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
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Roma Inclusion Working Papers
The paper was prepared with support from the European Union

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) expresses its gratitude to the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic for financial support and collaboration in implementation of this project

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ISBN: 978-80-89263-13-4

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Cover and layout design:
Valeur, s. r. o., Slovak Republic

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Acknowledgements

This report is the result of a short-term research project that was initiated by the Bratislava Regional Support Centre of the United Nations Development Programme and realized in early 2012. We would like to thank first of all the Slovak Government (namely, the ESF Managing Authority and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family) for agreeing to provide access to the data on the respective projects and various other internal documents. The team was particularly supported by Zuzana Polačková and Marek Hojsík who were providing important insights in the process. We would further like to thank Ján Valovský from the Slovak Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, who spent days generating project files from the Ministry’s electronic archive. The report benefited also from support and valuable comments provided by Enrica Chiozza and Jana Koláriková from DG Regional policy and Dominique Be and Martin Orth from DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.
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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.
1.1. 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 Fund, 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

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?

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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 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. 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.

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.
2.1. 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. 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

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."  

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”\(^9\).

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

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\(^{11}\) 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”\textsuperscript{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.

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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Source of information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project number</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Name of file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK NACE of the recipient of the grant</td>
<td>NACE code</td>
<td>Project application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>For meaning of codes see:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project location</td>
<td>Municipality or district or region</td>
<td>Project application</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:
### Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project number</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Source of information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme Priorities</td>
<td>2.1 or 2.2</td>
<td>Final monitoring report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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

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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project number</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Source of information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of ultimate beneficiaries - Roma</td>
<td>Number (if available)</td>
<td>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).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of members of target group involved in project activities - men</td>
<td>Number (if available)</td>
<td>Final monitoring report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of members of target group involved in project activities – men and women</td>
<td>Number (if available)</td>
<td>Final monitoring report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target group – number of persons who made use of offered services</td>
<td>Number (if available)</td>
<td>Final monitoring report (It is not exactly clear how this category differs from the one above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs created (social workers or work places for the ultimate beneficiaries)</td>
<td>Number (if available)</td>
<td>Final monitoring report (It is not exactly clear how this category differs from the one above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of project activities 1: Trainings</td>
<td>1: Yes</td>
<td>Project application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of project activities 2: Community mobilization</td>
<td>1: Yes</td>
<td>Project application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of project activities 3: Social work</td>
<td>1: Yes</td>
<td>Project application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of project activities 5: Community centre</td>
<td>1: Yes</td>
<td>Project application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of project activities 6: Employment</td>
<td>1: Yes</td>
<td>Project application</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 evaluations.

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-
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, but the final accounting was not provided.

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.

It is also important to notice that the group of 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 these groups directly are “projects of a secondary level” – a kind of projects implemented within 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.

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 dataset contains a comprehensive set of indicators for Roma communities in Slovakia.
Atlas contains detailed data on all locations in Slovakia that were identified by the authors as being inhabited by Roma.\(^\text{14}\)

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, Oždín, Utečák, Hnúšťa, Rimavská Seč, Žákovce, 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.\(^\text{15}\) 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

\(\text{14}\) Socio-graphic 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-à-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.

