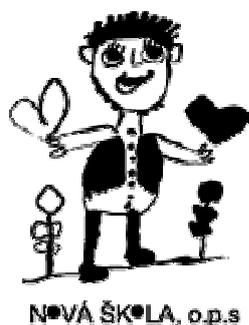


Analysis of socially excluded Roma localities in the Czech Republic and absorption capacity of entities involved in this field

Prague, August 2006



We would like to thank Mr. Bohumil Ptáček and the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs for making the photographs used in this document available for publication herein.

Dear readers,

We are presenting you the following "Analysis of socially excluded Roma localities in the Czech Republic and absorption capacity of entities involved in this field". The Analysis is one of several outputs from the project of the same name, organised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs and funded by the European Social Fund and the Czech Republic State Budget. The project was executed by GAC spol. s r.o. This document together with the Map of Roma localities experiencing or at risk of social exclusion, presents the most important and relevant outputs of this comprehensive analysis. We hope that the quality of information and depth of insight contained herein will contribute to improvement in the quality of life of those in socially excluded localities.

Our aim and wish is to initiate measures that will help to proactively tackle the problem of social exclusion in the Czech Republic using the European Social Fund's support to the maximum extent.

*ESF Support Management Department
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs*

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THE MoLSA'S APPROACH TO INCLUSION OF ROMA COMMUNITIES AND UTILIZATION OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

Poverty and social exclusion are among the current actual issues affecting Czech society. People living on the fringes of society regularly suffer from impeded access to quality education or employment that would increase their ability to re-integrate into society. In the last few years, members of Roma localities have been considered to be the groups most vulnerable to social exclusion. In the field of social inclusion, the Czech Republic has been frequently criticized for its passive approach to the issue of excluded Roma localities. In 2000¹, the Czech Government ratified the Concept of Roma Integration, the main objective of which was to ensure conflict-free coexistence between Roma and the majority society. This requires removal of external and internal barriers precluding inclusion of Roma at risk of social exclusion, especially all kinds of discrimination against individuals and groups based on their race, colour, nationality, language, ethnic or nation background. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic ("MoLSA") is indeed active in pursuing this objective.

As part of the subsidy process in the field of social service support, the MoLSA regularly carries out a programme focusing on support of special social service provision in socially excluded Roma localities. This sub-programme is designed for projects supporting integration of members of Roma localities and promoting field social work in Roma localities experiencing or at risk of social exclusion. As of January 1, 2007, a new Czech Act on Social Services will enter into force (the "Act")². The main purpose of the Act is to protect the rights and interests of people with lowered ability to enforce the same due to various reasons (health disability, insufficiently stimulating social environment, life crisis, etc.). Within the meaning of the Act, the field social work ("FSW") has been specified as a social service of "Field Programmes" (see Section 69 of the Act). The FSW, consisting in active work with people in need including individual help for such individuals and their families, is considered to be one of the most effective tools for tackling the issue of social exclusion. FSW clients include individuals or families from the lowest income groups who are long-term unemployed or dependent on state social support, etc. The basic strategy of the FSW requires that the issues are, as far as possible, handled in cooperation with the client and hence the client learns how to manage such issues and situations on his or her own. The mission and objective of the FSW is to involve as many interested clients as possible as well as mobilizing the community. However, the ultimate goal is to reduce the social exclusion of individuals and families and ensure their gradual integration into the majority society.

The public administration reform in the Czech Republic under which district authorities were dissolved and their competence transferred to regional authorities or local authorities with extended competence also transferred responsibility for support of Roma communities. Based on the *Execution Plan of the Concept of Roma Integration*³, the MoLSA provides methodological support to Regional Coordinators for Roma Affairs ("Regional Coordinator"). This position was established by an amendment to Section 67 of the Act on Regions⁴, as amended by Act No. 320/2002 Coll. Local authorities with extended competence were assigned a duty to perform tasks aiding the enforcement of law in favour of Roma community members and supporting their integration⁵. However, the job description of the Regional Coordinator frequently overlaps with other agendas and its scope is unclear. The situation is similar at the local level because no tasks and methodology supporting the integration of Roma communities have been specified.

The MoLSA intends to improve the general situation concerning the methodology of transferred competence execution in the field of enforcement of rights of Roma community

¹ The amended document was approved in 2004.

² Act No. 108/2006 Coll.

³ Ratified by the Government Resolution No. 1573/2005.

⁴ No. 129/2000 Coll.

⁵ Pursuant to amendment to Section 6 of Act No. 273/2001 Coll., on rights of national minority members, as amended by Act No. 320/2002 Coll.

members and Roma community integration and it is currently working on a methodology designed for the Regional Coordinators as well as for FSW operating in the socially excluded localities.

The integration of socially excluded Roma communities is rather an intersectoral issue exceeding the competence of the MoLSA. The Government Council for Roma Community Affairs and Government Council for National Minorities are also very active and provide valuable advice in this area. Successful implementation of each measure is conditioned by mutual cooperation at all levels of individual partners, contributing to the integration of socially excluded Roma communities.

The MoLSA as a managing body of the ESF

The European Social Fund (the "ESF") represents a new tool enabling the MoLSA to address issues of social exclusion of Roma communities related to long-term unemployment, high discrimination rate, deficient education and qualifications, limited access to higher education and insufficient orientation within the legal and social framework of the Czech Republic as well as in other aspects of life. The MoLSA is responsible for administration and management of EU funds appropriated to the ESF.

The ESF is one of the four EU Structural Funds. The main objectives of the ESF include support of employment, reduction of unemployment and support of social inclusion of individuals at risk of being excluded to the fringes of society due to various reasons. This mission is being achieved mainly via development of human resources. The Czech Republic has been provided with ESF financial resources since its accession to the European Union, i.e. since May 2004.

In the current ESF programme⁶ period (2004 - 2006), problems of Roma localities have been preferentially addressed via an "**integrated approach**", i.e. the members of Roma localities were perceived as one of a number discriminated groups or groups at risk of social exclusion (e.g. such as ethnic minorities, homeless persons, immigrants, individuals released from prison, etc). Projects focused on this larger target group allowed for inclusion of activities addressing the needs of members of excluded Roma localities in the field of the labour market, social services or education without ignoring other disadvantaged groups.

This approach necessitated from the fact that Czech law⁷ prohibits government agencies from collecting statistical data on ethnic minorities. Since it is not legally possible to ascertain whether a particular individual is or is not a member of Roma community, it is difficult to obtain relevant statistical data on Roma minority (based on census, etc.) as well as to design a special project exclusively addressing such target group. Actually, it is possible to design such a specially targeted programme; however it is impossible to obtain relevant figures concerning the benefits of such programme for the Roma minority.

However, recent experience in ESF programme implementation shows that such **integrated approach is not sufficiently effective and fails to bring the desired positive changes** regarding the social inclusion process of Roma communities. On the other hand, the experience gained also shows that in depth knowledge of the given environment and project implementation issues allows projects to be designed focusing directly on integration of socially excluded Roma communities.

This issue is also in the spotlight of the European Commission. Documents covering this issue, including the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe⁸, state that it is possible to process data on ethnic background provided that such data is used with the aim of equalization of minority groups with the majority society. In such cases, the processing of ethnic minority data is not deemed discriminatory.

⁶ Operational Programme for Human Resource Development; Objective 3 Single Programme Document – Prague; and EQUAL Community Initiative Programme, part of the Common Regional Operating Programme.

⁷ Act No. 273/2001 Coll., on rights members of national minority and amendments of some Acts.

⁸ However, the Framework Convention is not binding upon the Czech Republic.

The MoLSA as a managing body of ESF programmes has decided to address such situation and ensure efficient utilization of the ESF to the maximum extent possible in the upcoming programme period 2007 – 2013. The MoLSA has already performed several activities during the recent programme period, from establishment of the Working Group for Roma Community Affairs regarding the ESF to seminars focusing on the relevant issues. In addition, monitoring of projects focusing on integration of Roma communities was performed during the entire period, expecting evaluation by the end of 2006.

Indeed, the realization of the project *Analysis of socially excluded Roma localities in the Czech Republic and absorption capacity of entities involved in this field* whose findings are summarized herein represents another major activity of the MoLSA. The main objective of the analysis was to (i) gather basic information about the situation of socially excluded Roma localities through a general research of the situation in individual geographical areas where they are present and increase understanding of the processes affecting living conditions in various types of such localities in order to ensure proper configuration of the fund utilization system in the programme period of 2007 – 2013; and (ii) ascertain potential and level of absorption capacity of entities involved in this field and providing services therein (especially, non-governmental and non-profit organisations, organisations established by local and regional authorities, as well as local and regional authorities, Labour Offices, private sector entities, natural persons, etc).

Utilization of the ESF in the future

The issue of members of socially excluded Roma localities will be addressed using an individual and alternative approach in relation to provision of ESF programme funds in the upcoming programme period (2007 – 2013). **The Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme** will focus mainly on support of non-investment activities within the field of social integration (according to the nature of the ESF). Hence, members of socially excluded Roma localities will be one of key target groups in the field of social integration and equal opportunities. **A separate measure** has been defined for this target group including specific allocation of funds for projects focusing on integration of excluded groups. The objective of the proposed measure is to ensure a uniform approach to this issue and adequate funding flowing directly to integration services for the selected target group.

As part of the Human Resource and Employment Operational Programme, it is proposed to identify an **independent entity** capable of providing advice and other services and activities in the most vulnerable regions, enabling effective implementation of the national strategy in cooperation with local and regional authorities. In addition, the selected entity will carry out media and information campaigns and share the best practices from the local level. The activities of the entity will be based on the findings of the Analysis. In addition, for the new programme period, an entity will be selected to ensure uniform evaluation of the ESF funds provided for activities in this field.

