2	2.0 – 0 – 2	0.0 – 0 – 0
Nitra	1.05 – 0 – 11	1.60 – 0 – 4.5	1.66 – 0 – 4.5	1.44 – 0 – 2
Žilina	1.79 – 0 – 9	1.48 – 0 – 9	1.97 – 0 – 6.5	1.18 – 0 – 9
Banská Bystrica	1.47 – 0 – 14	1.77 – 0 – 11	1.56 – 0 – 11	2.99 – 0 – 9
Prešov	2.39 – 0 – 14.5	2.51 – 0 – 8.5	2.89 – 0 – 8.5	1.59 – 0 – 5
Košice	2.87 – 0 – 14	2.84 – 0 – 13	2.95 – 0 – 13	2.98 – 0 – 9
Slovakia total	2.14 – 0 – 14.5	2.37 – 0 – 13	2.53 – 0 – 13	1.90 – 0 – 9

Another approach to the same question is to look specifically into the situation of the most underdeveloped and segregated settlements. To what extent were locations with an Index > 7.5 reached by the ESF programme? As can be seen in Table 13, there are 82 locations in Slovakia that reach this high value. About 20 per cent of these locations were reached by an ESF-project. The rest remain underserved – or simply not on the “ESF radar screen”. This is something that could be taken into account for the next programming period.

Table 13: ESF Projects in highly segregated municipalities

	Total	Locations of ESF projects
Municipalities with Index > 7.5	82	17 (20%)
Municipalities with Index > 10	19	3 (15%)

5

Case study: ESF projects in Prešov Region

The previous two chapters introduced the structure of the ESF programme in Slovakia and the position of the so-called MRC-relevant projects within this structure. It further discussed the structure of these projects and analysed territorial distribution of the projects. As outlined in the introduction to this report, in order to gain a better idea of how the projects affected the Roma in the targeted communities, it is necessary to complement the statistical analysis with the perspective of the people who implemented the projects, as well as the perspective of their ultimate beneficiaries. This report's methodological chapter explained the authors' strategy for the selection of the project sites and the research methods used during the one-week field visit to the Prešov Region in Eastern Slovakia. In this chapter, we will first briefly characterize the Prešov Region and key problems Roma communities in Prešov Region are facing, before summarizing the key findings of the field research.

5.1. Roma in Prešov Region

The geography of Slovakia is characterized by two basic patterns of inequality. The first of these patterns is the gap between the more affluent and developed western part of the country and the poorer and less developed eastern and southern regions. The second pattern is the contrast between urban agglomerations and the development axis along major transportation arteries on the one side, and rural regions on the other side. With the exception of tourist resorts and the villages in proximity to urban centres, which began to function as suburban places of residence, development opportunities tend to be more limited in the case of the rural areas. Having these two patterns in mind, it is easy to understand why the Eastern Slovak Prešov Region is structurally disadvantaged as a whole and at the same time characterized by considerable intra-regional differences. Economic conditions are best in the two largest cities and in close proximity of the highway corridor, which links the tourist resorts of the High Tatra Mountains and the city of Poprad with the Prešov agglomeration. The situation is more difficult in the east of Prešov and in the remote areas along the Polish and Ukrainian borders. In these regions, labour migration has a long tradition, due to the limited local employment opportunities. The unemployment rate in Prešov Region is currently at 17.8% (31.12.2011) with the lowest level in the Poprad District (12.3%) and the highest in Kežmarok District (28.6%).²⁴

²⁴ Regional statistics (based on Labour Force Survey). Website of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

The differences in the local unemployment rates reflect not only the differences in the strengths of the local economies, but stem also from the uneven distribution of the Roma, who are at a much higher rate unemployed than the rest of the population. Correlations between the unemployment rate and the share of Roma can be studied when comparing the upper and lower part of map 4, which illustrates differences in the unemployment rate among districts within the Prešov Region and differences concerning the share of Roma.

As in the whole of Slovakia, the Roma in the Prešov Region are also mostly a rural minority. The Roma are not distributed equally within the rural parts of the region, yet concentrate in the historical regions of Spiš and Šariš. Even in these regions, by far not all of the municipalities are inhabited by Roma. Most of the villages that are ethnically mixed are divided in areas inhabited by ethnic Slovaks and areas inhabited by Roma. There are, however, striking differences in regard to the character of these divisions. While some Roma settlements have become wide-known as examples of extreme segregation and underdevelopment, in other municipalities the differences between the Roma and the Slovak parts in a village are hardly recognizable and, respectively, the relations between both groups of inhabitants seem harmonic. More typical than these positive and negative extremes are various situations in-between, as is demonstrated by the application of the Segregation Index in subchapter 3.3, where the Roma locations of the Prešov Region reached a mean value of $seg=2.39$ on a scale from 0 to 15.

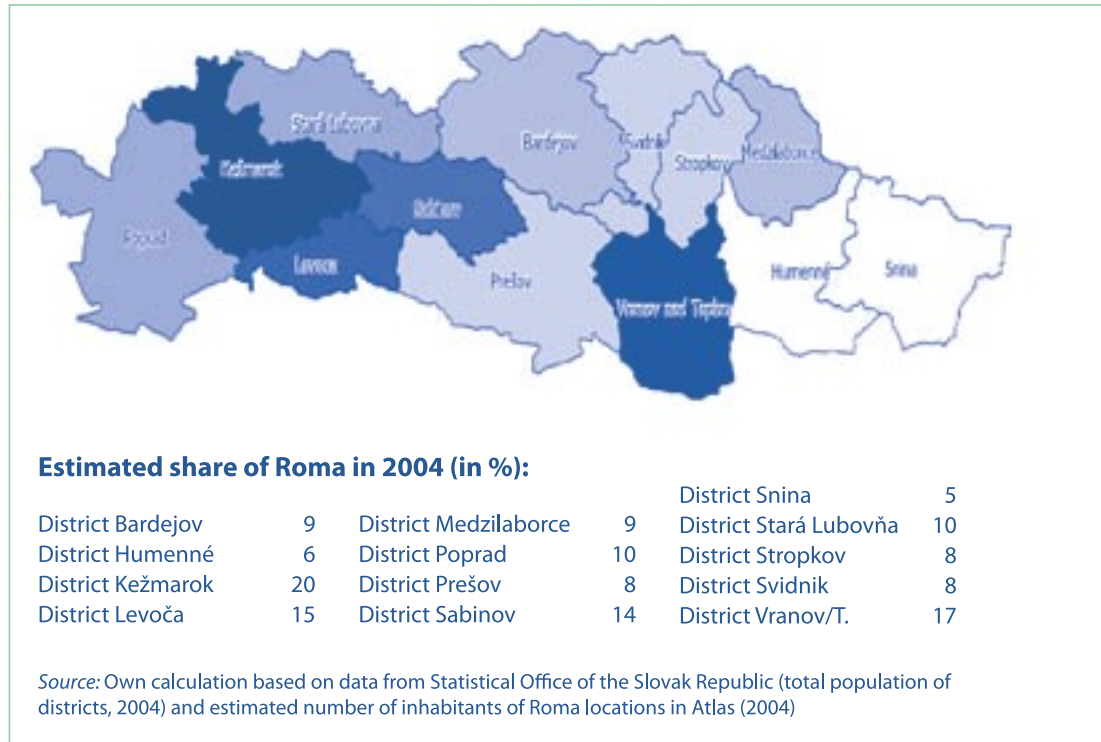
Map 3: Unemployment in Presov Region



Unemployment rates in % (31.12.2011):

District Bardejov	19.89	District Medzilaborce	19.84	District Snina	19.31
District Humenné	16.64	District Poprad	12.33	District Stará Ľubovňa	14.56
District Kežmarok	28.66	District Prešov	17.16	District Stropkov	18.11
District Levoča	18.48	District Sabinov	26.75	District Svidník	20.03
				District Vranov/T.	22.89

Source: Regional Statistical Database of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (RegDat).

Map 4: Unemployment and the share of Roma in Prešov Region

Map 5 illustrates how the situation differs in regard to segregation and underdevelopment in the different districts of Prešov Region. Perhaps surprisingly, there is no clear correlation between a district's overall level of development and the situation in its Roma settlements. To the contrary, the index is lowest in the peripheral districts of Snina and Medzilaborce. In both of these districts, the size of the Roma population is relatively small both in absolute and relative terms.

While there are huge differences between individual municipalities, the problem of unemployment is massive even in the case of villages where Roma might otherwise appear rather well-integrated. With the partial exception of labour migration, which is of significant importance for some communities, only a very small fraction of the Roma of working age are regularly employed. To some extent, the difficulties of the Roma on the labour markets can be explained with structural features. Living mostly in rural communities in Slovakia's eastern regions, most Roma live in economic environments where working places are a scarce resource. Being on average less educated and lacking a personal employment history in the formal sector, Roma are objectively worse positioned than most of their ethnic Slovak counterparts. Another factor is the very low level of salaries for manual work that result in a level of income that is, in the case of families with several children, not or is only insignificantly

Map 5: Districts of Prešov Region by Roma settlements' level of segregation and underdevelopment



Scale from 0 (lowest level of segregation and underdevelopment) to 15 (extreme level)

District Bardejov	3.35	District Medzilaborce	1.15	District Snina	1.01
District Humenné	1.59	District Poprad	2.21	District Stará Ľubovňa	1.77
District Kežmarok	2.96	District Prešov	2.78	District Stropkov	2.93
District Levoča	1.58	District Sabinov	3.65	District Svidník	2.53
				District Vranov /T	1.78

Source: Own calculation based on data from Atlas (2004)

higher than the income from welfare payments. As the requests for welfare are not processed immediately, the loss of employment (and also the return from labour migration) is in addition to this linked with particular risks, which can be the beginning of indebtedness. From an economical point of view, unemployed Roma that have sufficient skills to find informal work are therefore often better off with the combination of income from these activities with welfare payments, than with income from a formal position. These economic factors might be one explanation for the often-heard claims by members of the majority population that Roma would lack the motivation to work.

The economic and “colour-blind” explanations offered above are however not sufficient to explain the extent of Roma’s exclusion from the labour market. Arguably, factors of similar importance are ethnic discrimination and the lack of participation of Roma in informal social networks, where many working places are offered and job-seekers recruited. Ethnic discrimination and the lack of skills are, in addition to this, mutually reinforcing: As Roma are seldom offered formal employment opportunities, they have on the one hand limited opportunities to upgrade or even maintain their skills. Lacking work experience and insufficient financial incentives can, on the other hand, be the reason for employers’ dissatisfaction with Roma

employees. The interplay of these factors deepened in the two past decades the gap between the Roma and the rest of the population. It is also important to realize that Roma unemployment adds to the negative perception of the Roma. Members of the majority population justify their negative emotions towards Roma often with the minority members' alleged status of parasites, which would avoid work and live at the costs of the working majority population. In many municipalities of the Prešov Region, the resulting tensions are intensified by the ethnically divided demographic development, where an increasingly old and shrinking ethnic Slovak population faces a young and growing Roma minority, which has in many municipalities already turned into the local majority.

In the case of some municipalities, the fear of the ethnic Slovaks of losing their dominant position has led to overtly segregationist and punitive policies, which seek to control the Roma by blocking any development attempts (Svinia). In some cases, even the social work by non-governmental organisations was perceived as a hostile intervention, which the municipality sought to undermine (Hermanovce). However, a large number of municipalities are aware that some form of intervention is needed in order to prevent a further worsening of an already complicated situation. Due to the far-reaching transfer of competences from the state to the municipalities, municipalities are today the most important institutions in addressing the exclusion of the Roma. To some extent, the role of municipalities is complemented by non-governmental organisations. However, due to the often fragile structure of many NGOs, which were in many cases founded in order to apply for a specific project, the sustainability of results tend to be better when interventions are made by municipalities, or at least with their support.

5.2. The projects in Prešov Region and their impact

The two most important tools used by the municipalities are public works and social field work. Many municipalities make use of the possibility to offer Roma (and other unemployed) a limited amount of work in so-called "activation" schemes (10 or 20 hours per week). The beneficiaries of this work are not employed, yet benefit from an increase of their social payment. The praxis of the activation schemes differs very much from municipality to municipality. While some mayors perceive the activation work mostly as a formality that allows increasing the social payments, others use the Roma for the cleaning of public spaces. There are, however, also municipalities where the Roma are used for more complex works, such as the reconstruction of buildings. Until recently, also the participation in training (like in the ESF-projects realized under Measure 2.2) was accepted as a form of activation work. However, due to changes in the regulations governing the activation schemes, this is no longer possible.

Social field work is the second type of activity that is used by a large number of municipalities. Initiated and realized on a smaller scale by a number of private organisations, schemes for social field work were promoted by the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the Roma Minorities. However, to this point the social field work programmes are not financed from the regular state budget. While Slovakia was successful in tapping various European programmes for this purpose, the dependence on these programmes led to frequent discontinuities, which considerably weakened the programme's impact on the local level. Despite of these problems, the social field work programmes tend to be recognized as very beneficial. The ESF projects realized under Measure 2.1 and a new national project (to be implemented by the Office of the Plenipotentiary) are the most current form of these programmes.

There are several ways to assess impacts that the projects have on the ultimate beneficiaries. In this part of the report, we draw on data obtained during our field research, in which we have visited a number of localities and interviewed various actors. For the purpose of this report, we operationally divide the impacts in several areas. Additionally, we distinguish between perspectives of the following actors and groups: mayors and representatives of the local municipalities; NGOs implementing the projects and the ultimate beneficiaries – the Roma.²⁵

Projects' impact as seen by the implementing partners

In general, interventions and projects tend to be more successful if conceptualized by applicants as part of long-term activities. Thus, localities with previous long-term work and different experiences with various projects tend to achieve better results. This is due to their previous experiences in managing projects, but also long-term work, knowledge and trustful relationship with the groups of the ultimate beneficiaries. Organisations with previous experiences of project managements found it generally easier to run the projects. Additionally, by working with the beneficiary groups during their previous project meant that they could build on their previous experiences. However, even in the localities with previous history of projects, the ultimate beneficiaries were often greatly affected by the short-term period of project implementation. Many of the Roma respondents expressed their discontent by saying: 'We do not need any projects, we need jobs!' The idea of projects was often accompanied by a suspicion that the mediating site, frequently associated with powerful non-Roma mediating institutions, are benefiting from the projects more than the local Roma.

²⁵ We are aware that there are differences within these groups and that these had different experiences with the implementation of the projects. However, in this report we focus on the main themes and recurrent tendencies observed during the field trip.