\(\text{15}\) 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 E1 (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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation arrangement</th>
<th>Target group</th>
<th>Ethnicity of beneficiaries</th>
<th>Parallel/earlier 2.1 project in same location</th>
<th>Spatial focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Beneficiaries are Roma</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project developed and realized by municipality (2)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal project developed by a private company and implemented with support of this company (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal project developed by a private company and directly implemented by this company (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO linked to a state-run institution (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local/regional NGO (2)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 organisations 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.
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.
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. 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% respectively. 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”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority axis No. 1</th>
<th>Supporting Employment Growth Fund: ESF</th>
<th>EU resources</th>
<th>National resources</th>
<th>Total resources</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>MRC-relevant</th>
<th>Not MRC-relevant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget available (EUR)</td>
<td>Contracted budget / Number of projects / Average volume of project budget (EUR)</td>
<td>567,422,200</td>
<td>100,133,330</td>
<td>667,555,530</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total contracted volume:</td>
<td>709,909,916</td>
<td>45,616,615 (6.4%)</td>
<td>664,293,302 (93.6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of projects:</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>91 (14%)</td>
<td>540 (86%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean budget:</td>
<td>1,125,055</td>
<td>501,281 (44.5%)</td>
<td>1,230,173 (109%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority axis No. 2</th>
<th>Supporting Social Inclusion Fund: ESF</th>
<th>187,800,000</th>
<th>33,141,177</th>
<th>220,941,177</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total contracted volume:</td>
<td>200,703,179</td>
<td>45,616,615 (23%)</td>
<td>155,086,565 (77%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of projects:</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>91 (15%)</td>
<td>517 (85%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean budget:</td>
<td>330,104</td>
<td>501,281 (151%)</td>
<td>299,974 (90%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## UNCERTAIN IMPACT: HAVE THE ROMA IN SLOVAKIA BENEFITED FROM THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority axis No. 3</th>
<th>Supporting employment, social inclusion, and capacity building in the BSR Fund: ESF</th>
<th>Budget available (EUR)</th>
<th>Contracted budget / Number of projects / Average volume of project budget (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU resources</td>
<td>National resources</td>
<td>Total resources</td>
<td>MRC-relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean budget:</td>
<td>12,503,335</td>
<td>16,794,655 (134%)</td>
<td>8,927,235 (71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects based on calls for proposals:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total contracted volume:</td>
<td>58,168,556</td>
<td>50,174,056 (86%)</td>
<td>7,994,500 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of projects:</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>590 (92%)</td>
<td>47 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean budget:</td>
<td>91,316</td>
<td>85,041 (93%)</td>
<td>170,096 (186%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All projects:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total contracted volume:</td>
<td>21,801,363</td>
<td>5,378,063 (25%)</td>
<td>16,423,299 (75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of projects:</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>17 (24%)</td>
<td>53 (76%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean budget:</td>
<td>311,448</td>
<td>316,357 (102%)</td>
<td>309,874 (99.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National projects:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total contracted volume:</td>
<td>18,201,486</td>
<td>4,108,236 (23%)</td>
<td>14,093,251 (77%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of projects:</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5 (13%)</td>
<td>35 (87%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean budget:</td>
<td>455,037</td>
<td>821,647 (181%)</td>
<td>402,664 (89%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other projects based on calls for proposals:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total contracted volume:</td>
<td>3,599,876</td>
<td>1,269,828 (35%)</td>
<td>2,330,049 (65%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of projects:</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12 (40%)</td>
<td>18 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean budget:</td>
<td>119,996</td>
<td>105,819 (88%)</td>
<td>129,447 (108%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Priority axis No. 4

**Building capacities and improving the quality of the public administration**

**Fund:** ESF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU resources</th>
<th>National resources</th>
<th>Total resources</th>
<th>Total contracted volume</th>
<th>MRC-relevant</th>
<th>Not MRC-relevant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81,734,600</td>
<td>14,423,753</td>
<td>96,158,353</td>
<td>84,090,115</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>84,090,115 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>191</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>191 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>440,262</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>440,262 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU resources</th>
<th>National resources</th>
<th>Total resources</th>
<th>Total contracted volume</th>
<th>MRC-relevant</th>
<th>Not MRC-relevant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27,043,200</td>
<td>4,772,330</td>
<td>31,815,530</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 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 population\(^{19}\), 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

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\(^{19}\) 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](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%.

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 UPSVAR. 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 (‘vyrovnanacie 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.
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 (‘dopytovno-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.

### Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority axis</th>
<th>All projects</th>
<th>MRC</th>
<th>National projects</th>
<th>National projects excluded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of projects</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total contracted volume (EUR)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Number of projects</strong></td>
<td><strong>Share of all projects</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total contracted volume (EUR)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>631</td>
<td>709,909,916</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>648</td>
<td>195,705,240</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>91.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>21,801,363</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>191</td>
<td>84,090,115</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1540</td>
<td>1,011,506,634</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **1** | 23 | 509,206,737 | 0 | 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 | 0.0% |
| **Total** | 102 | 719,064,975 | 10 | 9.8% | 88,081,511 | 12.2% |

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 (‘dopytovno-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 the 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 where 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)**

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

*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**

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

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

Share of Roma (in %, according to Atlas, 2004)

01
10
20
50
99

Map 2: Distribution of ESF projects

Local share of national budgets
(in %, MRC-relevant projects excluding national projects)

0,02
0,05
0,10
0,50
1,05
4,22
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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bratislava</td>
<td>600,246</td>
<td>3,535</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tmava</td>
<td>552,641</td>
<td>14,073</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>529,939</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5,161</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>36.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trenčín</td>
<td>601,687</td>
<td>4,325</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>2,377,416</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>8,433</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>194.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitra</td>
<td>709,381</td>
<td>25,437</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>3,124,138</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>5,193</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>20.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žilina</td>
<td>693,757</td>
<td>6,295</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>487,010</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2,081</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>33.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banská Bystrica</td>
<td>658,701</td>
<td>55,840</td>
<td>8.48</td>
<td>5,485,050</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>31,858</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>57.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prešov</td>
<td>795,796</td>
<td>85,697</td>
<td>10.77</td>
<td>11,360,579</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>61,343</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>71.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Košice</td>
<td>769,969</td>
<td>89,364</td>
<td>11.61</td>
<td>6,161,005</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>34,568</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>38.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia total</td>
<td>5,382,178</td>
<td>284,566</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>29,525,137</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>148,637</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>52.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 where 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.
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-

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

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

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.
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 (Trebišov 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.
As 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 where 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**