The **Integrated Operational Programme** proposes another method of support for socially excluded Roma communities consisting in investment support for projects focusing on improvement of social infrastructure in vulnerable socially excluded Roma localities in the Czech Republic. This investment support will be closely related to implementation of projects funded through Human Resources and Employment Operating Programme.

1. BASIC DATA

Title:

Analysis of socially excluded Roma localities in the Czech Republic and absorption capacity of the entities involved in this field

Client:

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic

ESF Support Management Department

Human Resource Development Operating Programme Management and Implementation Unit

Client's partners:

Social Service Department, MoLSA

Czech Republic Government Council for Roma Community Affairs

Funding:

This Project was funded with support of the European Social Fund and Czech Republic State Budget.

Execution:

GAC spol. s r. o. (a limited liability company)

Nová škola o. p. s. (a charity)

Execution period:

November 1, 2005 – August 15, 2006

Primary objectives (as specified by the client):

- Gathering of basic information about the situation in socially excluded Roma localities necessary for proper setup of the fund utilization system in the 2007 – 2013 programme period.
- Evaluation of potential and level of absorption capacity of entities operating and providing services in this field.

Specific objectives (as specified by the client):

- Identification and explanation of basic terms applied in the execution of the analysis.
- Summarization of selected source documents and materials related to the given issue.
- Mapping of Roma localities and communities experiencing or vulnerable to social exclusion.
- Identification of relevant entities operating in this field.
- List of localities requiring and qualifying for ESF support; list of potential applicants in the upcoming programme period and/or applicants who have already applied for ESF funds.

Outputs (as specified by the executor):

- Electronic interactive map presenting detailed descriptions of living conditions in the reviewed socially excluded Roma localities in the Czech Republic and contact information on entities involved in this field (e.g. potential applicants for ESF funds) – on CD, 100 pcs.

- Summary brochure complementing the CD and containing necessary explanatory information regarding the analysis of the current state, future strategy development directions, types of projects potentially supported by the ESF – 100 pcs.
- Final report for the client.



2. DEFINITIONS

A) Social exclusion

Social exclusion is defined as **the process whereby an individual or a group of individuals is hindered or completely denied access to the resources, positions and opportunities allowing participation in the social, economic and political activities of the majority society.**

Some groups of citizens are more vulnerable to social exclusion than others. Such vulnerable groups include:

- Insufficiently educated individuals
- Long-term or repeatedly unemployed individuals
- Individuals with intellectual or physical disabilities
- Individuals suffering from addiction of any kind
- Seniors living in solitude
- Immigrants
- Members of minorities (ethnic, religious, sexual, etc.)
- Individuals experiencing hardship and unable to cope with it themselves, etc.

The risk of social exclusion increases in the case of individuals and groups with cumulated factors stated above (and/or other factors).

Social exclusion is frequently connected to and manifested *particularly* (however, not only) by:

- Spatial exclusion: Socially excluded individuals or groups *frequently* live in enclosed and/or isolated localities with low housing standards and insufficient civil services and facilities;
- Symbolic exclusion linked to stigmatisation (generalized attribution of negative traits) of individuals or groups;
- Low level of education and limited opportunity to overcome such disadvantage;
- Limited access to legal forms of income-generating activities, dependence on welfare and related material poverty;
- Risky lifestyle, poor hygienic conditions and related poor state of health;
- Life strategies focused on the present only;
- Isolated economic system characterized by frequent pawning and money borrowings at high interest (usury and "fast loans");
- Higher potential for incidence of social pathological phenomena (e.g. alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling) and delinquency (increased risk of both becoming an offender and a victim);
- Reduced sociocultural competencies (e.g. language barrier, inexperience in or ignorance of one's own rights and duties).

The above-described (and/or other potential) signs of social exclusion occur in various circumstances to various extent. Social exclusion is present even if only one of the signs emerges.

B) A Roma

Ethnic minorities are the groups which are the most vulnerable to social exclusion in the Czech Republic. In the Czech Republic, this is mainly the case with the Roma population. As the term "Roma" is used and understood differently in different contexts, it is necessary to clarify the use of the term in this research project.

By the term 'Roma' we understand **an individual who considers himself or herself to be a Roma even if she or he does not claim so in all circumstances (e.g. census), and/or is considered to be a Roma by a majority of people in his or her neighbourhood based on real or perceived (anthropological, cultural or social) indicators.**

This definition of the term Roma may be perceived as politically incorrect yet it emphasized the fact that **attributed Roma identity** is one of the **primary causes of social exclusion** of many residents of localities under review.

C) A socially excluded Roma locality

By the term 'socially excluded Roma locality' we understand an **area inhabited by a group whose members consider themselves to be Roma and/or are considered as such by a majority of people in their neighbourhood, and who are socially excluded.**

This may apply to a single building in which several individuals or families live, or a whole town district consisting of several hundreds or thousands of residents. This area is both the place to which the "excluded" people are segregated and the place which contributes to their exclusion. The frontiers of such area may both be symbolic (e.g. the locality is perceived as "a bad address", "the house of horror", "Gipsy street", "ghetto", "Bronx", etc.) and physical (e.g. separated by an industrial area, highway, river, waste dump, etc.). In both cases, the frontier is recognised by both the inhabitants of the locality and those who live outside.

Socially excluded Roma localities originate primarily as a consequence of:

- "Natural" migration of poor Roma families to localities with more affordable housing.
- The ousting of Roma families from lucrative flats and allocation to them of substitute housing in localities frequently inhabited by high percentage of Roma population.
- Controlled (by local authorities) relocation of rent dodgers and generally people regarded as "inadaptable" or "trouble-makers" to dormitories or bare flats (*holobyt* in Czech).

For a locality to be perceived as Roma, **it is not at all necessary that Roma inhabitants form the statistical majority therein.** There are, of course, socially excluded localities where the proportion of Roma population is low, or where Roma people do not live at all. (Such localities are not included in the map appended hereto since they fall outside of the scope of this project.) At the same time, it is necessary to realize that by no means all socially excluded Roma live in socially excluded localities (and therefore, covered by our research). Last but not least, considering the fact that many Roma people are fully socially integrated in the majority society, it should be stressed that **it is not possible to equal the term 'Roma' with the term 'socially excluded'.**

Roma community is a term often used in connection with inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities. However the findings of several field research projects show that **the term "Roma community" is inadequate to denote the groups of socially excluded Roma.** In many cases, there is a lack of shared group consciousness associated with the existence of formalized social bonds and shared behaviour patterns, values and attitudes. They are, rather, heterogeneous configurations of nuclear families moved to one place from different parts a city or even from different towns. When it is possible to speak of a community, it is mostly only so when the members of the group are mutually connected by family bonds related to the traditional structure of Roma extended families.

It appears utterly incorrect to us to label (Roma) localities experiencing or at risk of social exclusion with the term 'ghetto'. The increasing usage of this common label, clearly bearing negative connotations, in texts written by journalists, non-profit sector workers as well as members of academe (regardless of contents of the texts) reproduces and strengthens negative perceptions of such localities and motivates related behaviour in practice.⁹ Few people from the majority society want to live or conduct business in a ghetto or in its immediate proximity. Thus labelling a locality with the term ghetto contributes to intensification of the social exclusion of its inhabitants.

⁹ Regardless such mostly unintentional stigmatisation, it is necessary to note that general use of the term to describe all localities with Roma inhabitants ("Roma ghetto") and all localities with a poor population ("poor ghetto") is not correct as well. Such use devalues the meaning of the term "ghetto" as an analytical sociological term with relatively stable contents (compare e.g. Wacquant, L.: "Ghetto" In: N. J. Smelser, P. B. Baltes (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (rev. ed.), London: Pergamon Press, 2003)

3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

Phase 1: November 2005 to January 2006

Objectives:

1. Elaboration of a working list of potentially socially excluded Roma localities in the Czech Republic; evaluation of the maximum number of potential socially excluded Roma localities in the Czech Republic;
2. Elaboration of a list of operationalised indicators of social exclusion and its transformation into a compulsory "record sheet" designed for data collection in Phase 2.

Outputs:

1. Broad list of 333 municipalities with potential socially excluded Roma localities, containing basic descriptive data:
 - Location and type, verification of existence
 - Estimation of the population number, size of the locality
 - Estimation of the Roma population number
 - Existence of NGOs or any other entities supporting local residents and addressing their social exclusion.
2. Narrowed list of 173 municipalities with potentially socially excluded Roma localities selected in cooperation with the client for the field research. The aim was to record the localities showing signs of social exclusion rather than recording all places with a Roma population and hence conducting a substitute census.
3. The "record sheet" divided into two major sections – Profile of a socially excluded locality, and Absorption capacity.
4. Draft definitions of key concepts necessary for operationalised handling of the issues being studied in the field.

Phase 2: January 2006 to April 2006

Objective: Descriptions of localities experiencing or at risk of social exclusion in the Czech Republic based on the list of operationalised indicators of social exclusion ("record sheet").

Outputs:

1. 330 filled-in record sheets describing living conditions in the localities under review.
2. Working list of the NGOs whose activities are at least partially aimed at preventing social exclusion and eliminating its consequences in Roma localities.

Statistical data analysis

Phase 2 of the project included a statistical data analysis aimed at **generation of an analytical foundation for the typology design** as well as at **statistical processing of a set of localities based upon selected living condition characteristics in socially excluded Roma localities in the Czech Republic**. The statistical data analysis provides a basic notion of scale structure, population and living conditions in the entire set of localities within the Czech Republic.

To conclude Phase 2, we compiled a working **typology** of socially excluded Roma localities based on the results of the statistical data analysis. The working typology was taken into account in the selection of localities subjected to further research in the following field phase. The working typology was modified following the final results of Phase 3.