The concept of project-type interventions seems unsuitable to address the issue effectively due to a mixture of the following reasons:

- The phenomenon of social exclusion and unemployment of Roma in Slovakia is so 'large' that addressing it on individual projects' base (limited in scope and time) seems an insufficient response to it
- too short time horizon of project implementation
- instability of implementing organisations
- artificially created project programme with (in most cases) no continuity in terms of job opportunities.
- psychologising reasons and blaming the 'victims' for insufficient proactivity and loss of working habits rather than contextualizing Roma unemployment within the socio-economic exclusions and structural inequalities present in Slovakia. This point is related to certain tendencies in explaining socio-economic marginality of Roma, as well as efforts at addressing unemployment and poverty, by psychological and socio-cultural reasons (e.g. through 'activating' their habits) rather than seeing these as directly related to socio-economic and structural inequalities intersecting with ethno-racial discrimination.

Some of the interviewed mayors and project managers noted that Roma were a group with special needs, in particular emphasizing their alleged socio-cultural differences (such as a relationship to work ethic, orientation on money and not status) and lack of skills. We encountered some stereotypical generalizations such as 'they do not know how to work with basic tools... we have to buy more tools as they kept destroying them,' or 'you know how they are, one day they come, another they do not' implying a set of dispositions categorizing the Roma with a collective label of unreliability. At the same time, many of the mayors also admitted that some of the Roma working in the projects proved to be very skilful and talented in a number of ways. Some of the mayors claimed this to be an achievement of the projects. Other mayors made a significant distinction between 'our Roma' and the other Roma/Gypsies, with the first category being a bit more positive. Further differentiations were made alongside 'good Roma families' and 'problematic' (less skilful and poor working habits) lines, which often intersected with spatial disparities, with the latter category of Roma often residing in the outskirts of localities. In one of the localities considered as 'successful', due to a number of projects and involvement of local Roma, the mayor suggested that the key for their success is 'the way we've trained them' over an extensive period of time with a support of several projects. His words, like many of other mayors we encountered, suggested that after the trainings and work for the municipality the ultimate beneficiaries from the Roma communities were 'even employed by the whites'. His claim implied that the training and practi-

cal experiences gained during various works for the municipality (in various projects) turned the Roma into more skilful workers. Additionally, because of the work carried out for the municipalities, the Roma involved in the project gained (to a certain extent) a reputation of skilful workers among the non-Roma. However, it must be noted that these job opportunities were mostly in the sphere of informal employment.

Some of the interviewed Roma beneficiaries noted that they learned new skills and gained some practical experiences. However, it must be noted that some of the Roma beneficiaries were skilful workers prior to their participation in the projects. Although formally long-term unemployed, many of the Roma worked in various informal jobs such as construction works. The older generation in particular, frequently had a significant amount of work experience. Although opinions among interview partners concerning impact for informal employment differed, most of the interviews showed only limited effects of projects on increased employability of the ultimate beneficiaries.

- Rather than talking about the acquiring of new skills and inculcating ‘work habits’ (as is often trumpeted by project managers or policy makers), the projects had important impacts in other areas relevant for Roma beneficiaries’ opportunities on the job market. It must be said, however, that these impacts were mainly related to the informal economy, as the majority of the ultimate beneficiaries consistently reported unsuccessful job searches on the legal market. What some of the municipality projects achieved was to help the ultimate beneficiaries earn the reputation that they are capable of doing good work. In other words, they gained certain capital of trust in the eyes of the local non-Roma and potential employers. Additionally, some of the Roma workers gained the trust of the mayor, which he then used to get more jobs for these Roma. Rather than learning work habits or new skills, what seems to be more significant is that they gained certain cultural capital of trust and social capital of connections. Combination of these two forms of capital, underlined by the skilfulness demonstrated in their work, brought some of the Roma beneficiaries’ new jobs outside of the projects. Thus, for example, the afore-mentioned mayor of the ‘successful’ village suggested that ‘by now many *gadžo*²⁶ prefer to call our Roma for work rather than calling a *gadžo* firm.... We have trained them... and the *gadžo* knows that he will pay less to the Roma for the same work that he would pay a non-Roma.’ Additionally, the same mayor would sometime mediate jobs for the Roma beneficiaries by ‘borrowing them to another mayor who called me asking if I might know of some skilful workers to do something for him.’ These examples are telling, because it shows how Roma beneficiaries do get jobs on the market. At the same time, it also shows that this type of contracts have important economic

26 *Gadžo* is a term used by Roma to refer to the non-Roma.

dimensions for the contractors. First, the Roma would tend to be paid less for the same type of work (which raises a question of unequal financial valuation of labour based on ascribed ethnicity). Secondly, most of these jobs are one-off informal works with no legalization of these contracts.

The resulting situation of some Roma finding irregular jobs in the informal sector was interpreted, by several mayors, as a consequence of insufficient incentive to enter the legal labour market, but also by what was imagined as Roma preference for earning quick money paid in cash. Rather than being motivated by legal employment in terms of social and financial status, some of the interviewed mayors suggested that Roma are more motivated by immediate pecuniary gains. For example, one mayor explained this with the following words: 'They (i.e. Roma) have it somehow rooted in them. When I, as a white, do not have a job, I feel ashamed (because of that status) and try to get a job as soon as possible. However, for them this is not a priority. For us it is a matter of honour and it is a shame to be unemployed, for them what matters is the cash.' What the mayor interpreted in terms of habitual, psychological and socio-cultural dispositions, however, is crucially based on his inability to reflect on the larger matrix of socio-economic and structural inequalities. Although the same mayor also mentioned the significance of poorly set social system and demotivating state incentives to enter the legal labour market, as well as pervasive discrimination of Roma job-seekers, he omitted the practical logic and vulnerability entailed in the transition to the bottom of the legal market. The potential employers often prefer an informal contract, which makes the labour cheaper, costs lower, and workers' more easily exploitable. At the same time, the unstable and often temporary nature of jobs at the bottom of the labour market means that a combination of social benefits and informal jobs provides more social and economic security for the people (potential workers) living in precarious conditions.

To conclude, the projects' long-term impacts of training on the ultimate beneficiaries' employment prospects on the formal labour markets were minimal. In several projects, beneficiaries managed to use knowledge, skills and social connections to find job opportunities after the end of the project. However, most of these jobs were not formal employments or stable long-term jobs. We have encountered several examples of Roma beneficiaries who received job offers after, or during the duration of the projects. However, most of these jobs were in the form of informal, and frequently seasonal, jobs such as construction works. The most prevalent form of employment was a combination of informal jobs (*fušky*) and various social benefits.

Although the majority of projects did not create job opportunities beyond the end of their duration, they had a number of significant effects on the Roma, as well as on the municipality and majority of non-Roma populations, or organisations implementing projects. These effects were both evaluated as positive and negative by various respondents. It is the perception of the beneficiaries that we will turn to in the next section.

The projects' impact as seen by the Roma beneficiaries

The Roma beneficiaries' perception of the projects varied depending on the projects and individual ultimate beneficiary's position and relation to the project. However, for the purposes of analysis we can distinguish three points of views by adapting respondents' answers to our questioning about the forms of training. It must be noted that in reality these answers frequently overlapped.

The project trainings were seen as:

- 1) 'Better than nothing'
- 2) 'Good for something'/'It was good... only if we would get a job now'
- 3) 'Good for nothing'

The projects' ultimate beneficiaries expressed various, often conflicting, opinions about the projects. Some of them saw the projects as 'better than nothing'; others suggested that these trainings might be 'good for something'. The latter expression was made with no direct reference to a concrete opportunity in the future. Rather than seeing it as useful for their job prospects, the respondents tend to refer to more unspecified futures.

There were also a number of respondents who valued the usefulness of projects, offered activities and learned skills, but questioned the overall meaningfulness of their participation by suggesting that 'there will not be any type of job like that for us after the end of the project.' For example, two ultimate beneficiaries who participated in a training project teaching them how to breed sheep expressed this succinctly: 'We liked the training. They came for us every day with a van and took us to the farm where we were trained. They fed us and we learned some new things... but what shall we do now after it is finished? If only someone would give us this type of job.' Most of the ultimate beneficiaries articulated their criticism alongside similar lines of learning a skill, which did not help them to get a job on the legal market. As one community worker, who was responsible for recruiting some ultimate beneficiaries for the above NGO project, put it: 'These courses were good and the boys enjoyed these. However, at the end of the day what are these good for if there will not be any jobs for them like this. If only you could tell them to create some farms like that in real... so there would be actually jobs like that.'

Some Roma beneficiaries suggested that some of the trainings they attended were not useful considering their previous education and experiences and type of jobs they might possibly do. For example, in one of our interviews, several Roma beneficiaries were complaining about how they were made to attend IT skills and computer literacy courses without seeing any possible link to their job prospects. One of them

used an example of an older Roma woman in her late fifties who was made to attend such a course, which had no relevance for her past and future job prospects.

It must be noted that practically all Roma beneficiaries were clearly aware of who was the implementing organisation. This was especially the case if it was local municipality and mayor. They were aware that their participation might affect their status in the village, as well as other aspects of their living – participation in the scheme of ‘activating works’ or their relatives’ position. In the case of projects implemented by NGOs or other non-local organisations, the Roma were not concerned with these issues.

In two instances, Roma beneficiaries expressed their concerns that they were dismissed from the ‘activation works’ based on their disinterest in participating in projects, or on their poor performance or disciplinary issues. Indeed, we were repeatedly told that mayors used similar type of power mechanism to enforce Roma interest and participation in the project. For example, after one beneficiary questioned the usefulness of a training (implemented as a part of one project) and left, he found himself without a possibility to continue working in the activation works. The Roma beneficiaries were aware that the role of mayor is crucial for helping in their daily lives, as well as possibly making their lives in the locality more difficult.

Several respondents highlighted that some of the more ‘useful’ projects were often filled with unemployed non-Roma at the expenses of Roma. Similarly to granting places to non-Roma rather than to Roma, several ultimate beneficiaries accused mayors for clientelism and preferential treatment. Thus, one of the Roma beneficiaries asserted that: ‘though we were doing the training alongside each other, Roma and non-Roma, when it is over The person who is running the errands and got employed (by the municipality) is the *gadžo* and we are here, like we were before, with no jobs.’

5.3. The role of implementing agencies

Potentials and risks: the municipalities as “agents of change”.

A closer social proximity or surveillance with a heavy fist?

We must mention another important factor in assessing the effectiveness of the projects. The implementation of the projects differed importantly with regards to rural and urban areas. In most cases of urban projects, there was only minimal relationship between the ultimate beneficiaries and the implementing agency prior to and outside of the project. In the rural areas, the project implementation was largely interwoven into the existing social relationships between the local Roma, non-Roma and existing political representatives in the village. This proved to be both beneficial, but also possibly detrimental for the implementation of the projects.

The municipalities' role in successful implementation of projects is crucial in many ways. The willingness of the mayor to address and engage with Roma issues is a necessary precondition for any possibility of successful project realization. The mayors of visited localities all emphasised the importance of dealing with the Roma issues. We encountered mayors with a positive approach to their local Roma, as well as mayors who were rather hostile to Roma, but participated in the projects for more pragmatic reasons. The second type of mayors was interested in addressing Roma issues as it significantly affected the village life. One of the mayors, for example, shared 'We are living here with them. So, we have to take care of them... otherwise, things would only get worse.'

All of the mayors also emphasised the advantages of 'knowing their own Roma' (i.e. referring to local Roma in their municipality). In other words, the mayor or other municipality's employee often has a good or elementary knowledge of Roma families living in their villages. This knowledge helped the mayors to assess living situations of Roma, frequently knowing about their family situation, employment status and other circumstances. All mayors identified this as positive feature since it allowed them to exert certain social control over the ultimate beneficiaries that proved crucial for project management, as well as enabled them to build on their previous social relationships and knowledge of local Roma. This was praised as allowing the municipality to choose the best suitable candidates for the projects, as well as frequently building greater bonds of trust with several Roma beneficiaries. Several mayors used an expression that over the years 'we have educated (raised) them' (referring to some of the local Roma who have over the years gained trust of the local mayors). Some of these Roma beneficiaries, who were previously involved in various projects or had a trustful relationship with the municipality employees, worked as key contact persons in the implementation of the projects. They were often occupying a role of more trusted contact persons or 'informal' supervisors.

At the same time, what was often praised as a beneficial advantage for the project by mayors and other municipality workers also involved several risks and potential negatives. A mayor's position is always situated within the local power asymmetries and hierarchies, which includes local Roma and non-Roma. In several municipalities we visited during our field research, the mayor held a dominant position with a centralised power concentrated in his hands. This often led to almost unlimited power to decide about the selection of the ultimate beneficiaries, surveillance over their work and evaluation of their performances. This was displayed in possible unequal, asymmetrical and paternalistic treatments of the project's ultimate beneficiaries. Several respondents complained that the mayor would only work with Roma who have showed loyalty to him (for example, in the form of political support displayed during the elections), informing on the other Roma, or with whom he had previously developed good rapport. Many ultimate beneficiaries reported that historically crystallised inequalities shaped the selection and treatment of the ultimate

beneficiaries. Thus, Roma families who had good relationships with families prior to the projects were often prioritised or overrepresented in the selection for project participation. The Roma families who lacked the accumulated social capital of connections were often marginalised in the project recruitment and more likely to be dropped during the project implementation. While the mayors often argued that such exclusions were based on poor work performances or disciplinary issues, the affected ultimate beneficiaries often blamed personal issues, discrimination or previous disagreements with the mayor as the main reasons.

Additionally, most of the mayors proudly proclaimed that the key for the positive change and successful project implementation is an informal policy of a 'heavy fist'. This attitude translated into practice as working with those who 'took up the offered opportunity' presented to them through the projects. In other words, only those who were in the eyes of the mayors seen as willing to work hard, consistent and reliable were selected to work in the projects. The ultimate beneficiaries who for some reasons failed to fit mayor's criteria were sacked. As one mayor put it in one of our interviews: 'I do not give a second opportunity to those who have disappointed me.' Additionally, mayors often emphasised the importance of closely observed supervision (bordering with close surveillance).

However, the rhetoric of offered opportunity might in some cases border with authoritarian and paternalistic treatment of the ultimate beneficiaries. They were expected to willingly accept conditions and form of supervision dictated to them by the implementing organisation/municipality. A mayor's appreciation of the 'hard fist' approach was often based on very strong judgemental assumptions. First, in some of the mayors' discourses the Roma in Slovakia were portrayed in a very generalising manner as being scroungers, lacking work habits and skills, as well as being cunning and ready to take the first opportunity not to work. Thus, as one of the mayors argued, 'the only way to change this is to be constantly overseeing their work and making them to come and to work... once you ease up, they will take that opportunity... you have to train them.' The second problematic assumption that was repeated by several mayors was that the Roma were seen as 'spoiled' by the system of social benefits, accused of preferring to live on child and social benefits rather than working in the legal economy. This was further reinforced by the idea that 'They should be thankful for this (project as an opportunity)' and any possible dissent or disinterest on the side of the Roma beneficiaries was used to confirm the above mentioned assumptions. The logic of common sense prejudice was reinforced in the case of the Roma who failed to fit the expectations of the mayors regarding their behaviour and also certain assumed 'gratefulness' for these types of jobs. For some of the mayors, any possible difficulty seemed to confirm the general stereotype.