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

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***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of municipalities included in Atlas of Roma communities</th>
<th>Number of municipalities where MRC-relevant ESF-projects from sample were implemented (share of all municipalities in same category)</th>
<th>Number of municipalities where MRC-relevant ESF-projects (priority 1.1) from sample were implemented (share of all municipalities in same category)</th>
<th>Number of municipalities where MRC-relevant ESF-projects (priority 1.2) from sample were implemented (share of all municipalities in same category)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All villages included in Atlas (2004)</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>191 (19.5%)</td>
<td>161 (16.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Less than 300 inhabitants</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>17 (11.3%)</td>
<td>13 (8.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) 300 – 700 inhabitants</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>42 (14.6%)</td>
<td>39 (13.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) 700 – 1135 inhabitants</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>43 (22.3%)</td>
<td>37 (19.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All urban municipalities included in Atlas of Roma communities (2004)</th>
<th>Urban municipalities where MRC-relevant ESF-projects were implemented (all priorities, data from 2004)</th>
<th>Urban municipalities where MRC-relevant ESF-projects were implemented (priority 2.1, from 2004)</th>
<th>Urban municipalities where MRC-relevant ESF-projects were implemented (priority 2.2, data from 2004)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average size</td>
<td>16,440 inhabitants</td>
<td>21,126 inhabitants</td>
<td>21,006 inhabitants</td>
<td>17,319 inhabitants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Local share of Roma population (according to unofficial estimates of local administration in 2003/4)</td>
<td>5.12%</td>
<td>5.76%</td>
<td>6.29%</td>
<td>2.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Local unemployment rate (according to Atlas 2004)</td>
<td>14.94%</td>
<td>14.14%</td>
<td>13.73%</td>
<td>9.48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 index\(^{22}\), 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Location of the settlement:</th>
<th>4. Barrier</th>
<th>7. Public lighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within the municipal limits: 0 Outside of municipal limits: 1</td>
<td>No barrier: 0</td>
<td>No public lighting: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Type of settlement:</td>
<td>Any kind of barrier mentioned: 1</td>
<td>Public lighting partly: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within the municipality dispersed: 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Public lighting: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within the municipality: 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the margins: 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside of the municipality: 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Distance of the settlement (in metres)</th>
<th>5. Land ownership</th>
<th>8. Garbage collection in Roma settlement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No distance: 0</td>
<td>Land owner unknown: 2</td>
<td>No garbage collection: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance: 1 – 499 metres: 1</td>
<td>Otherwise: 0</td>
<td>Garbage collection: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance 500 – 999 metres: 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance: 1000 – 1999 metres: 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance more than 2000 metres: 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Access to electricity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity available: 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity partly available: 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No access to electricity: 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

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.

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.
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total Locations of ESF projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Municipalities with Index &gt; 7.5</td>
<td>82 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipalities with Index &gt; 10</td>
<td>19 (15%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 12: Segregation and underdevelopment of Roma settlements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Segregation and Underdevelopment Index (mean value weighted by sizes of local populations; lowest value, highest value)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All municipalities included in Atlas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bratislava</td>
<td>1.68 – 0 - 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trnava</td>
<td>1.01 – 0 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trenčín</td>
<td>0.78 – 0 - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitra</td>
<td>1.05 – 0 - 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žilina</td>
<td>1.79 – 0 – 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banská Bystrica</td>
<td>1.47 – 0 – 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prešov</td>
<td>2.39 – 0 – 14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Košice</td>
<td>2.87 – 0 - 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia total</td>
<td>2.14 – 0 – 14.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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%).

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 \( \text{seg}=2.39 \) on a scale from 0 to 15.

**Map 3: Unemployment in Presov Region**

![Map of Presov Region](image)

**Unemployment rates in % (31.12.2011):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bardejov</td>
<td>19.89</td>
<td>Medzilaborce</td>
<td>19.84</td>
<td>Stará Ľubovňa</td>
<td>14.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humenné</td>
<td>16.64</td>
<td>Poprad</td>
<td>12.33</td>
<td>Stropkov</td>
<td>18.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kežmarok</td>
<td>28.66</td>
<td>Prešov</td>
<td>17.16</td>
<td>Švidník</td>
<td>20.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levoča</td>
<td>18.48</td>
<td>Sabinov</td>
<td>26.75</td>
<td>Vranov/T.</td>
<td>22.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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

**Estimated share of Roma in 2004 (in %):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bardejov</td>
<td></td>
<td>Medzilaborce</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stará Lubovňa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humenné</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Poprad</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Stropkov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kežmarok</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Prešov</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Svídnik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levoča</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sabinov</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Vranov/T.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snina</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Own calculation based on data from Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (total population of districts, 2004) and estimated number of inhabitants of Roma locations in 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 economistic 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 segregationalist 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.

**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.

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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 skillfulness 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 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

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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 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 rapports. 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. 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

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.
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 RSF 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).  

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

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

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

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

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

**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.

<sup>30</sup> 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 training had to be cancelled as it proved impossible to find participants.
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Roma Inclusion Working Papers