Phase 3: May 2006

Objective: Execution of multiple-day detailed research projects at 20 typologically differing and contrasting localities, focusing on identification of possibilities for reducing social exclusion and initiation of the integration process.

Output:

1. 20 filled-in "Phase 3 Output Forms"¹⁰ serving as the basis for the analysis in Phase 4.

Phase 4: June 2006 to August 2006

Objective: Elaboration of an electronic map of Roma localities experiencing or at risk of social exclusion in the Czech Republic, analysis and strategy for change, elaboration of a final report and brochure, organisation of a closing conference.

Outputs:

1. Electronic map on CD containing descriptive information on 310 reviewed socially excluded Roma localities in 167 municipalities¹¹.
2. Research project final report – analysis and strategy for change.
3. A brochure accompanying the electronic map and summarizing information on the project.
4. Closing conference (carried out on September 6, 2006, as agreed with the client).

¹⁰ Quantitative records of the phenomena studied in the locality given in the course of Phase 3.

¹¹ The lower number of municipalities was caused by our decision not to include certain localities in the map. The reason for this was that either the locality not included was too small or failed to meet the criteria for the definition of a socially excluded Roma locality.

4. LIVING CONDITIONS IN SOCIALLY EXCLUDED ROMA LOCALITIES UNDER REVIEW – SUMMARY

The following chapter provides a graphical summary of the structure of reviewed localities and municipalities in terms of their basic descriptive characteristics. The diagrams presented are based on data gathered through the statistical processing of information recorded by the researchers in the field research in Phases 2&3 (the data served as a basis for the Map of Localities).

When interpreting this chapter it is necessary to consider several specific aspects resulting from the compilation method of input data for the analysis (figures are mostly estimations) as well as relatively dynamic development in these areas.

In particular, we wish to emphasize the following facts:

1. All information herein must be interpreted as information about the **reviewed** socially excluded Roma localities. The research **does not provide information about the situation of all socially excluded Roma** or all Roma in the Czech Republic. Many socially excluded Roma families live individually outside the localities identified by us. In addition, by no means all Roma can be considered socially excluded;
2. Information was collected from January to May 2006 while the analysis was executed from June to August 2006. All project outputs summarizing factual information about living conditions must be interpreted purely as an orientation tool and the **information** should be **updated** regularly. The data cannot be taken as final because the issue of social exclusion is very dynamic.
3. All **numerical data** are **estimations**. The situation of socially excluded Roma localities is constantly developing, the population number changes and there is lack of accurate and reliable numerical data at a nationwide level. In this connection we have to note that we have always sought estimations from multiple reliable sources with long-term knowledge of the given locality in order to use the most accurate estimations.

Any differences between 'N' as specified in the diagrams ('N' is the number of units summarized in the diagram) and the total number of localities and/or municipalities encompassing the reviewed socially excluded Roma localities represent **units where the required information was not obtained**.

4.1 Localities under review¹²

Figure 1 - The structure of the reviewed socially excluded Roma localities according to the size of Roma population

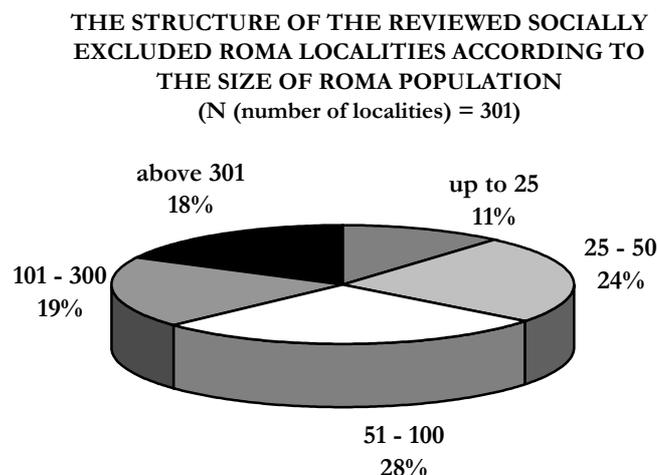


Figure 1 describes the percentage of reviewed socially excluded Roma localities populated by various population number categories (i.e. the total number of Roma population living in given localities).

Figure 2 - The share of Roma population in the total population of the reviewed socially excluded Roma localities

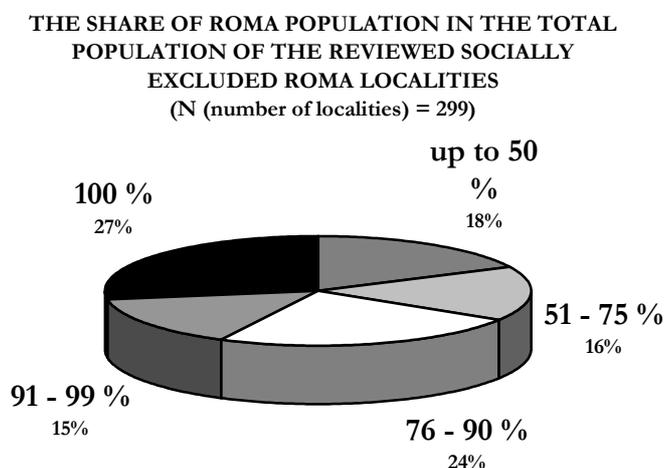


Figure 2 summarizes the level of homogeneity of the reviewed socially excluded Roma localities in the Czech Republic. The diagram clearly shows that localities with relatively higher percentages of Roma population prevail. The localities were categorized pursuant to the proportion of the Roma population to the total population of a locality and the diagram shows the share of a given category in the total socially excluded localities. In eight of ten localities (80%), the

¹² It is necessary to note that delimitation of a locality is rather problematic because it mostly depends on an arbitrary decision; in other words, it is a subjective decision whether a certain house or street shall or shall not be considered part of the given locality. Delimitation may modify the proportions specified in the diagrams.

estimated share of the Roma is above 50%, while in more than 40% of localities their share exceeds 90%.

Figure 3 – Age and development of the reviewed socially excluded Roma localities

AGE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVIEWED SOCIALLY EXCLUDED ROMA LOCALITIES
 (N (number of localities) = 299)

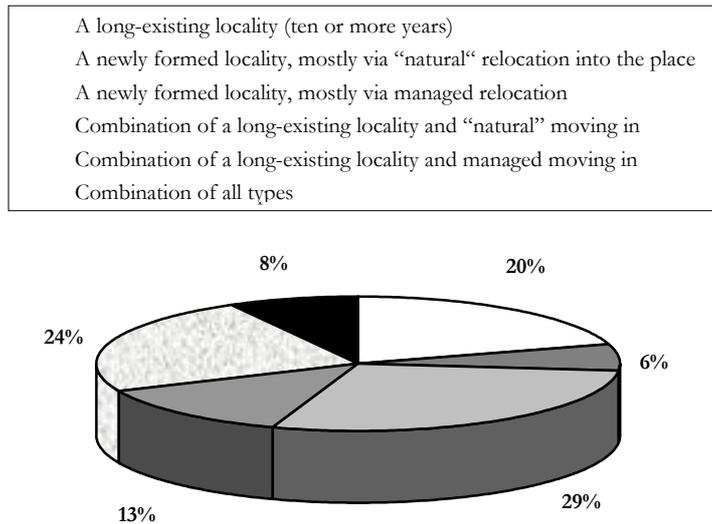


Figure 3 describes the structure of the set of reviewed socially excluded Roma localities in terms of their formation character and development to date. It shows the proportions of long-existing localities, localities formed relatively recently (within the last ten years), and long-existing localities being currently replenished by managed or "natural" moving in of new Roma residents. The fact that 90% of the reviewed localities was either formed (in most cases) or substantially increased via migration ("spontaneous" or managed) in the last ten years confirms the dynamics of the social and spatial exclusion process.

Figure 4 – Structure of property ownership in the reviewed socially excluded Roma localities

STRUCTURE OF PROPERTY OWNERSHIP IN THE REVIEWED SOCIALLY EXCLUDED ROMA LOCALITIES
 (N (number of localities) = 305)

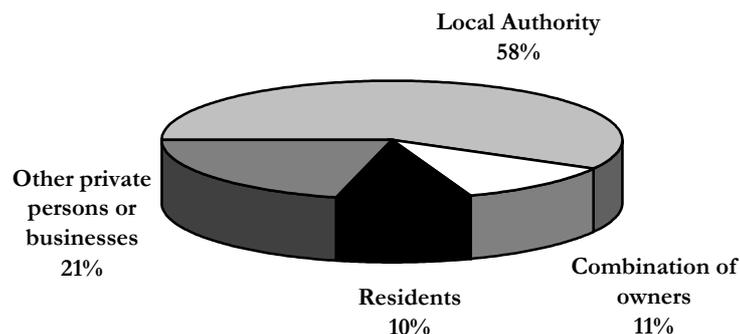


Figure 4 illustrates the structure of the reviewed socially excluded localities in terms of property ownership types. By far the largest share of the properties is owned by local authorities. The remaining properties are owned by local residents or other private persons or businesses. In certain cases, properties are owned by multiple types of owners. To a large degree, the type of ownership of properties comprising a locality determines the situation therein and in particular the opportunities to solve the problems.

Figure 5 – The degree of spatial exclusion of the reviewed socially excluded Roma localities

**THE DEGREE OF SPATIAL EXCLUSION
OF THE REVIEWED SOCIALLY
EXCLUDED ROMA LOCALITIES
(N (number of localities) = 307)**

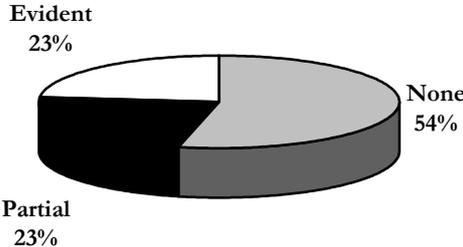


Figure 5 shows that the majority of socially excluded Roma localities is not spatially excluded ("none" spatial exclusion – the reviewed localities are relatively integrated into adjacent estate). Less than one in four reviewed localities is "partially" spatially excluded, e.g. the locality is located at the edge of a municipality or beside general residential districts, or is partly separated (e.g. by an industrial zone, highway, etc.). Less than one fourth of the reviewed socially excluded Roma localities are "evidently" spatially excluded (i.e. isolated from any adjacent estate, evidently spatially separated by an industrial site, highway, river, waste dump, etc.).