The implementation of ESF projects thus led to twofold processes of simultaneously countering the stereotypes of Roma beneficiaries and also reinforcing these. On the one hand, the projects contributed to mayors' perception of certain small segment

of Roma population as willing to work in the projects and to actively participate in the projects (daily conditions of which were often dictated by the mayor). On the other hand, it led to re-drawing of boundaries dividing Roma into those who want to take up the opportunity and help, and those who confirm the stereotype of not wanting to work and being 'problematic'. This division was often phrased in moralising rhetoric of good and bad Roma/Gypsies, which in many ways resonate with a classical division of the 'deserving' vs. 'undeserving' poor. In several localities, this also contributed to the growth of social differentiation between the Roma families, as well as to social polarization and tensions within local Roma. Some families, for example, accused others of being informants to the mayor.

Projects by non-governmental organisations

While the vast majority of social field work projects were implemented by municipalities, a large share of the employment projects (Measure 2.2) were realized by NGOs. It became clear already in the contacting-phase for the case study that the category "NGO" includes a large variety of entities that differ greatly in regard to their history and mode of operation. While some NGOs were founded by the elected officials of one municipality or the employees of local state institutions in order to have more possibilities for project-based activities, other NGOs were based far away from the place where the project was implemented. As the lists of participants contained only names without any contact information, it would have been, in the cases of concluded projects realized by NGOs from other parts of Slovakia, very difficult to come up with a strategy to learn anything about the project. The organisations differed also very much in regard to their institutional capacity. While some organisations are clearly well-established, in view of the often impressive project budgets, it seemed surprising that several of the contacted NGOs seemed to have no stable office. In a number of cases the attempt to establish a contact failed.

In the case of the projects that were actually visited, the projects implemented by non-governmental organisations provided different scenarios to the above-discussed projects in the municipalities. Nevertheless, although the municipal institutions were no longer the main 'agents of change', the extent to which NGO-based projects became successful, was significantly influenced by their relationship with the local municipalities and majority of local Slovak population. This was particularly the case in the rural settings. In one case, the representatives of one implementing NGO reported how difficult it was to find a physical space for the implementation of their projects in one locality. We were told that this was due to the resistance and reluctance of the local municipality and, more generally, the Slovak inhabitants of the village to rent any public space owned by the municipality to any projects that would bring Roma beneficiaries into the village centre. Most of the Roma beneficiaries were located in spatial and social margins of the locality and their presence and active involvement in the public spaces of the centre were met with

fear and resistance. This experience was not uncommon among the NGO representatives we interviewed, and many of them encountered mistrust and unwillingness to support their activities from the side of non-Roma Slovaks residing in the centres of the villages. The above-mentioned NGO project solved their difficulties by renting a parsonage building, with the support of a local Evangelic pastor.

During our field research and interviews with NGO workers, we found different forms of relationships with local communities and municipalities. From a mistrustful relationship with no support from the side of local municipalities, as noted above, to a more functional relationship in which municipalities recognised potential benefits of the NGOs projects. Regardless of the quality of these relationships, the NGOs, as implementing agencies, tended to act in a more independent way. In other words, because of their status they were more independent from the municipalities and, to some extent, managed to avoid the local hierarchies. Additionally, another important aspect of the NGO projects was that they often work with more skilled and qualified workers, those with some previous experiences in similar projects. These two elements contributed to a more open and inclusive selection of the potential ultimate beneficiaries. At the same time, it also led to more difficulties with gaining a trust of the local Roma groups (in the case of NGOs starting their projects in new localities with no prior work with the ultimate beneficiaries).

As much as the NGO autonomous position was identified as frequently beneficial for the projects, building and maintaining good relationships in the local settings was crucial for more successful project implementations, as well as for any potential continuation and long-term impact on the Roma communities. Thus, the most effective NGO projects were found in localities in which the NGO worked on a long-term basis, and had a good working relationship with the mayors and municipalities.

Our evaluation identified two important problems regarding the role of NGOs as implementing agencies. The first problem was related to functioning of the NGOs and their economic instability. Some of the NGOs were directly dependent on the project and some of the arising problems with financing of projects (as described elsewhere in the report) endangered not only the project implementation but also their very existence. Secondly, some of the NGO work with the ultimate beneficiaries was limited only to the duration of the project. Their services were withdrawn when the projects came to the end. Consequently, the projects had only limited long-term consequences for the ultimate beneficiaries, many of who afterwards found themselves in the same position as before the projects started. Additionally, such NGO project interventions frequently led to confirm the Roma beneficiaries' perception of these being similar to other 'projects', which provide some temporary opportunity, but have no effects and impacts beyond the duration of the projects.

A Special Case: Closed Institutions and their Roma Clients

During the field research we also visited two 'enclosed' types of institutions that were not directly dependent on the ESF projects. The ESF projects involved only a segment of their clients. The visited projects involved institutions in which the clients directly lived, worked and were trained. The first project focused on people with previous social problems (such as alcoholism; homelessness; ex-convicts). The project involved people who were residing in the institutions prior to the projects. The second project focused on teenage Roma adolescents from foster families and orphanages, and their transition to the labour market after reaching 18 years of age. The projects in these institutions differed significantly from all other projects. The personal biographies of the clients were often marked with social dislocation from their families. It was relatively common that these people had previous experiences of living in similar type of enclosed institutions (such as foster homes, prisons). This led one of the interviewed managers, for example, to suggest that: 'the majority of Roma (clients in the institution) were brought up in foster homes' and thus reasoned that 'they need this (type of) regime'. Living in specific enclosed spaces of these institutions, the people had to follow certain rules (both work and social) and were exposed to greater social control from the side of implementing organisation. They had to follow regular daily routines not only during working hours, but practically all the time. These institutions exercised greater disciplinary regimes (than just focusing on work) in relation to their clients.

It must be noted that the Roma ultimate beneficiaries of these projects differ greatly from other projects focusing on MRC. Unlike most of the other projects, the Roma ultimate beneficiaries in these institutions did not have close relationships with their families and did not hold strong ties with networks of Roma communities. Most of these people ended up as clients in these institutions as a consequence of their social marginalisation from/within the Roma communities. Thus, being cut off from other social networks of security (family ties), the Roma clients were often directly dependent on the institution, as it provided not only a project site, but also some kind of home and shelter. This also meant that the effects of these projects on the people differed from other visited projects. Some of the people were identified as more problematic due to their previous social (and other) problems. At the same time, having no other forms of connections and sociability and without a history of social relationship to the local settings, these people proved to have their behaviour and interactions in the implemented projects significantly impacted.

In the first Institute we visited, the project had 30 Roma out of 110 clients. It must be noted that 25 were Roma women (which is an unusually high percentage compared to the other visited project). The project manager reported that 10 persons found stable jobs after the end of the project).

In the project working with young Roma teenagers, we were told about an interesting follow up to the project. This involved finding formal employment of six persons in construction work. This work was mediated by one of the social workers of the project, who accompanied the clients in their search and assisted them in finding this work. Moreover, the project worker also helped the people with finding accommodation and their transition to more self-sustaining routines (such as paying bills, etc.). This example shows that the active involvement and further work with project's ultimate beneficiaries after the completion, or as a follow-up of a project, can be highly important in providing possible bridge from the artificial environment of project-type of work to entering the formal labour market.

The case of closed institutions is also interesting from a perspective of their engagement with the locality and surrounding community. In both cases, the representatives of the implementing organisations mentioned that their clients were met with mistrust from the side of the municipality representatives and the surrounding local community. This was due to the stigmatization ascribed to the people's past trajectories. The negative associations attached to their categorization as 'homeless', 'alcoholics', or 'Gypsy foster-children' and 'kids from orphanages' underlined some of the negative perception that these projects encountered. At the same time, their relatively enclosed nature and several material project outcomes, which became visible in public spaces (such as constructing a playground or cleaning public spaces) as a result of the work carried out by the people, played a role in influencing a more positive image. Additionally, one of the project managers of the institutions highlighted not only the social aspect of the projects, but also financial benefits for the municipalities hosting such enclosed institutions (for example, the fact that the clients of the institutions become residents of the locality, which in turn brings more money to the municipality budget).

The role of commercial subcontractors

Commercial subcontractors played an important role on several counts. First, many of the municipalities subcontracted an organisation for writing their project proposal and negotiating with the ESF Headquarters. The evaluators noticed an increasing amount of organisations specializing in 'project writing' with no previous experience of working with Roma related issues. If the projects were granted, many of these organisations received not only a financial amount, but frequently transformed into operating in the advising area. These organisations were not based locally, and communicated and coordinated their work from geographically distant areas.

It is interesting to note that some of the organisations made a pre-agreement with the municipalities that they will become the expert service provider for various trainings implemented in the projects. These subcontractors frequently delivered

specialized courses and trainings (e.g. psychological trainings). However, it was difficult to gain more information about the commercial subcontractors, since our field research focused primarily on the project-implementing organisations and the ultimate beneficiaries.

Side effects: Project impact on the local perception of the Roma community

Most of the projects visited during the evaluation field research had a positive impact on the perception of Roma in the municipalities. This was noted both by the implementing institutions (municipality or NGO) but also by some of the ultimate beneficiaries themselves. The fact that Roma were seen as working in public spaces and improving various municipality properties led to improvement of the local image of the Roma. Roma employed through the projects, more specifically in smaller towns and villages, became more visible. Rather than seeing the Roma as 'just standing around and not doing anything', as described to us by several mayors and local non-Roma inhabitants, they were seen as working for the municipality. This activity served to counter the widespread image, shared by the majority of Slovaks, seeing Roma as 'work-shy'. Additionally, it also increased the status of the Roma involved in the project as 'skilful', based on the type of work and products of their work. For example, in several localities the Roma worked in creating new pavements, constructing new fences or signposts. These jobs frequently involved types of work associated with higher degree of skill and qualification. Several respondents expressed in a positive tone that 'this was made by our Gypsies'.

Some of the Roma themselves reflected positively on this type of work and involvement in projects. It was frequently one of the first opportunities they were given to work in these types of jobs. Their previous experience in 'working for the municipality' (i.e. as a part of the Activation Works) was frequently restricted to menial tasks such as sweeping up streets or mowing. Unlike their non-Roma co-workers, the Roma are only rarely trusted by the municipality co-ordinators (or mayors) to be given work requiring manipulation with more expensive tools or driving municipality tractors/cars. Some of the Roma ultimate beneficiaries expressed positive opinions regarding their opportunity to work in the projects as some of these were seen more positively than the 'activating works'. At the same time, some ultimate beneficiaries complained that they were made to work in the same type of jobs (regardless of their status of working in the project or 'activating works').

5.4. Risks linked to ESF's administrative structures

Consequences of mismanagement and changing the rules

One of the most significant difficulties that were reported by the implementing organisations and municipalities we visited were related to the organisational changes that occurred in the senior structures of the ESF management in Bratislava. These changes came in the middle of the examined period. Senior management of ESF, after the 2010 elections, encountered two difficulties. First, they reported problems with management of projects both in Bratislava and in local implementing organisations, as well as a high number of previously approved projects that appeared ungrounded or with seemingly high budget approved for certain types of activities. The new senior management of ESF developed critical stances and misgivings regarding the effectiveness of certain activities.²⁷ For example, psychological trainings, an activity that was greatly supported during the first half of the examined period, came under critical scrutiny under the new leadership. Many of the psychological trainings were identified as ineffective and their number was significantly reduced. (Instead of the psychological trainings, more practical and skill-oriented trainings came to be emphasised in the second part of the observed period). Additionally, the approved fees were said to be too high in the initially approved projects, and the implementing organisations were often refused payment of the approved sums (often after the activity was already implemented and agreed upon with the subcontractor). The ESF justified its position on the grounds that the approved sums in the projects were never fixed but only approximate and the conditions of the contract stipulated that real prices should be the 'best' prices in given time and space.

The arrival of newly appointed senior management in the ESF in 2010 was followed with a thorough control over some of the ESF projects, which resulted in changes of conditions, affecting the project implementations. Additionally, the changes in the headquarters also resulted in difficulties with communicating between the regional partners and the Bratislava headquarters. According to the opinion of ESF managers, new rules decreased some bureaucratic requirements, all changes were fully in line with contractual conditions and no retroactivity took place.

Introduction of a cap on the lump-sum for certain services/goods as introduced by the managing authority is a positive step towards the efficient use of the public funds. However, introduction of such limits and new procedures in the middle of the projects' implementation can create unnecessary harms. As confirmed by our field research, the changes introduced by the managing authority led to an increasing amount of policing aimed at scrutinising the project implementation in greater detail. On the one hand, this led to discovering fraudulent problematic projects. On the other hand, the

²⁷ According to the ESF managers, this critical stance was based on the information gained by comprehensive market survey about services and prices.

increased vigilance led to obstructing many project implementations. Practically all project managers or municipalities' workers expressed their dissatisfaction with the managerial work in Bratislava. The reported difficulties were listed as follows:

- inefficient communications with long time lags in obtaining responses from Bratislava headquarters, often ascribed to a high turnover of administrative staff at headquarters in Bratislava
- a perception of unnecessary bureaucratic requirements
- changes in previously approved projects and inconsistency

These points were constantly reiterated by all the interviewed persons in the evaluation research. The last point was identified as particularly problematic. Some of the organisations made their agreements based on the previously approved budgets and calculations. However, in many cases the ESF representatives in Bratislava modified the conditions, and only after the subcontracted company or individuals carried out their work. Although there was a three months 'transition period' for organisations to comply to 'costs limits' (and regardless that outstanding obligations were fully re-funded) this left many of the organisations struggling financially to negotiate payments to the subcontracted parties. The resulting problems financially endangered not only the running of the ESF projects, but also frequently put at risk the very existence of the implementing organisations. In cases, in which the implementing organisation was the local municipality, financial means had to be taken from other areas of the municipality's budget. Although frequently causing significant financial difficulties, most of the municipalities were able to recover from such financial mismanagement and losses. However, in the case of NGOs implementing the projects, these retrospective changes left many organisations with substantial problems (some our respondents used expression: "on the brink of bankruptcy").

Additionally, the above difficulties often negatively influenced the relationships between the implementing organisation and the ultimate beneficiaries. Some of the problems led to significant delays or withdrawal of promised activities and services of sub-contracted companies were often paid with difficulty or delayed. The reasons given by the ESF representatives were met with mistrust.. In addition, some of the Roma beneficiaries we talked with, accused the implementing organisations (project managers or mayors) of "stealing money or using the money for their own interests, and not to the benefit of local Roma". The whole chain of trustful relationships, one of the key for successful project implementation, was often significantly harmed by these problems.

Politics of project reporting – circumventing categories of numbers and of activities

One of the invaluable aspects of carrying out qualitative field research, as a part of the evaluation was to contrast the seeming uniformity and formalised reporting present in the official project documentation, with the situation on the ground. The field visits, based on interviews and observations, frequently revealed discrepancies between data in written reports and the complex realities on the ground. While many of the projects we visited were already closed, by talking to variously situated actors from the implementing organisations and targeted ultimate beneficiaries, we were able to obtain stories that frequently differ from the official reports. One such aspect was to obtain information both from the project managers, mayors or projects' ultimate beneficiaries about differences that were not detectable from the documentation.

One of the first discrepancies was the relative circulation of actual ultimate beneficiaries involved in projects. This high mobility of the ultimate beneficiaries is often impossible to detect from the same number of the ultimate beneficiaries that appeared in the proposals and in the final reporting. This does not capture the fluctuating dynamics of persons who left the projects. This was caused mainly by three interrelated factors:

- a) The ultimate beneficiaries finding another type of income (whether in the form of formal or informal jobs). Although we encountered some statements that finding jobs was a direct result of the training provided during the projects, we were not able to verify such statements with concrete evidence.
- b) Disagreement between the implementing organisation or municipality workers and the targeted groups. According to the mayors or project managers, this was usually based on reported unreliability and disciplinary problems of some of the ultimate beneficiaries (such as problems with alcohol). According to the ultimate beneficiaries, this was often an outcome of poor treatment or inadequate working conditions from the side of the implementing organisations.
- c) Local intra-politics and social relationships within the ultimate beneficiaries' groups, as well as between the ultimate beneficiaries and the organisations/municipalities. Some of the drop-outs were caused by inter-personal conflicts.

Although many of the projects were affected by the afore-mentioned circulation of the ultimate beneficiaries, most of these were not reported.

6

Conclusions

So, in the light of the above analysis, to what extent is the practical implementation of the ESF Operational Programme “Employment and Social Inclusion” conducive to the specific needs of the Slovak Roma social inclusion? More specifically, are the interventions under the OP (that are supposed to be reaching Roma communities) indeed reaching those communities? Are the funds nominally allocated for Roma integration indeed spent on addressing the vulnerability of Roma and if they are spent, are they improving the chances of Roma to obtain employment? Did the allocation of the financial resources match the territorial distribution and the scale of the challenges in the country, namely, the distribution and density of the Roma population?

The conclusions are structured along those main questions outlined at the beginning of the study.

6.1. Can a clear link between the project inputs and outcomes be established?

Determining the links between inputs and outcomes – and between projects under individual measures

The analysis of the available project data suggests that it is difficult to establish a clear link between inputs and outcomes and even outputs in the case of most of the projects. The situation is different for the two measures, but for purely definitional reasons.

Projects under Measure 2.1 stand much better in regards to this link, because their very purpose (and expected “output” is providing field social work. The presence of social workers in the field is already an output and from a pure formal perspective, it is easily accountable. As regards outcomes, the situation is a bit vague. One can hardly expect that field social work itself would make a dent in the vulnerability of Roma. It could do that only if field social work is seen as a preparatory layer for other interventions. One of the primary purposes of the field social work is similar to any social assistance –preventing the vulnerable communities from sliding into deeper marginalization. Lifting them out of poverty requires a broad variety of approaches, interventions and funding tools.

Such tools ideally should have been provided by the interventions under Measure 2.2. The available data suggests that interventions under both measures were designed and implemented in parallel with no clear link between the two. This is a missed opportunity, because field social workers could have been used as a resource for the identification of reliable partners in the communities, facilitating the project formulation and supporting the monitoring of the implementation.

Data on the reported outcomes on individual projects exists in the project monitoring reports, but all of them are narratives in pdf format. As a result the reports are descriptive and are loosely related to the outcome indicators envisaged in the project applications and in the project reporting forms. Extracting useful quantitative data out of them would require detailed analysis and processing of each individual report and standardizing. Even if that expensive and time-consuming task is done, the results would still be dubious, given the dubious formulations and definitions used.

The quality of the data infrastructure

Another important reason for the difficulty in establishing clear relationship between project inputs and outputs is the very quality of project-related data that is collected, and the way it is maintained. The current system (both application and monitoring forms) is generating information, but not data. In most cases, this information is interesting but not useful for M&E purposes. One remains with the impression that the designers of the respective forms and the databases of projects in general, have had only a vague idea of how the data generated in the respective fields would be used, and for what purpose – or did not bear in mind the possibility of quantitative analysis at all.

Moreover, it seems that the database was not thought to be a tool useful for M&E purposes. The database is built as a document archiving system with “project inventory” functions. It provides guidance on where to look for detailed documentation on a particular project, but not direct access to that information. Data on the projects (even in the areas where quantitative data exists in the project files) is not machine-readable.

Very few of the fields are useful as a source of quantitative data on the projects, both their inputs, outputs and outcomes. Improving those forms would require a minor investment that could yield significant improvement of the project implementation data infrastructure.

6.2. Did the allocation of the financial resources match the territorial distribution and the scale of the challenges the Roma population is facing?

This question has three mutually complementary aspects. Do the ESF funded projects reduce the regional disparities in Slovakia? Are the localities with higher share of Roma population receiving higher share of ESF funding? If they do receive such funding, does the latter reach the Roma?

The relevance of the “MRC” categorization

There is a fundamental problem both for researchers and policy makers. Any evaluation of policies or development interventions related to Roma raise the question of how to define the ‘Roma universe’. Frequently are questioned: the Roma demography (numbers) and the approach to identification of Roma, whether it should be self-identification or external identification. It is often questioned whether such an identification of Roma does not break the principle of human rights and if it is not against the law.

Concept of the “MRC” is thus a suitable approach and policy-making tool, because it goes beyond sheer demography or ethnicity and circumvents all the above contentious questions. It is in fact a territorially focused concept. It is based on sociological assumption that vulnerable Roma are living in certain territorial “enclaves” - enclaves of social exclusion. The process of defining the MRC (“mapping”) does not investigate individual ethnic identity, but is only taking an “inventory” of settlements. This categorization, however, has certain shortcomings, in that it does not capture Roma who are integrated or who live in non-marginalized communities. However, it is perfectly suitable to evaluate the targeting of developmental interventions.

Territorial “sociographic” mapping of Roma communities in Slovakia has been conducted in 2004 by a consortium that included state administration bodies (the Plenipotentiary of the Government of SR for Roma Communities), and Slovak non-governmental organisations. The MRC mapping is considered to have been a positive, successful and desirable initiative which was clearly a step forward in public policies vis-à-vis the Roma population. Our feeling is that the legitimacy of territorial “sociographic” mapping (and the fact that no stakeholders have cast doubts about it) has become a positive model for a broader consensus concerning practices for data collection in the public interest.

The territorial distribution of the projects and its impact on the disparities among regions

The first of the underlying concepts of the ESF programme is the aim to **reduce disparities among regions**. Working within the framework defined by the European Commission, the Slovak ESF programme seeks to “increase the competitiveness and performance of Slovakia’s regions and of the economy as a whole” by “addressing structural unemployment and regional disparities in employment throughout the country”.

In the structure of the ESF support, the priority of the less-developed regions is reflected by the fact that the most-western Bratislava Region is targeted only with a specific programme with a very limited budget. Based on the methodology of the European Union, which determines the NUT 1 regions’ eligibility based on their economic strength, the rest of Slovakia is a priority region.

Even though all of Slovakia is fully eligible for ESF support, significant differences between Slovakia’s western regions on the one hand, and the eastern and southern region, on the other hand, exist. Despite of these regional disparities, the ESF structure possesses no systematic instrument that would steer investments to the regions or municipalities that are most in need of support. The analysis of the data from the sample of projects suggests that, on the contrary, people in such locations benefit from ESF funds even less than the inhabitants in average localities. Using spending per Roma inhabitant as an indicator, the investments were highest in some districts of western Slovakia, suggesting that other factors influence the allocation of ESF funding apart from the real needs. More importantly, the analysis showed that the chances to benefit from ESF support correlate with the size of the municipality – the smaller it is, the less likely it is to get targeted by ESF funding. Another important finding is related to the different situation of regions in a similar situation, namely Košice and Prešov Regions. Despite similarities, they differ greatly in their ability to attract ESF funds for Roma inclusion.

Even though it would require additional research to identify the causes of these inequalities, it is clear that the complexity of the administration of ESF funds plays a pivotal role. Developing the project and administrating the grants requires a high level of know-how and experience. One consequence of this phenomenon are small municipalities that lack the capacities to develop and implement projects; another is the role of subjects of various types, which specialize in the acquisition of European funds and support municipalities with the administration of funds or realize their own projects. Even though this study dealt not in detail with the costs of these arrangements, it was an often heard complaint of project-implementing organisations that the involvement of intermediaries would lead to rising costs.

Are the localities with higher share of Roma population receiving higher share of ESF funding?

The majority of Roma in Slovakia live in the less-developed eastern and southern regions of Slovakia, which are, according to the above-mentioned rules, fully eligible. However, it should at least be mentioned that there is a small concentration of Roma in the rural Malacky District of Bratislava Region. Roma are found in 17 municipalities of this region. In the case of five municipalities, the share of Roma is in the range of 10 – 23 per cent. Due to their location in the Bratislava Region, none of these municipalities was able to apply for ESF support for social field work or realize other MRC-relevant activities within the axis 2, even though the data from the Atlas (2004) indicates that the level of segregation in this district and the entire Bratislava Region (index = 1.7) is higher than in the other regions of Western Slovakia (Trenčín Region: 0.8; Nitra Region: 1.1; Trnava Region: 1.0).²⁸

This observation leads to an important insight. Even though the concentration of segregated settlements in eastern Slovakia implies a direct correlation between the living conditions of Roma and the situation of the surrounding economy, such correlations are neither automatic nor universal. Economic development offers opportunities (especially informal employment) also for those on the margins, and it can also be associated with specific threats, such as rising costs for housing. Economic factors can also lose significance due to historical factors, such as the development of the ethnic settlement pattern, the local housing and employment policies during the socialist period, or the fate of the local Roma community during the period of persecution in the first Slovak State (1938 – 1945), which led to path-dependencies. If investments are to reach those Roma communities in the greatest need, territorial criteria need to be developed not from general data on socio-economic conditions, but on the basis of the mapping of the concrete conditions within the Roma community. As has been demonstrated in this report, the dataset of the Atlas of Roma Communities (2004, update planned for 2012) is an extremely helpful tool for this purpose. The allocation formula for the structural funds should reflect the map of socio-economic conditions at the level of the municipality.

The matching of the data from the Atlas, with the data from the sample, showed that there are considerable differences in regard to the territorial distribution of two groups of projects that are listed as being relevant for marginalized Roma communities. Whereas projects realized within action 2.1 (social work) targeted municipalities that had a higher share of Roma and a higher unemployment rate than the average of municipalities included in the Atlas, the opposite is true for the projects realized under action 2.2 (training and employment projects), where the Roma were in many cases just one of several target groups. As designed, Measure 2.2 has implicit structural characteristics that skew the potential pool of ultimate beneficiaries towards those already

²⁸ However, these municipalities are eligible to apply for ESF funding under the axis 3 of relevant OP.

employable – a group that is not overrepresented among the Roma. Due to imprecise indicators, it was impossible to determine in the framework of this study, what share of the ultimate beneficiaries of these projects were in fact Roma. However such data is necessary when resource allocation is in question. In such cases data from various sources should be used (and not just the information from the census or from the Atlas). Information from qualitative research needs to be integrated with data from quantitative surveys and administrative records. GIS methodologies should be used more creatively for targeting vulnerable groups without “counting” them through controversial one-dimensional approaches.

The results of the field study showed that it is beneficial if employment/training projects are prepared in cooperation, and later accompanied by social field work in the locality. Possibly, better results could have been achieved if such synergies would have been sought in a systematic way.

Implications for Roma employability

While the ESF continues to finance programmes for the access of vulnerable groups, the priority of the current programming period are investments into **the adaptability of workers and businesses**. In case of the Slovak OP “Employment and Social Inclusion”, the first priority axis “Employment Growth” aims to support this objective. By far the largest share of resources was invested into this framework. A large share of the resources invested under this scheme went to private companies that sought to expand their staff or increase the skills of their workforce. As noticed in the analysis of the project data, Roma benefited from the projects realized under this priority axis only to a negligible extent. There are a few projects listed as relevant for marginalized Roma communities, yet this relevance is based on the fact that a single employee is from this group. In addition to this, the documentation did not allow verification of whether Roma were in fact employed, as this information had not the character of binding indicators.

In view of the exclusion of the Slovak Roma minority from the formal labour markets, it is not surprising that Roma are not benefiting from projects that seek to improve the skills of those that are already employed. From the perspective of the Roma, and other groups of long-term unemployed, programmes with such an intention do the opposite, that is deepen the skill gap between those inside and outside of the formal labour market. At least theoretically, the Roma and other vulnerable groups might benefit in the future from the positive impact of such projects on the targeted regions’ economic performances. However, in view of the very difficult position of the Roma on the labour market, it is unclear whether such a “trickle-down effect” would, without other forms of intervention, reach the Roma at all.

As outlined above, the ESF priority during the current 2007-2013 period is to increase adaptability of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs by improving the anticipation and positive management of economic change. In addition to this, the ESF still addresses **employment issues and works to prevent social exclusion and combat discrimination**.

In Slovakia, the ESF programme puts in this regard particular emphasis on the inclusion of Roma, which are rightly identified as a particularly vulnerable part of the population. Roma were targeted by two different types of activities. The first type is the social field work (financed under Measure 2.1), which did not directly address employment issues. The second type are the training and employment projects (financed under Measure 2.2), which sought to improve the position of unemployed Roma (and other beneficiaries) on the labour market by improving their skills. As outlined above, the territorial distribution of these projects is, at least from the perspective of the Roma, a questionable issue, as great resources were invested into locations where the Roma are not a significant minority. The documentation accessed in these cases often did not allow establishing what share of the ultimate beneficiaries were Roma.