Figure 6 – Prevailing condition of houses and flats in the reviewed socially excluded Roma localities

**PREVAILING CONDITION OF HOUSES AND FLATS IN
THE REVIEWED SOCIALLY EXCLUDED ROMA
LOCALITIES**
(N (number of localities) = 305)

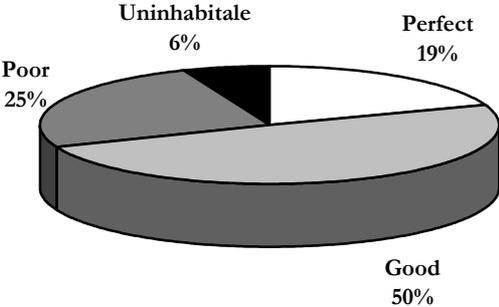


Figure 6 shows the condition of houses and flats comprising the reviewed socially excluded Roma localities in terms of compliance with basic technical parameters rather than the level of facilities. The condition categories are as follows:

"Perfect": Only locally damaged façade (plaster), occasional broken window or door, roof in perfect condition, etc.

"Good": Some windows and/or doors broken, façade damaged to a larger extent, local moulds, common areas not properly maintained, etc. It is necessary to note that the "good" category in many cases fails to meet general housing standards expected by the majority society. Therefore, this category must be considered relatively to other properties in worse condition.

"Poor": Sanitary installations and distribution systems in poor conditions/unfitted for use, dilapidated common areas, damaged roof (leakages), broken windows and/or doors, partially impaired bearing structure, etc.

"Uninhabitable": A building fails to meet technical parameters required for occupation, seriously impaired bearing structure, broken roof, collapsing walls, widespread moulds, sanitary installations and distribution systems completely out of order or not available, many broken windows and/or doors, etc.

Figure 7 – The amenities of houses and flats in the reviewed socially excluded Roma localities

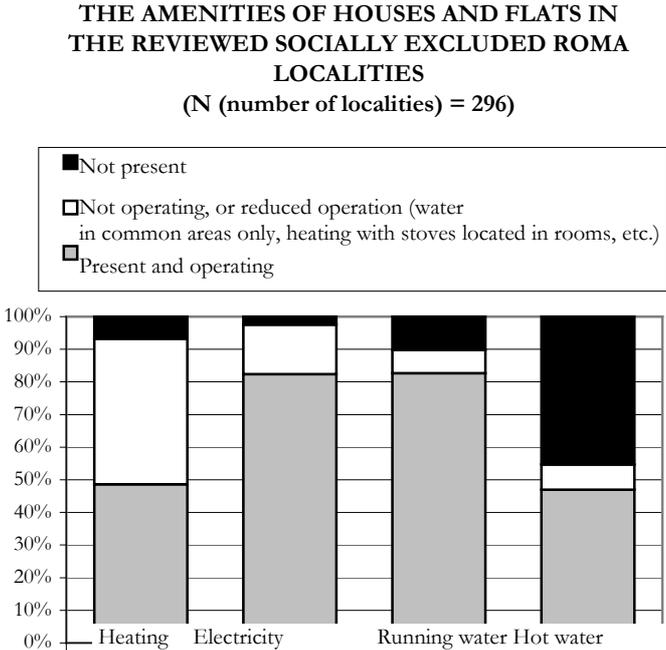


Figure 7 shows the level of amenities (heating, electricity, running and hot water) of buildings comprising the Roma localities experiencing or at risk of social exclusion. The conditions prevailing in each locality is taken into account.

Figure 8 –Teacher's assistant available in schools attended by children from the reviewed socially excluded localities

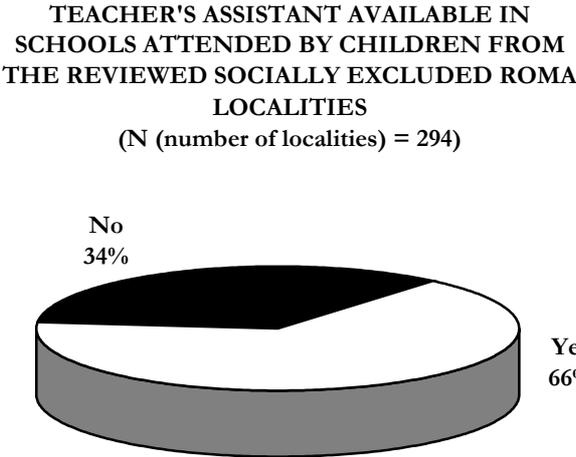


Figure 8 shows the availability of teacher's assistants' services in reviewed socially excluded Roma localities. It shows whether an teacher's assistant is available in **at least one of the primary schools** attended by children from the given locality. The diagram **fails to describe how many children from the given locality attend the school with the teacher's assistant available** (can be the majority in some cases, or almost none in others).

4.2 Municipalities under review

Figure 9 – The size (total population) of municipalities encompassing the reviewed socially excluded Roma localities

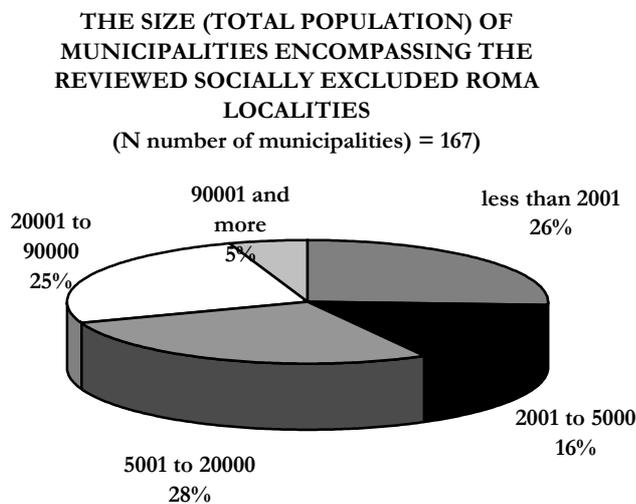


Figure 9 shows the structure of the set of municipalities encompassing the socially excluded Roma localities under review in terms of their total population. Each municipality is represented only once in the diagram irrespective of number of localities it contains.

Figure 10 – Existence of a specific concept of Roma integration in municipalities encompassing the reviewed socially excluded Roma localities

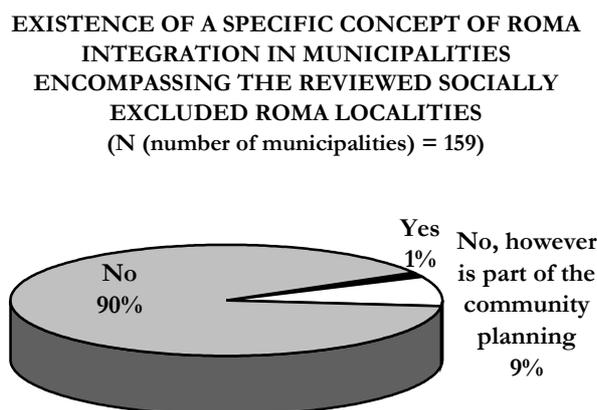


Figure 10 shows the situation of the municipalities encompassing the reviewed localities in terms of execution of specific concepts of Roma integration. From municipalities with no concept in place, we specify municipalities addressing the Roma issue as a specific part of existing (rather than in preparation) community planning process. Each municipality is represented only once in the diagram irrespective of number of localities it encompasses.

Figure 11 – Familiarity of central and local authorities in municipalities encompassing the reviewed socially excluded Roma localities with ESF operation

FAMILIARITY OF CENTRAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN MUNICIPALITIES ENCOMPASSING THE REVIEWED SOCIALLY EXCLUDED ROMA LOCALITIES WITH ESF OPERATION
(N (number of municipalities) = 137)

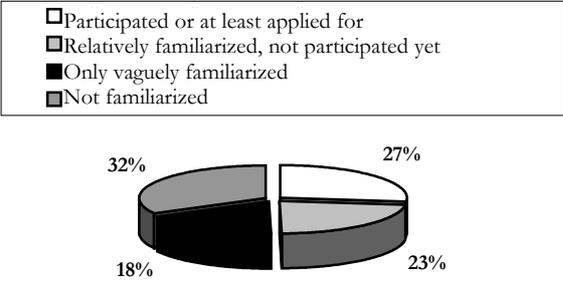


Figure 11 illustrates various experiences of municipalities encompassing the reviewed localities in utilization of structural funds and the ESF in particular including familiarity with its operation. Each municipality is represented only once in the diagram irrespective of number of localities it encompasses.

The categorization is as follows: "**Participated or at least applied for**": An authority has already prepared some project(s) (irrespective of whether the project(s) was/were finally supported or not); "**Relatively familiarized**": An authority considers itself to be adequately informed (via printed materials, seminars, web, consultations, etc.) however it has not prepared a project yet; "**Only vaguely familiarized**": An authority has only limited basic information about the ESF; "**Not familiarized**": An authority is aware of the ESF but lacks of any information (there was no case of an entity not aware of the ESF).