The objective of the field research undertaken for the purpose of this study in the Prešov Region was not to verify to what extent Roma were in fact targeted, but to study the impact of training and employment projects that were realized in municipalities with large Roma communities. The most important, alas sobering, finding was that only a very small number of the ultimate beneficiaries of the studied projects ended up with finding employment in the official economy. Due to this disappointment, a significant number of the interviewed ultimate beneficiaries assessed the trainings very negatively as a "waste of time", from which benefited only those who provided the trainings, instead of the ultimate beneficiaries. Why did the projects fail to meet the initial expectations? First, it is necessary to be aware of the current economic environment in Eastern Slovakia, where the economic crisis has led to the loss of many working places. As the challenge of unemployment is by far not limited to the Roma, the situation is especially difficult for the Roma, which cannot present themselves with a successful employment record. While a training certificate might prove decisive in another economic environment, the barriers in the current situation are too great for such a certificate to make a difference.

That being said, it seems necessary to think of the skill-based approach also in broader terms and question some of its underlying assumptions. While there can be no doubts that the low educational background of Roma and the lack of formal employment records are important factors that impede Roma access to employment, the findings of the field research clearly suggested that it would be misleading to explain the exclusion of Roma from the labour market only due to educational deficits or other cultural features of the Roma. Repeatedly, the researchers were assured by mayors that some of the ultimate beneficiaries would

be excellent and motivated workers, which would nevertheless remain with no chances on the labour market because they are Roma. It seems remarkable that the summary of the Slovak ESF goals avoids the term – discrimination – which is used by the European Commission in their description of the general goals. The authors of this report propose to comprehend integration as a process where both sides – those inside, and those outside or on the margins of society (or, more specifically, the labour market) will have to change their attitudes and actions. Of course, such a change cannot be simply dictated from above. However, the crucial importance of structural funds for the economy of many Slovak regions might offer the chance to stimulate developments in the right direction. Companies bidding for tenders financed from EU Structural Funds could for example be asked to demonstrate that the composition of their staff reflects the ethnic composition of their municipality or region. While such measures will certainly be unpopular, it clearly is not effective to train Roma, if there is at the same time no will by the private sector to overcome negative preconceptions of the Roma.

While there were only single cases of Roma that managed to find formal employment, in some locations the trainings seemed to have an important role in the municipal approach towards the local Roma. Mayors explained that the trainings would improve the performance of the Roma within the public work programmes managed by the municipality, which are in some municipalities used to realize quite complex investments into public property, such as the upgrading of schools, the building of a municipal hall, the improvement of public spaces, or the building of flood protections. As outlined in the previous chapter, these municipal public works do have a number of positive aspects, such as the improvement of the Roma workers' chances on the informal labour market or the bettering of inter-ethnic relations thanks to the demonstrated "usefulness" of the Roma for the entire community. However, the study identified also a number of risks, which are mostly linked to the highly dominant position of the mayors, who exercise control about many aspects of the Roma and can decide quite arbitrary which of the local Roma "deserves" to be offered employment (housing, training, etc.). The dominant position of the municipalities/mayors is best described as a dilemma: On the one side the municipality is (unlike NGOs) a stable and at the same time local institution, which is able to use sources from various funding schemes to implement a long-term plan; on the other side, the monopolist position of the municipality leads to a highly dependent relationship between the municipality (represented by the mayor) and the Roma, which comes along with a risk of misuse and arbitrariness. In addition to this, it has to be realized that there are municipalities that are unwilling or not capable of realizing project-funded integration activities.

While municipalities should have a key role in any integration strategy, the state is, for the mentioned reasons, well-advised not to concentrate all competences in the hands of the mayors, but develop a system where several types of institutions co-operate.

7

Recommendations

Most of the recommendations outlined below stem directly from the current study and its findings. They are not limited however just to those findings and benefit from broader knowledge about Roma inclusion that exists and is relevant to the specific topic of ESF projects and their implications. When such knowledge is referred to, it is done for the purpose of “opening up the issue” – and taking the ESF results-orientation of Roma targeted interventions out of the narrow perspective of only “ESF funded” funded projects. It is also important to note that although most of the recommendations are explicitly oriented at the ESF funded projects, they are applicable to other structural funds as well.

7.1. Towards results-oriented ESF implementing structures and procedures

Results orientation will be a major eligibility and assessment criterion for the next programming period. The results of the study suggest that much can be done in this direction – and at relatively low cost. At least three suggestions emerge in this regard: simplification of the ESF application procedures, improvement of the application and monitoring forms making them “meaningful data generation tools” and genuine involvement of Roma communities in the entire process of implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Streamlining the administrative structures and simplifying the rules

The visits to projects revealed that difficulties with the administration of the funds leads to massive problems. These problems do not only affect the projects’ implementation negatively, but threaten in many cases the future existence of the institutions that were awarded the grants. Most of the interviewed project-implementing organisations reported serious problems, due to the changes in conditions, which on the side of the ministry led to the refusal to recover parts of incurred costs. Changes concerned both the choice of approved project activities and their costs.

It has to be emphasized that any change of contractual relations is very much a non-standard procedure. The reported changes were problematic, as these changes were

imposed even on intermediary financial reports, which had previously been accepted. For example, approved fees were said to be too high in the initially approved projects, and the implementing organisations were often refused payment of the approved sums (often after the activity was already implemented and agreed upon with the subcontractor). Although there was 'transition period' for organisations to comply with new 'costs limits' and although the approved sums in the projects were never fixed but only (real prices should be the 'best' prices in given time and space) it might harm the project-implementing organisations, paralyzed many projects and undermine the basis for a trustful relationship between project-implementing organisations and the administration. The changes in conditions were introduced in two steps with certain transition period. They were also both published on the ESF website and delivered to project-implementing organisation by email. However, all these measures were perceived as insufficient by respondents who often complained not to be informed in an appropriate way. Should they be informed, as mentioned by respondents during the field visits, properly it would have allowed for modifying the project realization in a way that would comply with the new regulations.

We strongly recommend, first of all, that the entire process is critically revisited in order to minimize unintended damages. This critical review should also assess the enormous problems the ESF funds beneficiaries experienced, which neither appeared overtly overpriced nor were in any way fraudulent. We do further recommend making use of an independent third party (e.g. ombudsperson or appointed mediator) to oversee the communications between the ministry and the project-implementing organisations – the ESF funds beneficiaries.

A second important problem is the complexity of the administrative rules. As a consequence, many potential applicants lack the capacity to apply for ESF funding or are able to manage ESF grants only with professional support, which significantly increases the costs of the actions.

Another likely outcome is a problematic specialization on the side of the applicants for the ESF funds (the project-implementing organisations), which are not in all cases the organisations known for their expertise in the field of Roma inclusion, yet rather unknown subjects that specialize on the administrative side of the project realization. While this form of specialization might help to minimize administrative difficulties, it seems unlikely that this type of recipient of the grant is well-disposed to realize the project in the very specific environment of the Roma community, to achieve interventions with long-lasting results.

The complexity of the administrative agenda contributes also to delays on the side of the ministry, which lacks the capacities to timely control all financial reports.

Even though Slovakia choose not to make use of this option, already the 2007 - 2013 the ESF Regulations included the possibility to reimburse indirect costs on the basis of

a flat rate, making it possible to pay for operations based on outputs and results rather than financial input. This would at the same time allow shifting the focus of the monitoring process from the monitoring of spending to the monitoring of results.

We strongly recommend that Slovakia, in the next Operational Programme, will make use of this opportunity – the country has already taken first steps towards this system (although unluckily introducing it in the middle of the projects' implementation). The most important precondition for a successful transition to a lump-sum-based system is a rigid analysis of the costs of various types of actions (e.g. vocational training per day/participant, computer training per day/participant, creation of temporary working place per month/person, internships abroad per month and person). The resulting "catalogue of costs" should further reflect the setting of the action (rural/urban), costs for transportation of the ultimate beneficiaries, the size of the groups, and the place of origin of providers of services (to reflect transportation and accommodation costs).

An important precondition for the functioning of a lump-sum based system will be the creation of strong incentives regarding the quality of the actions. While the assessment of outcomes (e.g. number of trained participants that found employment) looks, in principle, like a good approach, the incentives have to be formulated in a way that does not motivate project-implementing organisations to refuse already at the project start stage, those ultimate beneficiaries, who are likely to be difficult to place. We recommend thoroughly studying the experiences of EU member states that have already made use of lump-sums in the on-going Programming period (e.g. Finland (starting in 2012), some German federal states (since 2011)). This study must not be limited to ESF-funding, as similar quality-control mechanisms were, for example, used by some member states in order to assess performance of schools (which are, by the way, also in Slovakia "lump-sum" financed institutions!).

Smarter reporting and monitoring forms that generate meaningful data

The results of the study suggest that the M&E infrastructure can be improved through improving the administrative procedures, reporting formats and the scope of responsibilities of the structures that already exist (namely the field social workers). Such changes would not require dramatic investments or fundamental changes in the existing procedures, thus they could be operationally feasible and cost-effective.

One immediate area of possible change is changing the application and reporting forms so that the targeting (definition of "MRC-relevant") is improved. The project category "**relevance for marginalized Roma communities**" is on the one side very vague and contains projects of very different characters.²⁹ Especially in case of older projects, which were written before the change of indicators took place, it is often impossible to find out how many Roma were actually reached. The category's open-

ness is, on the other side, an advantage, as it allows taking notice also of projects, where Roma are only one of several target groups. The open character also provides an incentive for applicants to consider the possibility to reflect Roma concerns in cases where the project's main objective is different.

Striving to maintain the open character's advantages, while achieving more clarity about future projects' character and the way they define and reach the ultimate beneficiaries, we suggest simple improvement in the project application forms, which would improve their informational value. More specifically,

- In the application form, the applicants claiming that their project is contributing to the horizontal priority "marginalized Roma communities", should be asked to provide an explanation of how exactly marginalized Roma communities will be targeted (directly or indirectly). Namely, is the group of the ultimate beneficiaries mixed or homogeneous; what is the estimated percentage of Roma among the ultimate beneficiaries (so that a realistic estimate is provided – and not simply the population data for the respective settlement). If the project does not target Roma directly, it should be described how it would benefit the Roma. Detailed samples of the possible forms and questions can be developed as a follow-up to this research.
- In addition to this, project-implementing organisations should at the end of the project realization provide a detailed overview of the composition of the targeted group of persons. One way of doing this would be to create a form that links information on the features of the ultimate beneficiaries (X axis: e.g. Roma, long-term unemployed, disabled, men, women) with information on the type of involvement (Y axis: e.g. training, job created, user of services).

Having the data is not sufficient – making good use of data is equally important. Currently the Ministry stores a lot of information in electronic form. However, the system in its current form allows for directly exporting only fractions of this information directly into tables, which could be analysed with excel or statistical software. Accordingly, the analysis of the sample conducted for this study was possible only through the highly time-consuming manual copying of data from pdf documents into new excels tables. It would be highly desirable to establish a list of project-related key data and indicators, which can be exported directly from the database.

29 The analysis showed that MRC relevance tended to mean something different in different funding lines. While Roma represented at best a small percentage of the ultimate beneficiaries of the projects funded under priority axis 1 and examined for this study, all ultimate beneficiaries tend to be Roma in the social field work projects funded under Measure 2.1. In case of Measure 2.2., the involvement of Roma differs from project to project. Of the 39 projects with meaningful indicators, 15 per cent targeted only Roma while in 43% of these projects the majority of the ultimate beneficiaries were not Roma. In the case of six projects (15%), less than 15 per cent of the ultimate beneficiaries were Roma.

Another important aspect is better **tracking of the outputs of project activities**. On the one hand, this can be done in a cost-efficient way through improving the administrative reporting forms. On the other, the outcome-focused M&E infrastructure can be improved through involving the ultimate beneficiaries and the field social workers in the process. The new role of the latter is described in the next section; as regards the ultimate beneficiaries, their involvement in the outcome-level monitoring and evaluation can bring huge benefits beyond just data.

Active involvement of the Roma communities in the entire project implementation and M&E cycle

“Nothing for Roma without Roma” has turned into a standard mantra, but is rarely materialized in reality. Monitoring the results of Roma-targeted interventions can be an ideal opportunity for Roma involvement. A broad range of community-level observation and reporting techniques exist, making possible the involvement of the people that are supposed to be targeted. Available technology hugely expands the scope of such techniques (like “Really simple reporting” or community observers). Institutionalizing such role and including it as part of the ESF conditionality (currently being discussed) can provide a powerful leverage for increasing the responsibility of the organisations implementing Roma targeted projects (ESF funding beneficiaries), and at the same time, will provide an opportunity for constructive feedback on the meaningfulness of projects. What is more important, active Roma involvement can be a building block for transformation of the ultimate beneficiaries from a “target group” into empowered actors. This would contribute to overcoming the dependency culture and social marginalization, and thus in the long run magnifying the long-term impact of the implemented projects.

Hearing the voices of the organisations implementing the projects (the beneficiaries of the ESF funding) is also important. The existing procedures for monitoring and evaluation focus, to a large extent, on administrative procedures. According to the project-implementing organisations interviewed, the ESF managing authority did not encourage them to provide feedback concerning their satisfaction with the functioning of the funding procedures. In view of the very serious problems that were reported by most of the interviewed recipients of the grants, this appears to be a serious deficit. The managing authority should therefore develop procedures to regularly measure the satisfaction of project-implementing organisations with the administrative procedures that could help identify, in a timely manner, emerging difficulties before they evolve into problems of systemic character.

The managing authority of the ESF also lacks, to this point, procedures to assess the outcome of the supported projects. Apparently, the present study represents one of the first attempts in this direction. In order to identify what kind of methods are successful, methods for the measuring of outcomes should be developed. As the study

revealed, considerable differences exist between the perspectives of project-implementing organisations (especially mayors) and the ultimate beneficiaries, thus it seems especially important to find ways to integrate the beneficiary perspective into the framework for the monitoring of projects. Suitable methods could be: interviews with the ultimate beneficiaries and focus groups, both during the project realization and after its conclusion. As the ultimate beneficiaries tend to be in highly dependent positions, in respect to the owners of municipal projects, it is absolutely necessary to realize such interviews in the absence of mayors and other municipal workers.

As a general recommendation, the development and implementation of suitable evaluation and monitoring structures should be done in partnership with various institutions, such as universities, research-focussed NGOs or international organisations.

7.2. A new role for field social workers

Field social workers are doing tremendously important work, but it is too biased towards social assistance. Often they are providing a basic social safety net to people facing the real challenges of exclusion and marginalization. This activity is very important and it is important to have it maintained as a form of basic social safety. At the same time, it is regrettable that these activities, which should be considered an elementary service for a group of inhabitants with specific needs, are not directly financed from the Slovak state budget. The project-type of funding, which comes along with higher administrative demands and limited durations, is not well-suited to finance activities that need to be realized continuously over a longer period of time in order to bring the best results.