Figure 12 – Existence of any relevant NGO in municipalities encompassing the reviewed socially excluded Roma localities

EXISTENCE OF ANY RELEVANT NGO IN MUNICIPALITIES ENCOMPASSING THE REVIEWED SOCIALLY EXCLUDED ROMA LOCALITIES
(N (number of municipalities) = 163)

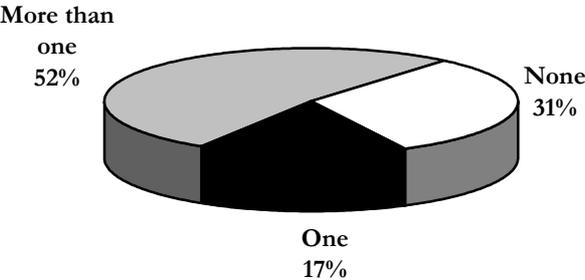


Figure 12 provides a basic overview of existence of NGOs addressing the Roma minority in municipalities encompassing the reviewed socially excluded Roma localities. The diagram does not reflect the level or intensity of work of NGOs. Each municipality is represented only once in the diagram irrespective of number of localities it encompasses.

6. ASPECTS CONSTITUTING SOCIAL EXCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The following chapter describes individual aspects of social exclusion, including:

- Impeded access to quality housing
- Impeded access to the labour market
- Impeded access to education.

In our opinion, the above-mentioned aspects constitute exclusion of residents of the reviewed localities¹³.

Considering the assignment, i.e. mapping of **localities** experiencing or at risk of social exclusion, the **issue of housing** was deemed crucial. This issue and its post-1989 (as well as pre-1989) development closely relates to current distribution of the localities in the map of the Czech Republic and in plans of individual towns and villages. Socially excluded localities are most likely to be found in certain regions and certain parts of towns or villages, specifically in those parts which are not lucrative for other residents due to various reasons. These localities have been gradually populated by relocated families of socially excluded individuals (unless already living here before 1989) who become "prisoners" of such places unable to leave the locality despite their efforts.

The families of socially excluded individuals mentioned in the preceding sentence are primarily families of long-term unemployed Roma (i.e. persons considered to be Roma by their wider vicinity). To say it in simplified way, **unemployment** can be taken as a primary factor in the social exclusion process of residents of the reviewed localities. Long-term exclusion from the labour market has often led to life strategy changes resulting from various facts including weakened income basis of a family. Shortly after the primary earner's job loss, these families frequently stopped paying the rent. As rent dodgers, they were sooner or later relocated from their original settlement.

Finally, it is necessary to say that **minimal education and no or low qualifications** of most residents of the reviewed localities were the main reasons for unemployment and inability to reintegrate into the structured labour market.

Unlike the other sections, section 6.5 addresses three aspects of social exclusion that cannot be considered primary factors in social exclusion but which still represent substantial barriers to social integration of residents of reviewed localities. At the same time, these aspects do contribute to the deepening of social exclusion if not effectively addressed. These aspects include **increased occurrence of risk phenomena, poor social competencies and impaired health**.



¹³ The identified dimensions reflect three priorities of the Action Plan for the Czech Republic within the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005 – 2015): Housing, Employment, Education. The fourth priority of the Action Plan, i.e. Health, is covered in Section 6.5 hereof.

6.2 Impeded access to quality housing

6.2.1 General specification of the low-quality housing issue

The housing issue is closely related to the issue of formation and development of Roma localities experiencing or at risk of social exclusion. Large majority of such localities has been formed in locations considered non-attractive due to various reasons and in which hardly anybody wanted to live voluntarily. Some of the localities were solely formed as substitute (or emergency) housing for individuals or families who had lost their previous housing (mostly of better quality).

Some of the present socially excluded Roma localities were formed at locations where the Roma population was quite large even before 1989. However, **most of localities** were not **formed until the 1990s as a consequence of the post-communist transformation**.¹⁴ In the field of housing, the transformation was marked by:

- Cessation of the state-supported flat allocation system (transfer of the housing stock into ownership of local authorities);
- Restitutions of residential houses;
- Conceptless privatisation of a substantial part of the housing stock;
- Gentrification of historical centres of towns, i.e. the ousting socially weak residents, followed by renewal and conversion into residences for high-income individuals and businesses.

Since most Roma lived in state-owned or company-owned flats rather than in cooperative flats or private houses before 1989, the above-mentioned changes (combined with impacts of social exclusion in other aspects of life¹⁵) substantially contributed to the **deterioration of housing conditions** of a large number of Roma. Such deterioration was primarily related to the gradual concentration of Roma inhabitants in *certain* localities which occurred (and is still occurring) through:

- "Natural" relocation of the poor Roma families to localities with less expensive housing;
- Ousting of Roma families from lucrative flats to substitute dwellings in localities frequently inhabited by high percentage of Roma population;
- Controlled (by local authorities) relocation of rent dodgers and people generally regarded as "inadaptable" or "trouble-makers" to dormitories or bare flats.

In the research, we identified 310 Roma localities experiencing or at risk of social exclusion with a total combined population of 60,000 to 80,000 Roma according to our estimation. **The situation in individual localities was very diverse in many aspects**. Aside from the various age and formation mechanisms, the localities vary *primarily* in:

- Size (and relative size compared with the encompassing municipality);
- Location within a municipality and degree of spatial exclusion;
- Availability of basic civil services and facilities (including transport serviceability);
- Degree of ethnic and social homogeneity of residents;
- Types and sizes of houses and flats and forms of their ownership;
- Condition and amenities of houses and flats.

¹⁴ 65% of the reviewed localities are 10 and more years old. The majority of such localities still receive the Roma who have decided to move or who have been moved. 35% of the localities were formed in the last ten years. See Figure 3.

¹⁵ E.g. loss of job followed by sinking into material poverty and decreasing ability to pay rent and other service charges connected with the housing.

Some of the mentioned aspects (in combination with other factors) substantially affect the quality of housing in the reviewed localities. Although the quality of housing varies among the localities, **the living conditions therein are in most cases considerably below the common standard** in the Czech Republic.

Also **the approach of local authorities in municipalities encompassing the localities varies**. Certain local authorities more-or-less directly contributed to formation of the localities and some of them further contribute to intensification of social exclusion of their (not exclusively) Roma residents. Such local authorities accept spatial segregation of "trouble-makers" as an effective solution. Another group of local authorities doesn't intentionally exclude the Roma but rather act as passive witnesses to the developments. This approach is frequently based on the fact that such local authorities do not perceive the situation as a problem requiring a solution. On the other hand, there are a few local authorities (however, the minority) trying to stop further social sinking of the localities and their inhabitants through the use of various integration tools.

6.2.2 Current situation

In the following section we describe *selected* sub-issues which we consider crucial for the issue of impeded access to quality housing. First, we explore major mechanisms of the social exclusion process in the area of housing, in particular how and why the Roma at risk of social exclusion lose their flats and move (or are moved) to substandard housing settings. Second, we identify major signs of substandard housing in the socially excluded localities. Finally, we address the issue of poor prospects of residents of socially excluded localities for any housing improvements (i.e. prospects for better housing outside the socially excluded localities).

A) Mechanisms of the social exclusion process in the area of housing

As already mentioned above, the formation of socially excluded Roma localities is closely related to gradual concentration of socially weak Roma families in low-standard housing settings. This process frequently corresponds with transition of such families from **tenancy for an indefinite period** in a council house, through **tenancy for a definite period** in a council or private flat to **substandard housing settings** (in council or commercial dormitories, bare flats, shelters, or overcrowded flats of relatives).¹⁶ There are also many families at risk of such process. The reverse process (i.e. improvement of housing) is rather rare (see below).

The **switch from protected to an unprotected¹⁷ tenancy** is in most cases initiated by a breach of the law by either party (i.e. landlord or tenants). On the landlord side, it can be various **semi-legal or illegal acts by owners** (including certain local authorities) to oust "trouble-making" Roma tenants. Owners frequently try to convince the tenants to sign a written agreement on termination of the lease. To this end, they use combination of threats and promises (compensation payment). This behaviour abuses the poor general knowledge, poor legal awareness and poor orientation regarding administrative procedures of the socially weak Roma.

¹⁶ Sometimes such families have no place to go and end up on the street while their children are taken away from the (otherwise functional) family to institutional care.

¹⁷ **Protected tenancy** can be terminated by a landlord exclusively due to causes specified in law, including material breach of good morals in the house and material breach of obligations arising from the lease (failure to pay the rent, see below). A tenant can file an action if he or she disagrees with the causes for termination and shall prove that the grounds for termination were not existent. The landlord is obliged to offer the tenants shelter (the court may order the landlord to provide a substitute flat in case of a family with minor children). If the tenancy is not terminated by landlord due to causes specified by law (for example if the landlord wants to refurbish the house), the tenant is always entitled to a substitute flat of equal quality. The same applies to a lease for a definite period of time, however solely during the lease period. Upon the expiration of the lease period, all rights towards the owner cease to exist unless the lease is extended.

Unprotected tenancy concerns people using a flat without a proper lease agreement or based on a contract for accommodation (dormitories). People in such tenement are not entitled to any form of substitute housing.

On the tenant's side, this basically concerns breaches of the law by the tenants, with **failure to pay the rent and fees for related services** being the most common.¹⁸ There are several causes for this, including without limitation:

- Tenants duly pay the rent and fees for related services but sometimes they are unable to pay high arrears following the annual accounts of water and/or electricity consumption.¹⁹
- A family incurs unexpected expenses related to an unforeseen event (disease, funeral, wedding, etc.).
- A family is in debt (usurers, credit companies lending money at a high interest rate), and is required to repay debts or its social benefits are subject to the execution.
- A family member suffers from any type of addiction (alcohol or drug abuse, gambling).
- Inability to run the household often due to apathy caused by precarious life situation. This inability is marked by preferring certain expensive items (e.g. electronics) over payments for every day needs. In the socially excluded settings, these items serve as status symbols.²⁰
- Historically, disqualification for social benefits due to failure to obtain Czech citizenship was a frequent cause of rent defaults.

Local authorities as well as private owners approach the issue of rent dodgers differently. In some places, prevention and timely measures addressing the issue are carried out to prevent growth of debts while in others such effort is neglected due to various reasons. Sometimes, owners even wait until the debt grows to a certain level allowing them to displace the unwanted tenants. **It is clear that the approach of local authorities to rent dodgers substantially affects growth of existing (influx of new relocated families), or formation of new socially excluded localities.**

Other reasons causing loss of a flat may include **"sale" of the rented flat** (its transfer to another person or subleasing to relatives, foreign workers, etc.) or **long-term disuse** of the flat (e.g. due to stay abroad).

B) Low quality of housing

The following section describes living conditions in the socially excluded Roma localities. As mentioned above, the living conditions vary from locality to locality. Therefore not everything mentioned below reflects situation in every locality.²¹ However, the described features were observed in a *majority* of the reviewed set of localities.

Initially, we shall address the **quality of housing in the narrow sense of the word** (i.e. condition of houses and flats comprising the reviewed localities):

- Socially excluded localities often comprise **low quality houses with small flats of lower classes** (first class flats were very rare in the reviewed set of localities).
- The flats are mostly **inadequately equipped**.²² Sanitary facilities are in many cases located outside the flats (in the corridor or even outside the building) and sometimes shared with several households (this often means that such sanitary facilities are not routinely

¹⁸ According to law, a landlord may terminate a lease agreement if a tenant is in default with payment of the rent or fees for related services by more than three months (not necessarily consecutive).

¹⁹ Occasionally, such arrears do not correspond with actual consumption of the given family. In many localities, metering devices are not installed for individual flats but rather for the entire building or even multiple buildings (or the entire locality). The total consumption (mostly enormous) is then apportioned among the households. This is often complicated by obsolete distribution systems with undetectable leaks.

²⁰ The status symbols are used to publicly declare membership of a specific social stratum or to differentiate from the surroundings.

²¹ The electronic map appended hereto provides basic description of individual localities under review.

²² See Figure 7 showing the level of amenities of houses and flats in the reviewed socially excluded localities.

maintained). Their capacity is frequently inadequate, in some cases the residents must pay for each use. In many localities there is no hot water available even in the common sanitary facilities. In several cases there is no water connection at all (residents use water from a source in the yard or bring it from relatives and neighbours). Water and power connections of several households (or even the entire locality) are cut due to defaulted payments to energy providers. There are localities with no power available for extended period of time.

- These flats are sometimes rented for high rent despite their low quality and poor amenities. In certain cases, families pay a substantially higher amount for a small flat or even one room in a dormitory than they used to pay in their previous flat (mostly larger and of better quality).
- Many houses in the socially excluded localities are characterized by **poor hygienic conditions** (wet masonry, mould, difficult to heat, etc.). This fact (combined with frequent risky lifestyle and neglected health care) is reflected in the **poor health** of the residents.
- **Flats are often overcrowded** (number of residents is not appropriate to the size of a flat). There are two major reasons for this: Children staying in the parents' flats with their newly established families, with low prospects for getting their own flat, and the Roma providing accommodation to relatives who have lost their flats or moved from Slovakia.
- **Many houses are in a poor technical condition and gradually deteriorating.**²³ In particular, common areas are the most dilapidated assets (entrance halls, corridors, cellars). Experts also reported poor technical condition of roofs, facades and distribution networks. In this connection, the above-mentioned overcrowding of flats plays substantial role as well. In many cases, house owners are also partly responsible for the deterioration of houses and flats as they frequently neglect necessary maintenance and repairs. The poor condition of new buildings is often caused by cost-cutting efforts (cheap materials, low quality of construction works) rather than by residents' tendency to negligent overuse of appropriated houses, as stereotypically assumed.
- Residency in dormitories and bare flats is often subject to house or accommodation rules, the provisions of which *sometimes* verge on humiliation, infringe upon privacy and contravene the law.²⁴ In some cases, there is a caretaker (an employee of a security agency in certain cases) or security CCTV system monitoring compliance with the rules.²⁵

Another group of characteristics relates to **quality of housing in the wider sense** (entire localities and settings containing individual houses inhabited by socially excluded individuals and families):²⁶

- The majority of localities are more-or-less **spatially excluded**²⁷, i.e. located outside the general residential areas (on the edge of villages or towns, sometimes several hundred meters outside the municipal limits). In some cases, the localities are located within the inner city however in areas not primarily intended for residential purposes (e.g. industrial zones) or separated from residential areas (by river, railroad, highway, factory, etc.).

²³ Among the total number of 310 localities, 6% contained uninhabitable houses and 25% houses in poor condition, as reported by experts. In 50% of localities the condition of houses was considered good (see Figure 6). It is necessary to note that "good" condition still fails to meet the housing expectations of the middle class in the Czech Republic.

²⁴ Residents are not allowed to have visitors in their flats (or must inform the owner in advance), are obligated to enable the owner or his or her employees to make inspections of the flat at any time, etc.

²⁵ Living conditions in some dormitories are often comparable to conditions in a penitentiary, according to residents as well as representatives of NGOs.

²⁶ It is necessary to note that some of the specified negative characteristics may also affect people living in wider vicinity of the localities (especially in village settings).

²⁷ 23% of the localities under the review show evident spatial exclusion, 23% show partial spatial exclusion.

- The majority of the reviewed localities are **ethnically (and socially) rather homogeneous**²⁸, hosting mostly socially weak Roma. The wider community generally considers such people to be "inadaptable", noisy and trouble-makers. This perception is often supported by local media. Due to such **stigmatisation**, the localities gradually become places to which it is better to give a wide berth.
- A number of the localities experience **lower availability of basic civil services and facilities**. There are hardly any shops, services and institutions in the proximity. If there is a shop, it generally offers overpriced goods. (On the other hand, there are pawn shops and gambling clubs in the proximity.)
- **Also the transport serviceability is often poor**. In some cases, there is no public transport stop in the proximity, or alternatively there is a stop but with only a few connections per day.

C) Poor prospects for housing improvements

Locality inhabitants have generally **very poor prospects for moving outside the locality**. In particular, the housing problem of young families (living in a parents' household) is a major issue. Such families, mostly dependent on welfare, cannot afford to rent a flat at the market rent. In addition, they are 'double-stigmatised' (they are the Roma and they are from the 'Bronx', 'house of horror', etc.), increasing concerns (based on prejudices) of house owners.

Roma families living in the localities generally have no good prospects for getting (other) council flats. Such flats are scarce (some local authorities do not have any flats because they have privatised the housing stock). In addition, the **council flat allocation systems** are not transparent and (mostly indirectly) discriminating²⁹. The systems are governed by local authority notices so they vary from municipality to municipality. However, there are three major allocation methods:

- Market-based allocation (the "envelope method" or public auction). In this system, socially weak individuals are disqualified by their inability to save up a large amount of money.
- Waiting list-based allocation (combined with the "rating system"). In this system, socially weak Roma are disqualified by various allegedly neutral allocation criteria.³⁰
- Allocation of flats „in the municipal interest".³¹ This system disqualifies all socially weak citizens.

Families finding themselves in commercial or council dormitories (or in "bare flats"³²) for "rent dodgers", "socially weak" or "inadaptable citizens" have in practice no chance of getting a council flat. Such housing is primarily occupied by rent dodgers whose lease contract has been terminated with the consent of a court under the condition a substitute flat or

²⁸ In 66% of the reviewed localities, the share of Roma in the total population reaches at least 76%. 27% of localities are occupied exclusively by Roma (100%) (see Figure 2). It is necessary to note that determination of the share is rather problematic because it depends on (mostly arbitrary) delimitation of the localities; in other words it depends on a decision on whether a certain house or street shall or shall not be considered part of the locality.

²⁹ **Direct discrimination** shall mean the situation where a person is treated in a less favourable manner compared to other persons in a similar situation, due to his or her racial or ethnic origin. **Indirect discrimination** shall mean the situation where a person of certain racial or ethnic origin is affected by allegedly neutral provisions, criteria or practice to a larger degree than other persons in a similar situation except when such provisions, criteria or practice are justified by a reasonable purpose and the means of their execution are reasonable and necessary.

³⁰ E.g. duration of the permanent residence in the municipality; moral integrity (of applicant or family members), i.e. no criminal record; exclusion of applicants whose previous lease was terminated due to a material breach of lease obligations (default in rent payment); exclusion of applicants whose previous lease was terminated due to a material breach of good morals in the house; exclusion of applicants with debt on rent (or applicants who had debt on rent or whose family members had debt on rent), etc.

³¹ E.g. to employees of the Municipal Authority or municipal organisations.

³² The term "bare flat" is not supported by any legal regulation and its interpretation varies from municipality to municipality. In terms of quality of housing, there is hardly any difference between the "bare flats" and council dormitories for "rent dodgers" or "inadaptable citizens". However, there is a difference in the legal relationships between dwellers and owners. Generally, the relationship between the tenant and owner of a bare flat is governed by a lease agreement concluded for definite period of time while the accommodation in a dormitory is rather governed by a contract for accommodation. The dweller is hence not entitled to substitute accommodation if the contract is terminated for any reason.

shelter be provided. **However, not only rent dodgers live in these facilities**³³ but also people who were moved there from damaged flats. Originally, they were supposed to stay there only "temporarily" until the local authorities provide them a substitute flat. But in fact, they have already been living there for several years. These flats are also sometimes offered to Roma applicants for council flats. Especially for young families, this represents the only opportunity to become independent of their parents. All people living in such facilities are generally treated as rent dodgers irrespective of how they have got there. This without exception decreases prospects for their return to standard housing settings.