The authors also think that deliberate efforts are necessary to boost the development and inclusive aspects of this work. This can be done in a number of ways.

One is to **boost the field social workers' role in monitoring and evaluation**, and thus contribute to the individual interventions' orientation towards results. The field social workers are currently a huge potential – still underused – asset in that regard. They are present in the field and have first-hand information both on the status of the community as well as on the available social and human capital. They simply know (or should know) who is who in the communities and could be the liaison with the ultimate beneficiaries. They can play more explicit role as information sources on the status of the communities. Quantitative data collection on the status of the Roma communities has always been a weak aspect of Roma-targeted interventions – only partially offset by the Atlas of Roma Communities and its update (due to be completed in 2013). **Field social workers can be used as local level data collectors**, updating the data from the Atlas on an on-going basis (on some basic indicators at least). They could be also more effective in collecting informa-

tion on the outcomes of different interventions (and on the presence of different implementing agents) in a given territory. This data can be one of the many independent sources of information necessary for building a comprehensive picture of the community, required for comprehensive M&E.

Second, in addition to more explicit role in the monitoring and evaluation, the field social workers should have **more explicit role in the design of the employment and income generation targeted projects**. They should not be part of the implementing structures – but should be used as a resource and a source of knowledge on community dynamics, possible internal conflicts of interests and other patterns that could have an impact on the projects' success. Currently the communities of the ultimate beneficiaries are treated as 'black boxes' and opening them up is necessary for the success of interventions in the long run.

Independent of this discussion, we would like to suggest involving the social workers into the social work micro-grant schemes, which proved to be a successful tool to mobilize citizens of excluded communities. In order to prevent these activities from unintentionally deepening ethnic frictions, we suggest that these micro-grants could be given for activities that are beneficial for the local community, to members of the minority and majority alike.

7.3. Blending mainstreamed and targeted approaches

The European Commission is explicit that Roma concerns should be "mainstreamed". The goal of the EU is not to create separate programmes for Roma, but to pay special attention to the particular situation of the Roma within all relevant EU policies. The reality however is usually more nuanced. As has been outlined in the statistical analysis of the project data, the Slovak ESF programme failed to stick to this principle. The vast majority of the MRC-relevant projects were realized within the two actions of the priority axis "Social Inclusion", while the share of Roma among the ultimate beneficiaries of projects realized in the first priority axis – "Growth of employment" was very low. There was, however, a large number of training projects realized under Measure 2.2 that targeted both Roma and non-Roma.

All this suggests that the answer to the question "Shall we prioritize targeted or mainstream approaches?" is – "Both, depending on the specific circumstances". The analysis has shown that different communities are facing different challenges and blending both approaches is a key for successful and sustainable inclusion of Roma populations. For that purpose adopting the four major principles outlined below could help the projects under the OPs in the next programming period achieve better outcomes for the Roma:

Explicit focus on segregated communities

The ESF programme divides Slovakia in two types of regions. While the Bratislava Region is considered to be too developed to qualify for the highest level of support, all the rest of Slovakia is considered a priority region. This division disregards that there are very significant differences on the level of sub-regions and localities. As demonstrated the usage of a segregation index, which was developed for this study on the basis of data from the Atlas of Slovak Roma Communities (2004), the differences in terms of development are in particular great in the case of Roma settlements. **Mainstreaming the use of the segregation index (or of some similar instrument) is recommended in the future, for both targeting of projects as well as for evaluation of the projects' outcomes.** An instrument like this index can be also used for the implementation of the anticipated Roma targeting conditionality of the structural funds in the next programming period.

The analysis of the project data showed that only the projects realized in Measure 2.1 were concentrated in municipalities where the share of Roma and the unemployment rate is higher than in the average of municipalities with Roma inhabitants. One way of achieving that the available resources will be better targeted to places where a larger amount of Roma live, could be to fund Roma-targeting training and employment projects primarily as follow-ups to social work projects. In addition to this, the data from the Atlas of Roma Communities (2004, to be updated in 2012) and other municipal level data could be sources of data for such assessments. The segregation/underdevelopment index developed and applied in this paper could be one of the methods used for this purpose.

At the same time, it seems necessary to warn about a policy that would steer all resources to those locations where conditions are the worst, as this might be perceived as a form of punishment against those municipalities that avoided segregationist policies in the past. One possible approach to tackle these dilemmas might be to **develop tailor made funding schemes for different types of Roma beneficiaries.** While a programme for the inhabitants of highly segregated communities (whose chances to become integrated on the regular labour market are the lowest) could create employment through activities linked to the upgrading of the segregated settlement (upgrading of housing, paving of streets, water supply), the programmes for inhabitants of less segregated locations could be ethnically mixed and aim for the inclusion of the Roma in the regular economy.

In regard to employment, the projects sought to minimize the entrance barrier by investing into the skills of the Roma. Even though the number of visited projects is too small to make the study's findings fully representative, the study revealed that the success of this strategy is limited. In the opinion of the authors, such programmes underestimate the importance of other factors that contribute to the exclusion of Roma from formal employment. We want to mention, in particular, the

widespread discrimination and the depressed condition of many local labour markets, and also the complicated interplay with welfare and social security.

As those responsible for the programme are not in the position to change the parameters of the entire social system, in the following section we will **recommend a number of measurements, with the intention to improve the results of the employment projects:**

Mainstream the concern for Roma through conditionalities for the usage of EU structural funds in all funding lines

EU funds do play a very significant role in the local and regional economics of the less-developed regions of Slovakia. While the resources of the ESF could be used to prepare Roma for employment, the funding from other EU programmes should be spent under the condition that the contractors of EU-financed construction projects demonstrate that the composition of their workforce reflects the ethnic composition of the district where the investment is taking place. This soft version of affirmative action might be politically more acceptable than policies that are directly intervening in the contract relationships between private subjects. To increase political acceptance, this rule could be part of a more general rule, according to which a certain share of the workforce for EU-financed construction works has to be recruited locally to ensure that part of the benefit will stay in the targeted area.

A possible alternative to this ethnic approach could be a request that the recipients of the ESF grants, realizing projects in disadvantaged districts, need to make use of the labour provided by municipal companies (*obecné firmy*), which employ local long-term unemployed.

Mainstreaming of policies so that Roma benefit as well

From the point of view of the authors of this report, the idea to reflect the needs of Roma in all EU-funded activities is a good and important one. This applies in particular to all activities that generate employment. For this reason, it appears as a major weakness that Roma concerns were mostly ignored in the case of the priority axis "Growth of employment".

However, at the same time, it is important to stress that the mainstreaming of Roma concerns will not be sufficient if the Roma issue in Slovakia should be addressed effectively. The living conditions of many Roma differ, especially in the segregated settlements, radically from the conditions of the majority population. There can be no doubt that specific tools are necessary to address the problems of the minority. One of these tools is the social field work, which was financially supported by the

ESF in the form of projects realized under Measure 2.1. All interviewed stakeholders confirmed that the presence of social workers is one important precondition for the successful addressing of other needs. Unfortunately, the project-based way of financing these essential services often leads to discontinuities, which can greatly reduce the effect of the work. Therefore the maximum should be done to allow these programmes to function on a continuous basis.

Support of complex municipal projects

In the given economic environment, the most realistic legal job opportunities for Roma are programmes administrated by their home municipality. The project visits realized for this study demonstrated that many mayors developed noticeable skills in using this workforce for the improvement of the municipal infrastructure at low costs. These projects seemed successful in improving the image of the local Roma community, as the Roma are seen to be beneficial for the community. While such an effect is certainly highly desirable, it seems at the same time recommendable to impose rules according to which, the Roma part of the municipality will also benefit from these public works.

We further propose to encourage municipalities (and possibly also NGOs that are able to demonstrate sufficient experiences and capacities for such a complex task) to come up with project proposals for more complex employment projects. Key features of such projects would be:

- being prepared on and supported by (earlier and parallel) social field work
- long duration of 5 years or longer
- combination of training and employment
- gradual reduction of ESF-support in order to encourage efficiency and market-oriented choice of products and services
- partnership with local companies (where possible)

To summarize, ESF – and any other – interventions should be driven by pragmatic common sense – and not by abstract ideological arguments. The answer to the question “What works?” should precede the question “What to do?” The decision in each individual case (locality and/or a project) should be driven by this pragmatic criterion – what approach yields tangible results and helps lift the people out of poverty and marginalization. In order to achieve that though, clear results orientation is a must. This obvious idea emerges as the overarching conclusion of the entire study.

Annexes

Table A-1: Division of costs within projects (mean values calculated on basis of sample)

Measure/ Number of projects		Realized budget – total:	Realized budget: - Costs of trainings	Realized budget: - Costs of social field work	Realized budget: - Costs of project management	Realized budget: - Costs of public relations
2.1/213	Total:	930,1076 € (100%)	101,778 € (0.1%)	8,746,117 € (94.0%)	312,246 € (3.4%)	152,751 € (1.6%)
	Mean:	45,371 €	48 €	42,457 €	1,494 €	717 €
	Max:	133,267 €	10,177.8 €	127,568 €	16,783 €	10,819 €
	Min:	1,784 €	0 €	1,784 €	0 €	0 €
2.2/74	Total:	8,869,572 € (100%)	7,555,435 € (85.2%)	16,530 € (0.2%)	1,075,057 € (12.1%)	222,911 € (2.5%)
	Mean:	119,859 €	103,499 €	223 €	14,528 €	3,012 €
	Max:	376,247 €	336,686 €	14,731 €	54,546 €	27,144 €
	Min:	13,500 €	10,178 €	0	389 €	0 €
All priorities and actions/287	Total:	18,170,648 €	7,602,434 € (41.8%)	8,762,647 € (48.2%)	1,390,288 (7.6%)	376,035 (2.0%)
	Mean:	65,128 €	26,489 €	31,295 €	4,895 €	1,306 €
	Max:	376,247 €	336,686 €	127,568 €	54,546 €	27,144 €
	Min:	1,784 €	0	0	0	0

Source of data: Own calculations based on documentation of projects included in project sample. Only project documentations that include a final report were included in the calculation. The sum in the realized budget is the sum spent by the recipient of the grant according to the final report. This sum can differ from the expenses that were recognized as eligible by the Ministry.

Table A-2: Project budgets and size of target groups

Action/Number of projects		Contracted budget	Realized budget (% of contracted budget)	Number of Participants	Costs per participant (based on realized budget)
2.1/213	Total:	11,660,518 €	9,301,076 € (79.8%)	143,639	
	Mean:	56,604 €	45,371 € (80.2%)	678	65 €
	Max:	320,906 €	133,267 € (41.5%)	7,428	1,593 €
	Min:	13,467 €	1,784 € (13.2%)	20	2 €
2.2/74	Total:	11,767,958 €	8,869,572 € (75.4%)	5,490	
	Mean:	159,026 €	119,859 € (75.4%)	74	1,615 €
	Max:	365,500 €	376,247 € (102.9%)	618	12,417 €
	Min:	17,095 €	13,500 € (79.0%)	0 ³⁰	99 €
All priorities and actions/287	Total:	23,107,570 €	18,170,648 € (77.6%)	149,137	
	Mean:	82,823 €	65,128 € (77.8%)	516	122 €
	Max:	365,500 €	376,247 € (102.9%)	7,428	12,417 €
	Min:	13,467 €	1,784 € (13.2%)	0	2 €

Source of data: Own calculations based on documentation of projects included in project sample. Only project documentations that include a final report were included in the calculation. The sum in the realized budget is the sum spent by the recipient of the grant according to the final report. This sum can differ from the expenses that were recognized as eligible by the Ministry.

30 This value refers to one part of a larger project (No. 27120230040) that was realized in several villages. As explained in the methodology, in the table projects that were realized in several locations are split up and divided among these locations. In three villages, the trainings had to be cancelled as it proved impossible to find participants.

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ATLAS RÓMSKÝCH KOMUNITÍ NA SLOVENSKU 2013

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ATLAS rómskych komunít na Slovensku 2013

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Náklad 200 ks

4. APLIKAČNÉ MOŽNOSTI ÚDAJOV Z ATLASU

4.1. Index segregácie a podrozvinutosti

Štúdia *Nejasný výsledok: pomohli projekty Európskeho sociálneho fondu Rómom na Slovensku?*¹⁴, ktorá porovnáva údaje z *Atlasu 2004* s údajmi o distribúcii projektov z ESF v programovacom období 2007–2013 ukázala, že len relatívne malý podiel projektov, ktoré boli označené ako relevantné pre marginalizované rómske komunity (MRK), naozaj smerovalo priamo k Rómom. Štúdia prišla s radom ďalších zaujímavých poznatkov:

- Existujú regióny a konkrétne lokality s relatívne malou početnosťou Rómov, ktoré však boli v projektovej dokumentácii projektov financovaných z Európskeho sociálneho fondu (ESF) uvedené ako "MRK relevantné", a ktoré predstavovali značný objem finančných prostriedkov. Napriek tomu, že celkový objem vynakladaných finančných prostriedkov bol vyšší vo východných a južných regiónoch Slovenska, kde žije väčšina Rómov, ak sa "výdavky na MRK" vyjadria ako podiel na osobu (počet Rómov žijúcich v danom regióne podľa odhadov Atlasu 2004), sú tieto omnoho vyššie v niektorých západných regiónoch Slovenska ako na východe krajiny.
- Aj v oblastiach s početnou rómskou populáciou existujú veľmi významné rozdiely, pokiaľ ide o množstvo peňazí, ktoré boli použité na „rómskej projekty“.
- Len relatívne malé množstvo projektov zamestnanosti bolo realizovaných v malých obciach so segregovanými rómskymi osídleniami a vidiecke oblasti regiónu s druhým najväčším počtom Rómov (Košický kraj) dosahovali veľmi nízke hodnoty, čo sa týka výdavkov na osobu.

Z metodologického hľadiska štúdia *Nejasný výsledok* ukázala, že *Atlas rómskych komunít 2004* a následne aj *Atlas 2013* obsahuje veľmi užitočné údaje, ktoré možno následne použiť pri ďalších analýzach a hodnoteniach týkajúcich sa Rómov na Slovensku. Súbor údajov *Atlasu rómskych komunít* obsahuje najrôznejšie informácie, ktoré možno využiť napríklad na vyhodnotenie použitia finančných prostriedkov smerujúcich na zlepšenie situácie Rómov ako to bolo v prípade štúdie *Nejasný výsledok*, ale aj na plánovanie rozvojových investícií alebo na distribúciu finančných prostriedkov verejných rozpočtov práve do tých miest a obcí, ktoré to najviac potrebujú. Stanovenie kritérií pre plánovanie a alokáciu finančných prostriedkov založené na relevantných údajoch o situácii v tej-ktorej lokalite je predpokladom pre efektívne vynakladanie verejných prostriedkov na riešenie problémov spojených so sociálnym vylúčením. Táto kapitola uvádza príklad indexu vytvoreného na základe údajov z *Atlasu 2013* (Index segregácie a podrozvinutosti), ktorý by mohol byť použitý ako takéto výberové kritérium. Text uvádza príklad Indexu zostaveného z informácií o jednotlivých lokalitách zameraných na štrukturálne aspekty situácie v obci. Cieľom tejto kapitoly je súčasne naznačiť, že prerozdelenie fondov na báze indexu môže mať svoje obmedzenia. Kým aplikácia Indexu môže byť veľmi užitočná na to, aby sa výdavky distribuovali cielenejšie, mali by sme si byť vedomí aj potenciálnych nevýhod, ku ktorým by mohlo dôjsť najmä vtedy, ak sú nástroje aplikované príliš mechanicky.

Ako bolo už skôr spomenuté, široký rozsah informácií v *Atlas 2013* je veľmi užitočný tak pre účely výskumu ako aj tvorby politik. Avšak, veľký rozsah dát môže spôsobiť aj problémy. Ak použijeme konštrukciu kompozitného indexu, je potrebné starostlivo zvážiť, ktoré informácie z databázy do neho zahrnieme. Výber informácií (indikátorov) závisí primárne od tematického zamerania indexu a účelu jeho ďalšieho použitia. Nasledujúci text sa zameriava na údaje štruktú-

rálneho charakteru (najmä teda týkajúcich sa fyzickej infraštruktúry), ale informácie v databáze *Atlasu 2013* by mohli byť využité podobným spôsobom aj pri posudzovaní vzdelávacej infraštruktúry alebo dostupnosti sociálnych služieb.

Aj po zadefinovaní tématického zamerania kompozitného indexu by bolo zavádzajúce zahrnúť do neho všetky informácie, ktoré k zvolenej téme máme v databáze k dispozícii. Zároveň je dôležité si uvedomiť, že mnohé informácie treba vidieť v špecifickom kontexte lokálnych podmienok. Napríklad samotný fakt absencie autobusovej zastávky pri segregovanej rómskej osade môže v niektorých prípadoch znamenať diskrimináciu v prístupe k verejným službám. V iných prípadoch však môže znamenať, že s jej inštaláciou bol nejaký stavebný problém, alebo že nebol vysporiadaný pozemok, na ktorom mala byť zastávka umiestnená, alebo že je aj pre Rómov dobre dostupná v rámci obce. V mnohých prípadoch správna interpretácia informácie uvedenej v *Atlasu 2013* závisí od lokálneho kontextu a teda existenciu určitého typu infraštruktúry možno posúdiť len v rámci celkovej situácie tej-ktorej obce. Ďalším príkladom rôznych možností interpretácie údajov z *Atlasu 2013* je informácia o existencii tzv. hygienického centra. V prípade, že obyvatelia lokality nemajú inú možnosť prístupu k tečúcej vode je hygienické centrum poskytujúce prístup k tečúcej vode a možnosť prania bielizne dôležitým prvým krokom rozvoja v osídlení. Avšak v podmienkach osídlenia, kde obydlia majú prístup k vodovodu, existencia takéhoto strediska neprinesie príliš veľké zlepšenie situácie.

Vytvorenie akéhokoľvek kompozitného indexu je proces, ktorý zjednodušuje spoločenskú realitu. Je preto veľmi dôležité identifikovať tie údaje z databázy *Atlasu*

2013, ktoré sú čo najviac nezávislé na konkrétnych miestnych podmienkach a zároveň sú pre účel použitia indexu zmysluplné. Ďalšou otázkou je, či sa zamerať na úroveň obcí (Dotazník A), na úroveň osídlení (Dotazník B) alebo, čo je technicky dosť zložité, vytvoriť jeden indikátor, ktorý integruje informácie z oboch úrovní.

V tomto texte pracujeme s aktualizovaným indexom segregácie a podrozvinitosti, ktorý bol použitý v už spomínanej štúdii o Európskom sociálnom fonde na Slovensku. Tento index je zostavený z 13 indikátorov využívajúcich údaje z *Atlasu 2013*, ktoré popisujú štrukturálnu situáciu rómskych lokalít v obciach Slovenskej republiky: typ osídlenia (1 indikátor), umiestnenie osídlenia (1), vzdialenosť osídlenia od obce (1), typ bytového fondu (1), vlastníctvo pozemkov (1), prístup k pitnej vode (4), prístup ku kanalizácii (2) a prístup k elektrickej sieti (2). Každému indikátoru je definovaná hodnota minimálneho a maximálneho možného počtu bodov, ktoré môže daná lokalita získať (Tabuľka ZZ). Hodnota indexu pre jednotlivé lokality sa vypočíta ako suma bodov získaných v jednotlivých indikátoroch. V prípade, že je v obci viacero lokalít, vypočítava sa index pre každú lokalitu zvlášť. Maximálna hodnota pre takto zostavený index je 39 bodov, pričom hodnota 0 bodov znamená, že daná lokalita nedosahuje žiadne ukazovatele pre segregáciu a zaostalosť a hodnota 39 bodov znamená najextrémnejší prípad segregácie a zaostalosti. V prípade lokalít popísaných v *Atlasu 2013* bola najnižšia dosiahnutá hodnota 0 bodov (16 lokalít) a najvyššia hodnota dosiahla 33 bodov (Spišské Bystré – lokalita Pod Lesom). Rozdelenie počtu lokalít podľa Indexu a podľa krajov možno vidieť v Tabuľkách AA, BB a CC.

Tabuľka ZZ:
Konštrukcia indexu segregácie a podrozvinutosti – výber údajov a váh

Číslo	Indikátor	Priradovanie bodov	Maximálna a minimálna hodnota:	Vysvetlenie a poznámky:
1	Typ koncentrácie: A) rozptýlená B) vo vnútri obce C) na okraji obce D) segregovaná	A: 0 B: 1 C: 2 D: 3	min: 0 max: 3	Podľa analýz UNDP z prieskumov životných podmienok Rómov na Slovensku z roku 2006 a 2010 sú dosiahnuté najhoršie výsledky za domácnosti žijúce v segregovaných lokalitách, nasledované separovanými lokalitami.
2	Umiestnenie koncentrácie Na základe otázok: Je koncentrácia v intraviláne alebo extraviláne obce?	Intravilán: 0 Zmiešané umiestnenie: 1 Extravilán: 2	min: 0 max: 2	Umiestnenie lokality v extraviláne obce či mesta predstavuje symbolický múr medzi obcou a osadou a zároveň aj prekážku pre rozvoj celej obce.
3	Vzdialenosť lokality od obce Na základe otázky: Koľko metrov je od obce vzdialená?	Nulová vzdialenosť: 0 1 – 99 metrov: 1 100 – 499 metrov: 2 500 – 999 metrov: 3 1000 – 1999 metrov: 4 viac ako 2000 metrov: 5	min: 0 max: 5	Priestorová izolácia rómskej osady predstavuje mimoriadnu prekážku pre integráciu. Životné podmienky v priestorovo segregovaných osadách sú spravidla horšie ako v koncentráciách, ktoré sú v rámci obce. Vzdialenosť je ďalšou prekážkou participácie v aktivitách, ktoré sú nápomocné integrácii.
4	Percento obyvateľov lokality bývajúcich v jednotlivých typoch bytového fondu Na základe otázok: Koľko je v osídlení obydli? a) Koľko je z toho bytových domov? Koľko v nich býva ľudí? b) Koľko je z toho murovaných domov skolaudovaných alebo inak legálnych? Koľko v nich býva ľudí? c) Koľko je z toho dreveníc skolaudovaných alebo inak legálnych? Koľko v nich býva ľudí? d) Koľko je z toho murovaných domov v štádiu stavby, t.j. pred kolaudáciou? Koľko v nich býva ľudí? e) Koľko je z toho murovaných domov nezapísaných do katastra? Koľko v nich býva ľudí? f) Koľko je z toho drevených domov nezapísaných do katastra? Koľko v nich býva ľudí? g) Koľko je z toho obydli typy chatrčí? Koľko v nich býva ľudí? h) Koľko je z toho obydli postavených z tzv. Unimobuniek? Koľko v nich býva ľudí? i) Koľko je z toho obydli postavených z tzv. Maringotiek? Koľko v nich býva ľudí? j) Koľko je z toho obydli využívajúcich iné nebytové priestory, pôvodne určené nie na bývanie? Koľko v nich býva ľudí? k) Koľko je z toho iných obydli? Koľko v nich býva ľudí?	a) $(XY\%/100)^*0$ b) $(XY\%/100)^*0$ c) $(XY\%/100)^*1$ d) $(XY\%/100)^*1$ e) $(XY\%/100)^*2$ f) $(XY\%/100)^*3$ g) $(XY\%/100)^*5$ h) $(XY\%/100)^*4$ i) $(XY\%/100)^*4$ j) $(XZ\%/100)^*4$ k) $(XY\%/100)^*4$	min: 0 max: 5	Aj keď takéto rozdelenie obydli podľa kategórií neumožňuje získať predstavu o konkrétnych podmienkach života v jednotlivých osídleniach, charakter bytového fondu je dôležitá informácia pre učenie charakteru osídlenia. Kódovanie bolo vedené predpokladom, podľa ktorého sú pevnejšie a legalizované obydliá vnímané ako viac integrované a menej pevné a nelegálne obydliá sú vnímané ako menej integrované. Výsledný počet bodov za tento indikátor je vypočítaný ako suma hodnôt za a) až k)

Číslo	Indikátor	Priradovanie bodov	Maximálna a minimálna hodnota:	Vysvetlenie a poznámky:
5	<p>Percentuálny podiel pozemkov v jednotlivom type vlastníctva</p> <p>Na základe otázok:</p> <p>Pozemky, na ktorých sa nachádza osídlenie patria (v %)</p> <p>a) samotným Rómom</p> <p>b) známym vlastníkom (súkromným osobám) mimo osídlenia</p> <p>c) neznámym vlastníkom</p> <p>d) obci</p> <p>e) cirkví</p> <p>f) armáde SR</p> <p>g) SPF – je ich vlastník</p> <p>h) SPF – je v jeho správe/štátnym inštitúciám</p> <p>i) iný vlastník</p>	<p>a) $(XY\%/100)^*0$</p> <p>b) $(XY\%/100)^*0$</p> <p>c) $(XY\%/100)^*2$</p> <p>d) $(XY\%/100)^*0$</p> <p>e) $(XY\%/100)^*0$</p> <p>f) $(XY\%/100)^*0$</p> <p>g) $(XY\%/100)^*0$</p> <p>h) $(XY\%/100)^*0$</p> <p>i) $(XY\%/100)^*0$</p>	<p>min=0</p> <p>max=2</p>	<p>Databáza Atlasu 2013 neobsahuje žiadne informácie o postojí majiteľa pôdy a preto je obtiažne uzatvárať akékoľvek všeobecné závery o rozvojovom potenciáli. Preto za prekážku rozvoja bola považovaná iba situácia, pri ktorej nie je identifikovaný vlastník pôdy.</p> <p>Výsledný počet bodov za tento indikátor je vypočítaný ako suma hodnôt za a) až i)</p>
6	<p>a) Koľko % obydli v osídlení môže využívať verejný vodovod</p> <p>b) Koľko % obydli v osídlení ho aj skutočne využíva</p>	<p>a) $(XY-100)/100^*2*-1$</p> <p>b) $(XY-100)/100^*2*-1$</p>	<p>min: 0</p> <p>max:4</p>	<p>Prístup k zdroju pitnej vody je jeden zo základných predpokladov jednak dodržiavania základných hygienických pravidiel ako aj predpokladom zdravého života domácnosti.</p>
7	<p>Koľko % je v osídlení obydli bez prístupu (nemajú osobitný vodovod ani studňu) k pitnej vode?</p> <p>Koľko % obyvateľov osídlení využíva iné zdroje pitnej vody?</p>	<p>a) $XY\%/100^*8$</p> <p>b) $XY\%/100^*1$</p>	<p>min: 0</p> <p>max: 9</p>	<p>Nemajú prístup k pitnej vode sa považuje za hlavné riziko, že by sa mali riešiť.</p> <p>V prípade druhej otázky, najčastejšie odpovede sú "verejný zdroj", ktorá predstavuje nižšiu úroveň ešte nie sú zdravotné riziká (v prípade, že zdroj je čistý). Existujú však prípady, kedy "iný zdroj" je v blízkosti rieky. Odporúčame upraviť tabuľky, ako je voda z rieky nemožno považovať za zdroj pitnej vody (je zrejmé, že aj tým, ktorým chýba zdroj najšť zdroj, ale v prípade, že otázky, b), iba zdroje, ktoré sú čisté a v prijateľnej blízkosti by mali byť zahrnuté.</p>
8	<p>Koľko % obydli v osídlení môže využívať verejnú kanalizáciu</p> <p>Koľko % obydli v osídlení ju aj skutočne využíva?</p>	<p>a) $XY\%/100^*0,5$</p> <p>b) $XY\%/100^*0,5$</p>	<p>min: 0</p> <p>max:1</p>	<p>Prístup ku kanalizácii je jedna z podmienok zdravého života domácnosti. Keďže verejná kanalizácia nie je ešte úplným štandardom vo vidieckych obciach, týmto indikátorom bola daná relatívne nízka váha.</p>
9	<p>Koľko % obydli v osídlení môže využívať elektrickú sieť?</p>	<p>$XY\%/100^*4$</p>	<p>min: 0</p> <p>max: 4</p>	
10	<p>Koľko % osídlenia je pokryté verejným osvetlením?</p>	<p>$XY\%/100^*4$</p>	<p>min: 0</p> <p>max: 4</p>	

4.2 Prínosy a obmedzenia použitia indikátorov pri programovaní

Ako je uvedené v úvode, štúdia *Nejasný výsledok* ukázala, že geografická distribúcia MRK relevantných projektov ESF nezodpovedá plne geografickému rozloženiu rómskej populácie, ani potrebám, ktoré by mohli byť identifikované pomocou nástrojov ako je Index segregácie a podrozvinutosti. Pre čitateľov, ktorí sú oboznámení s pravidlami ESF na Slovensku v priebehu programového obdobia 2007 – 2013 tento záver nemôže byť prekvapujúci, pretože výberové kódnia neobsahovali konkrétne nástroje, ktoré by smerovali prostriedky do tých obcí alebo osád, kde sú najviac problematické podmienky. Postupy podávania žiadostí a riadenie projektov vyzadovali zároveň značné skúsenosti a špecifické know-how, ktoré často chýbalo vo vidieckych komunitách. Skúsené organizácie, ktoré pôsobia v mestských a viac rozvinutých regiónoch dokázali realizovať relatívne veľký počet projektov. Znamená to, že investície boli nasmerované zle? Hoci veľký podiel z prostriedkov Európskeho sociálneho fondu nebol použitý na tie komunity, kde sú podmienky najhoršie, nemali by sme zabúdať ani na to, že existujú aj dobré argumenty v prospech takéhoto spôsobu distribúcie, ktorý by mohol byť vyjadrený ako „absorbčná kapacita“. Zapojenie skúsených organizácií do implementácie projektov by mohlo byť napríklad prijaté ako faktor, ktorý zvýši takúto absorbčnú kapacitu. Avšak na druhej strane nie je vôbec jasné, do akej miery boli tie podporené „skúsené“ organizácie tými, ktoré mali dobrú povest' v rámci rómskych integračných projektov alebo boli tými s najlepšimi poznatkami o prístupe k finančným prostriedkom.