6.2.3 Social integration tools in the field of housing

In the following section, we describe major tools currently in use to prevent social exclusion and alleviate its consequences in the field of housing. The sequence of tools corresponds with the sub-issues analysed above.

6.2.3.1 Attenuation of social exclusion mechanisms in the field of housing

Problem: Rent dodging

As mentioned above, rent dodging is one of the most frequent reasons for moving tenants out and hence impairing their housing situation. Local authorities in particular should only apply this most extreme solution in unavoidable cases. Their approach should not be based merely on profit-making grounds (i.e. as 'prudent businessman') but they shall also act as entities executing their own social policy.

Rent dodging need to be prevented. Anytime a family fails to pay the rent, the situation must immediately be tackled. First, the reason for the default must be identified, be it negligence or some more serious problem. Upon the first failure, it is appropriate to threaten the family with a sanction³⁴; upon the second failure, local authority (or NGO) workers should consider helping the family solve the problem.

Effective solution of rent dodging (as well as other issues related to housing) is generally conditioned by improved communication between involved entities (Housing Department or property manager, Social Department or FSW on one side, and tenants on the other side).³⁵ Most of the tools below need not necessarily be considered as 'Roma-focused'. Once the tools are implemented, they are (and should be) used generally for non-Roma rent dodgers as well. This ensures that local authorities that implement such tools are not confronted with a public perception of 'favouritism' or 'positive discrimination' towards Roma. However, the local authorities must ensure dialogue with the public on this issue.

Payment schedule

Benefits:

- Allow for gradual repayment of rent debt at an agreed pace (taking into account the actual ability of tenants).
- It is more likely that an owner will get the entire amount in this way than by claiming a one-time repayment.

³³ The generalized label "rent dodger" covers people who are in long-term default in payment of the rent (several years in some cases) as well as people who failed to pay the rent only occasionally (e.g. due to a life crisis).

³⁴ Of course, taking full account of the potential impacts of such sanctions, in particular in relation to families with young children.

³⁵ Escalation of debt is sometimes enabled by poor (or absent) communication between entities involved.

Drawbacks:

- The tenants may get used to the fact that if they fail to pay they can always repay the debt later.

Bottlenecks:

- Local authorities are not motivated to use the tool. The tool requires additional administration and local authorities have had bad experiences with the payment schedules being breached.
- Debtors are not motivated enough to accept the payment schedule. (It is wise to use motivation tools such as waiving the penalties.)
- Some owners will not use the tool because rent dodging gives them an excuse to move the debtors out, enabling them to increase the value of their property (via new lease under more favourable conditions, or sale).

Lease agreement concluded for a definite period of time to be regularly extended provided that tenants meet the agreed terms and conditions

Benefits:

- The risk of non-extension motivates tenants to pay the rent and helps prevent potential rent dodging.

Drawbacks:

- Insecurity for tenants.
- Additional administration related to extension of agreements (for landlord).
- According to amendments to the Civil Code, no lease agreements shall be extended automatically but it is necessary to conclude a new agreement. If a new agreement is not executed, lease period terminates according to the original agreement and the tenant loses his or her housing.

Bottlenecks:

No bottlenecks have been identified.

A designated beneficiary

The tool allows transfer of social benefits or any part thereof to an account of a person or entity other than the authorized beneficiary³⁶. The tool can be used in cases when payment of a certain benefit to an authorized beneficiary fails to meet the intended purpose. In particular in the field of housing, a designated beneficiary (i.e. the landlord) may be appointed if the authorized beneficiary fails to use the benefit (housing allowance) towards rent payment. Appointment of the designated beneficiary requires consent of the designated beneficiary **NOT** the authorized beneficiary.

Benefits:

- The tool has preventive effects.
- The tool precludes further escalation of debts of families, preventing application of extreme solutions such as termination of the lease agreement.

³⁶ "Authorized beneficiary" shall mean a person to whom the relevant state social support benefits are due.

Drawbacks:

- Application of the tool may further undermine already poor money management skills of families.
- Tenants ignore the fact that the rent is paid out of their money and believe that the rent is paid by someone else (the state) or that their state social support benefits are too low.
- The tool has been misused several times (e.g. by a dormitory owner who was a relative of a mayor).
- Failure to implement any rent dodging prevention tool prepares the ground for property privatisation by local authorities/owner (indebtedness – moving out – sale).

Bottlenecks:

- Local authorities are not motivated to use the tool. The tool requires additional administrative burdens. Some local authorities are not adequately informed about actual functioning of the tool. Frequently, it is wrongly assumed that the application of the tool must be approved by the authorized beneficiary (i.e. the tenant).

Prevention of rent dodging via FSW³⁷**Benefits:**

- Field social workers may focus both on prevention (motivate inhabitants to pay the rent) and solution of existing problems (negotiate the payment schedules).

Drawbacks:

- The effective functioning of the field social work is conditioned by establishing close relationship with the client families. Such relationships are developed on a long-term basis so the preventive effect of the tool is relatively delayed.

Bottlenecks:

- FSW involvement may have no impact on the issue because the debt is composed mostly of amounts due for energy and water (for major reasons see above). The majority of commercial energy suppliers strictly reject all above-mentioned tools. Communicating with them and convincing them to accept any such tool is crucial for any improvement of the current situation.

Voltage regulators, measuring devices in each flat

Installation of voltage regulators (a device preventing illegal tapping on the distribution system; used in few localities) or measuring devices in each flat may help solve the complicated situation.

Benefits:

- Each tenant may control their own consumption. No disputes over final accounts.

Drawbacks:

No major drawbacks have been identified.

Bottlenecks:

³⁷ For more information about FSW see section 6.5, *Further selected aspects of social exclusion*.

- High costs.

Working off the debt

Waiving a debt in consideration of voluntary work for the municipality. The tool is not very common although some local authorities (Roudnice nad Labem, Brno, etc.) have used it successfully.

Benefits:

- The tool provides a solution for families which wouldn't otherwise be able to pay their debts.
- Development of work habits in case of unemployed individuals can be regarded as an indirect benefit.

Drawback:

- Application of the tool may motivate others to non-payment.

Bottlenecks:

- Local authorities are not willing to employ the tool due to high demands resulting from the necessary monitoring of the quality of work and supervision (similar to the publicly beneficial work scheme). There is not always enough work for debtors.
- Some local authorities are not adequately informed about actual functioning of the tool. During the field research, we noted doubts concerning premium payments, occupational accidents, etc. Such questions are irrelevant because the work is voluntary.

Waiver of the late payment charge

Benefits:

- It is a motivating tool. The late payment charge will be waived if a debtor actively tackles the situation.

Drawbacks:

No major drawbacks have been identified.

Bottlenecks:

- Local authorities are not willing to employ the tool because for them, the late payment charge represents an expense that would not be paid.
- The tool is mostly unacceptable for power suppliers. And it is indeed power which is frequently not paid for by tenants.

6.2.3.2 Housing quality improvement tools

Problem: Inadequate and expensive housing

Renewal (council-initiated³⁸)

Benefits:

³⁸ Another possibility is NGO-initiated renewal co-funded by the local authority, in which the locality inhabitants are involved (via work).

- In several cases, involvement of the inhabitants in the renewal (under expert supervision) proved useful. Such involvement develops bonds between the inhabitants and houses ensuring better care afterwards.

Drawbacks:

No major drawbacks have been identified.

Bottlenecks:

- Local authorities are often not informed about the opportunity to obtain funds to cover the costs of construction.
- Concerns about repeated dilapidation (sometimes based on negative experiences).
- Some owners want to demolish the building and sell the land rather than to have the building renovated. Therefore, they are not interested in any housing quality improvement.

Transfer to private ownership

The tool is employed in two ways:

- 1) Local authorities sell their houses to Roma tenants for a symbolic price of CZK 1.
- 2) Local authorities purchase substitute flats for Roma in consideration for their current flats.³⁹

Later, local authorities transfer the property to private ownership of the Roma provided that the Roma family duly pays rent and service charges for several years.

Benefits:

- The tool is sometimes used to move apart larger localities.⁴⁰

Drawbacks:

- The majority of houses transferred to private ownership are in a poor technical condition. The tool is not effective for improving or at least conserving the condition of the property. When the property is transferred to the ownership of multiple unrelated families, they often fail to maintain common and adjacent areas. Therefore, it is not likely that they would reach any agreement on future renovation. The inability to save enough money for the renovation poses another problem.
- This process requires ongoing work with new owners.
- The second variant impairs the accessibility of the socially excluded individuals for social service providers.

Bottlenecks:

- Negative public reactions in the location into which a Roma family is moved.

Caretaker

Benefits:

³⁹ In practice, this mostly concerns houses in rural areas.

⁴⁰ For example, the tool was used by Prostějov local authority in connection with clearance of former St Anne's settlement.

- A caretaker supervises the house and its vicinity. *Ideally*, he or she is a widely recognized personality, serving as intermediary between tenants and property owner.
- Work in this function can be motivated by waiving rent debts.

Drawbacks:

- Selection of a local inhabitant as a caretaker may evoke tension among the families living in the locality. Only rarely does such caretaker enjoy the confidence of all inhabitants. Experience shows that a caretaker living outside the locality is more acceptable; caretaker is more acceptable in smaller localities.

Bottlenecks:

- Selection of a suitable personality.

Problem: Overcrowding of flats causing their dilapidation; ethnic homogenisation of localities

A stereotyped notion that Roma like to live together in large groups represents a generally accepted barrier that prevents solving of the problem of overcrowded flats (and generally, of residential segregation). Overcrowding of flats is rather a necessity.

Duty to notify of "long-term guests"

Pursuant to the amendments to the Civil Code, a tenant shall notify the landlord of any changes in the number of persons living in the flat. It is not clear how the local authorities will approach such provisions with regard to overcrowding of flats. The tool is new and so far it is not possible to identify its benefits / drawbacks.⁴¹

Moving socially excluded Roma apart into separate houses

Benefits:

- Decreased concentration of socially excluded Roma in certain localities.