Do akej miery môžu byť dáta z *Atlasu 2013* reálne použité pre zlepšenie zacielenia verejných prostriedkov? A ako by to mohlo byť dosiahnuté? Na nasledujúcich riadkoch ponúkame príklad odpovede na tieto otázky.

Využitie indexu 1: Obmedzenie oprávnenosti

Jedným zo spôsobov ako pomocou Indexu segregácie a podrozvinutosti (alebo porovnateľných indexov) zacieliť verejné fondy a intervencie je obmedziť geografický rozsah opatrení financovaných a zamerať sa na tie lokality (prípadne mestá alebo obce), kde sú najviac problematické podmienky. Ak by sa použil takýto postup, riadiaci orgán by mohol podľa Indexu určiť, ktoré obce/osady majú nárok na osobitné opatrenia alebo sú automaticky oprávnené čerpať pomoc z fondov EÚ prípadne z iných verejných zdrojov. Vytvorenie takéhoto zoznamu je veľmi jednoduché = zoradia sa všetky lokality podľa hodnoty indexu (vypočítaného podľa postupu uvedeného vyššie) a vyčleniť lokality (respektíve obce s lokalitami), kde index presahuje určitú hodnotu. Stanovenie hranice pre oprávnenosť je záležitosťou odbornej diskusie a závisí do veľkej miery od objemu finančných prostriedkov, ktoré by boli k dispozícii (alokácia akého priemerného objemu prostriedkov na jednu obec ešte umožňuje realizáciu zmysluplných aktivít so stanoveným cieľom). Ďalšou alternatívou stanovenia hranice oprávnenosti je použitie jednoduchého rozdelenia celej skupiny lokalít napríklad na päťtiny, alebo desatiny, podľa hodnoty indexu a podporenie len najhoršej päťtiny alebo desatiny (pozri rozloženie podielu lokalít podľa krajov v Tabuľke AA, BB a CC). Z dôvodu obmedzenia prípadnej chyby z mechanického použitia indexu na stanovenie oprávnenosti je potrebné osobitne pristupovať k obciam s lokalitami, kde hodnota indexu sa blíži k hraničnej hodnote oprávnenosti. Na vysvetlenie: Ak je stanovené, že prostriedky z verejných zdrojov dostanú všetky obce, kde je lokalita s hodnotou Indexu segregácie a podrozvinutosti rovná alebo vyššia ako 25 (v prípade Slovenska je to hodnota vyjadrujúca 75% z maximálnej dosiahnutej hodnoty (33)), tak obce, kde sú lokality s hodnotou Indexu +/- 10% (t. j. 22,5–27,5) by boli individuálne posúdené vopred definovanou expertnou skupinou.

Tabuľka AA:
Rozdelenie lokalít podľa hodnoty Indexu segregácie a podrozvinutosti podľa krajov SR - štvrtiny

Hodnota Indexu Kraj	0-8.25		8.25-16.5		16.5-24.75		24.75-33		Spolu	
	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%
BB	99	69.7	33	23.2	9	6.3	1	0.7	142	
BA	14	73.7	5	26.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	19	
KE	146	64.0	66	28.9	12	5.3	4	1.8	228	
NR	57	90.5	6	9.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	63	
PO	181	71.3	61	24.0	10	3.9	2	0.8	254	
TN	11	84.6	1	7.7	1	7.7	0	0.0	13	
TT	56	91.8	4	6.6	1	1.6	0	0.0	61	
ZA	13	68.4	6	31.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	19	
Slovenská republika	577	72.2	182	22.8	33	4.1	7	0.9	799	

Tabuľka BB:
Rozdelenie lokalít podľa hodnoty Indexu segregácie a podrozvinutosti podľa krajov SR - päťtiny

Hodnota Indexu Kraj	0-6.6		6.6-13.2		13.2-19.8		19.8-26.4		26.4-33		Spolu	
	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%
BB	82	57.7	44	31.0	11	7.7	4	2.8	1	0.7	142	
BA	13	68.4	4	21.1	2	10.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	19	
KE	123	53.9	74	32.5	21	9.2	6	2.6	4	1.8	228	
NR	56	88.9	5	7.9	2	3.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	63	
PO	159	62.6	69	27.2	18	7.1	7	2.8	1	0.4	254	
TN	10	76.9	2	15.4	1	7.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	13	
TT	51	83.6	9	14.8	1	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	61	
ZA	12	63.2	6	31.6	1	5.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	19	
Slovenská republika	506	63.3	213	26.7	57	7.1	17	2.1	6	0.8	799	

Tabuľka CC:
Rozdelenie lokalít podľa hodnoty Indexu segregácie a podrozvinutosti podľa krajov SR - desiatiny

Hodnota Indexu Kraj	0-3.3		3.3-6.6		6.6-9.9		9.9-13.2		13.2-16.5		16.5-19.8		19.8-23.1		23.1-26.4		26.4-29.7		29.7-33		Spolu Počet lokalít
	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%	Počet lokalít	%	
BB	46	32.4	36	25.4	29	20.4	15	10.6	6	4.2	5	3.5	3	2.1	1	0.7	1	0.7	0	0.0	142
BA	7	36.8	6	31.6	2	10.5	2	10.5	2	10.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	19
KE	53	23.2	70	30.7	45	19.7	29	12.7	15	6.6	6	2.6	6	2.6	0	0.0	3	1.3	1	0.4	228
NR	40	62.9	16	25.8	3	4.8	2	3.2	2	3.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	62
PO	83	32.7	76	29.9	44	17.3	25	9.8	14	5.5	4	1.6	4	1.6	3	1.2	0	0.0	1	0.4	254
TN	8	61.5	2	15.4	2	15.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	7.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	13
TT	35	57.4	16	26.2	6	9.8	3	4.9	0	0.0	1	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	61
ZA	9	47.4	3	15.8	3	15.8	3	15.8	1	5.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	19
Slovenská republika	281	35.1	225	28.2	134	16.8	79	9.9	40	5.0	17	2.1	13	1.6	4	0.5	4	0.5	2	0.3	799

Poznámka: V prípade štyroch osídlení vzhľadom na absenciu údajov bola možnosť index vypočítat

Index segregácie a podrozvinutosti, ako je definovaný vyššie v texte, môže byť zmenený alebo nahradený indexom na mieru tak, aby sa odrážali ciele určitého režimu financovania. Ak skupina oprávnených obcí a osád nie je zadefinovaná príliš úzko, v procese výberu žiadostí o financovanie je stále možné uplatniť konkurenčné prvky ako napríklad posúdenie existujúcich kapacít, preukázanie politickej vôle alebo kvalita navrhovanej metodiky projektu. Mali by sme si byť vedomí toho, že podmienky sa v priebehu času menia. Pokiaľ by sme definovali skupinu obcí oprávnených na financovanie príliš úzko, mohlo by sa stať, že v okolitých obciach by vznikli nové neformálne štruktúry, ktoré nie sú zahrnuté v *Atlase*.

Aj keď uvedená metóda môže veľmi efektívne zabrániť omylom pri celení podpory, je potrebné upozorniť aj na jej nedostatky. Jeden z problémov, ktorý sa môže objaviť sú problémy s použitím (alebo využitím) poskytnutých finančných prostriedkov. Mnohé etnické rozdelené obce sa zdráhajú podporiť zlepšenie podmienok v rómskych osadách, a teda by sa ani o prostriedky ponúkané na takýto „politicky nepopulárny účel“ neuchádzali. Najlepšou odpoveďou na tento problém by mohla byť formulácia jasných požiadaviek integrácie marginalizovaných skupín obyvateľov a ich následné tvrdé presadzovanie vládou aj v prípade, keď miestna samospráva sa takýmto integračným aktivitám bráni. V prípade obcí, kde miestni politici bránia integračným aktivitám (ako sú budovanie infraštruktúry v osadách, legalizácia bývania, atď.) by plánovanie, a kde je to nevyhnutné aj vlastníctvo pozemkov pod rómskou osadou, mala prebrať štátna agentúra, ktorá by mala za úlohu rozvoj najmenej rozvinutých lokalít. Legislatívne by to mohlo byť upravené podobne ako je to v prípade veľkých dopravných projektov (napr. výstavba diaľnic, atď.), ktoré sú považované za príliš dôležité pre štát, aby boli blokovanie nejakou lokálnou opozíciou.

Bez takýchto systémových krokov je žiaľ nepravdepodobné, že ponúknutie finančných prostriedkov bude dostačujúce na skutočnú zmenu v mnohých najviac znevýhodnených osadách. Samozrejme, problém neochoty spolupracovať na strane obce má tendenciu byť väčší s reštriktívnejším obmedzením oprávnenosti obcí alebo lokalít. Hoci čím užšie zameranie môže byť motivované čo najlepšími celením zdrojov na lokality, kde je to najpotrebnejšie, výsledkom môže byť, že pomerne veľký objem prostriedkov nebude vôbec použitých. Keďže celkové životné podmienky nie sú uspokojujúce ani v mnohých lokalitách s nižšou hodnotou indexu segregácie a podrozvinutosti, takýto nežiaduci vedľajší efekt

by znamenal, že v konečnom dôsledku by cenné zdroje neboli poskytnuté nikomu, kto pomoc potrebuje.

Ďalším problémom takéhoto jednostranného zamerania na najproblematickejšie lokality môže byť vyslanie signálu obciam, ktoré sa v minulosti viac snažili realizovať rôzne integračné politiky. Ak by boli zdroje na zlepšenie situácie Rómov poskytnuté iba obciam, ktoré v minulosti nerealizovali žiadne integračné aktivity (čiže celkové podmienky sú zlé, ako vyjadruje index segregácie a podrozvinutosti pre lokality, ktoré sa v nich nachádzajú), tak zástupcovia progresívnejších obcí by to mohli celkom oprávnene kritizovať ako určitú formu nezaslúženého trestu za ich integračné aktivity v minulosti. Zameranie sa len na extrémne situácie (podmienky) a vynechanie lokalít, kde životné podmienky Rómov a medzietnické vzťahy nie sú ani extrémne zlé, ale ani nijako zvlášť dobré, by bolo obrovskou chybou. Zatiaľ čo lokality s extrémne zlými podmienkami predstavujú humanitárnu tragédiu, ktorá si vyžaduje rázne opatrenia, lokality kde je rozdiel medzi Rómami a Nerómami menší, majú väčší potenciál na úspešnú integráciu do modernej spoločnosti a hospodárstva. Preto je veľmi dôležité presne definovať, aké aktivity by mali byť celené primárne do najhorších lokalít a aké aktivity by mali smerovať do všetkých lokalít s Rómami (respektíve do lokalít s Rómami, ktorých charakterizujú iné potreby).

Využitie indexu 2: Alokovanie prostriedkov pre jednotlivé regióny

Ďalším spôsobom použitia indexu by mohlo byť definovanie kľúča, podľa ktorého by sa alokovali prostriedky medzi regióny alebo mikroregióny, a ktorý by odrážal identifikovanú úroveň potrieb. Napríklad, riadiaca autorita zodpovedná za rozdelenie finančných prostriedkov v programe podpory zlepšenia základnej technickej infraštruktúry v najmenej rozvinutých lokalitách by mohla použiť Index na definovanie zoznamu 50-ich (alebo 100, alebo 20, atď.) lokalít, ktoré podporu potrebujú najviac. V druhom kroku by riadiaca autorita analyzovala regionálnu distribúciu takýchto lokalít (na úrovni krajov, okresov alebo mikroregiónov) a následne alokovala finančné prostriedky na tie územné celky proporčne k počtu lokalít. Čiže, ak v niektorom okrese (alebo inej územnej jednotke) je

10 najmenej rozvinutých lokalít, zatiaľ čo v inom okrese je iba jedna taká lokalita, tak ten prvý okres dostane 10 krát viac finančných prostriedkov ako ten druhý. Podobne v inom type programu, napríklad zameranom na vzdelávanie, môže byť vytvorený iný index (odzrkadľujúci ciele programu) a použitý potom podobne ako je písané vyššie.

Práca s alokáciami môže pomôcť minimalizovať niektoré potenciálne problémy spomenuté skôr v tejto kapitole (mechanické použitie Indexu bez zvažovania lokálneho kontextu). Ale s touto metódou sa nevyhneme riziku, že alokované finančné prostriedky budú v podporených regiónoch použité na iný účel ako je zlepšenie situácie Rómov v najviac znevýhodnených lokalitách. V prípade použitia tejto metódy je istotne nevyhnutné pridať ďalšie podmienky podpory. Aj na to môže byť použitý *Atlas 2013*. Napríklad podporené územné jednotky (obce

alebo mikroregióny) by mali jasne preukázať ako súvisí podiel Rómov v celkovej populácii tej územnej jednotky s podielom Rómov medzi účastníkmi projektov.

Alokácia finančných prostriedkov na základe Indexu sa javí ako vhodná metóda na riešenie nedostatočnej infraštruktúry (technickej, sociálnej, vzdelávacej). V iných prípadoch (ako napríklad zamestnanosť) je lepšie alokovať zdroje na základe odhadov veľkosti rómskej populácie. Keďže mnohé projekty zamestnanosti nebudú cieľiť iba na Rómov, možno tento údaj kombinovať s inými, ako napríklad miera nezamestnanosti v regióne a podobne. Navyše by bolo vhodné, aby grantisti, ktorí implementujú aktivity s dopadom na zamestnanosť mali povinnosť preukázať, že ich cieľová skupina korešponduje s etnickou a sociálnou diverzitou regiónu a obce, kde sa projektové aktivity realizujú. Údaje z *Atlasu 2013* sú vhodné aj na toto.