Drawbacks:

- No major drawbacks have been identified.

Bottlenecks:

- Negative public reactions in the localities in which Roma families are moved.
- Shortage of vacant houses / flats.

⁴¹ However, it is likely that this new provision may increase migration of socially excluded families which lost their own flats and look for help at their relatives. Due to such provision, they would not be allowed to stay in their flat (if the given municipality exercises such provision).



6.2.3.3 Housing prospect improving tools

Problem: Shortage of affordable housing

The issue of poor prospects for improvement of the housing situation of socially excluded people is largely influenced by the housing policy of local authorities. Not merely are the local authorities the predominant house owners in most of the localities⁴², they are also required by law to look after the housing needs of their citizens. However, this duty is not further specified (there are no specific duties or activities defined, no penalties are specified for cases where local authorities fail to comply). In effect, some local authorities rather prefer to make the maximum profit out of their housing stock over pursuing socially beneficial objectives. The process that is currently considered favourable for the municipal treasury, i.e. marginalisation of Roma, turns to be extremely costly in the long-term perspective (due to subsequent gradual escalation of problems).

(Re)construction of social housing

As mentioned above, lack of affordable housing causes that many socially excluded individuals must live in uncertainty in over-priced and often poor quality private (or council) dormitories or overcrowded flats of their relatives. Such situation can be tackled through (re)construction of non-profit social housing. This type of housing is very rare in Czech municipalities although the tool is common in a majority of EU member states.

Benefits:

- For many socially excluded individuals, social housing represents the only opportunity to escape from a socially excluded locality.

Drawbacks:

- In some cases, there are too many social flats built in one location (often separated from other residential areas; this is also due to limited availability of vacant land plots). Such spatial segregation can intensify social exclusion of socially weak families and escalate problems and hence is not a suitable solution at all.

⁴² Local authorities are predominant house owners in 58% of reviewed localities and owners of substantial portion of houses in 11% of localities (see Figure 4).

Bottlenecks:

- The term 'social housing' has not yet been clearly defined.⁴³ It is not clear who is entitled to such type of housing and who should be its provider.
- Social housing is often wrongly mistaken for poor quality housing (dormitories for 'socially inadapted individuals') and this substantially affects the local authorities' approach to the tool.
- The local authorities mostly lack financial resources necessary for (re)construction of the social flats. They are frequently not adequately informed about existing systems of subsidies.⁴⁴
- The local authorities often lack the will to tackle the situation of the socially excluded individuals and families.

Three-level system of social housing

A multiple-level hierarchical housing system applied within the local housing stock represents a tool which links social housing with superior flats. **The functioning of the system is conditioned by its two-way permeability.** Clear and simple rules must also be defined, intelligible for all tenants. The tenants must be fully aware of the consequences of breaching the rules and that they are able to return to the higher housing level if they comply with certain rules.

Benefits:

- Motivating tool helping improve housing situation of actively cooperating families.

Drawbacks:

- The opportunity to reach superior housing seems rather theoretical in actual implementations (the tool has been implemented in only few municipalities in the Czech Republic).

Bottlenecks:

- The functioning of the system becomes complex when the individual houses (individual levels of housing) are managed by different entities.
- High administrative and human resource demands.
- The tool is generally unknown among local authorities.⁴⁵

⁴³ In February 2006, the government of the Czech Republic ratified the definition of the term 'social housing' for the purpose of lower VAT rate on construction works. According to it, social housing shall include: 1) buildings for accommodating people at risk of social exclusion (children's homes, old people's homes, supported flats, shelters, etc.), 2) rented flats financed or co-financed from public sources, 3) other flats and single family houses with floor area below the specified limit.

This new definition combines two approaches: Narrow interpretation of the term (housing for low-income groups) on one side, and wide interpretation of the term (any housing supported by public finances) on the other. This however deflates the meaning of adjective 'social' which in this given context fails to refer to people in social need.

⁴⁴ The Ministry for Regional Development has been running the "Supported Flat Construction Programme" since 2003, providing subsidies to local authorities for three types of flats: **supported flats** (for individuals with health disability and/or impaired self-sufficiency), **half-way flats** (for young persons leaving institutional care, individuals who have an unstable life-style, or individuals living in a hazardous environment), and **entrance flats** (for individuals barred from access to housing due to adverse life circumstances). Flats for socially excluded Roma families can be funded by subsidies for the second and third type. In addition, the Ministry for Regional Development runs the "Rented flat and infrastructure construction support programme" aimed at supporting construction of rented flats for low-income individuals, owned by local authorities.

⁴⁵ The tool is employed just in few larger towns in the Czech Republic. In most cases, management of the system has been delegated to local NGOs providing FSW or other social services (pre-school education, complementary teaching, leisure-time activities, etc.).

'Housing with a contract'

The 'housing with a contract' model (also known as housing with assistance) is employed in only few localities. This model requires that lease agreements be complemented with consents of tenants to cooperate with a field social worker and/or other terms and conditions (e.g. maintenance of common and adjacent areas, participation in a requalification course, involvement of children in educational activities). For the tool to be employed, an entity capable of providing complementary social services (mostly NGOs) must exist.

Benefits:

- The FSW guides the tenants towards proper maintenance of the building, thus avoiding its dilapidation.

Drawbacks:

- See the drawbacks of the above-mentioned tools (social housing, FSW).

Bottlenecks:

- Willingness of families to cooperate.
- The tool requires mutual confidence. It is therefore more suitable for smaller, compact localities.

Non-discriminating flat allocation system

As mentioned above, the opportunity to get council flat is in many municipalities subject to certain criteria indirectly discriminating large number of socially excluded Roma. This is a mere system barrier. Modification of the criteria is therefore a key precondition for the weakening of spatial exclusion.

Benefits:

- Implementation of the tool enables at least some families to escape from a socially excluded locality (some of them live there against their will; frequently they were moved there without any fault on their side).

Drawbacks:

No major drawbacks have been identified.

Bottlenecks:

- Some local authorities own no flats.
- Allocation systems are non-transparent in many municipalities, necessitating thorough review. Time-demanding and capacity-demanding task.
- Flat allocation rules are often *indirectly* discriminating.

Selection of families to be moved to superior housing (outside the locality)

Families which actively cooperate in tackling their problems (pay rent, cooperate with the FSW, search for jobs, etc.) are selected, based on given criteria, and provided with superior housing outside the locality.

Benefits:

- Motivation for other families.

Drawbacks:

- Vacated flats are in many cases re-occupied by other socially excluded families. In the long-term, the problems in the locality may intensify because families which refuse or are not able to cooperate tend to concentrate there.

Bottlenecks:

- Correct configuration of clear criteria for selecting suitable families is a time and capacity-demanding task. Some local authorities employ this tool in exceptional cases, however the rules applied are unclear and the selection procedure is not transparent.
- As is the case for any other integration-oriented tool, it is necessary to ensure that the tool is available to all socially excluded inhabitants of a locality, i.e. Roma as well as non-Roma. Allocation of flats to families from localities is frequently perceived negatively by public opinion. Local authorities must stress out that the tool applies irrespective of ethnicity.
- There is a shortage of vacant council flats.

Negative tool – Sale of a property to a business

Some local authorities "solve" the problem through the sale of a property occupied by socially excluded tenants to a business. From an integration point of view, this is not a suitable solution because the business purchases the property for profit rather than to address social needs. It will not accept any agreement containing conditions required by local authorities in order to "protect" the occupants. Local authorities will lose the lever to influence further development of the situation, this transaction will not prevent problem escalation and will backfire on them in the long-term.

6.3 Impeded access to the labour market

6.3.1 General specification of impeded access to the labour market

Until 1989, almost all Roma in the Czech Republic had jobs. The paternalistic socialistic state ensured work for everyone. To be without a job was actually illegal (crime of vagrancy). During the first half of 1990s, the majority of current inhabitants of the socially excluded Roma localities lost their jobs⁴⁶ in consequence of economic transformation resulting in lay-offs in several industries. This period was marked by onset of the general trend towards decreasing numbers of **unqualified and low-qualified jobs**. At the same time, the required level of qualification has been increasing so the prospects of socially excluded people for their (re)inclusion in the labour market have further lowered. The Roma minority in the Czech Republic has therefore been suffering from a **high unemployment rate** for prolonged period of time. Regardless the total unemployment rate in a region, the unemployment rate reached 90-100% *in the majority* of the reviewed localities⁴⁷ and unemployment was very frequently **long-term** (several

⁴⁶ Job loss has also affected the majority of Roma whose families have been living in flats/houses fully integrated into surrounding settings. These people are permanently at risk of being forced to move to a socially excluded locality due to insufficient funds to cover their everyday needs.

⁴⁷ It is well known that it is not possible to obtain accurate data on the unemployment rate of (socially excluded) Roma because the Labour Offices do not (officially) monitor such data due to personal data protection. The mentioned data are based on estimations of entities operating in the socially excluded localities (field social workers of NGO or local authorities, representatives of social departments of local authorities, and occasionally Labour Offices workers).

An unemployed person for the purposes of this analysis means any person registered as a job seeker with the Labour Office (i.e. including persons who work while being registered as job seekers).

years) and/or **repeated unemployment**⁴⁸. It was also very common that both partners (or all adults in a household) were without work.

Unemployment has **several serious impacts** on inhabitants of the socially excluded localities. In addition to **material poverty**, these include **social** (exclusion from participation in social and economic life of Czech society) and **mental consequences** (quitting further attempts to find a job, loss of work habits, falling into addictions, etc.) which further **decrease prospects of inhabitants for integration into the labour market**. In many cases, we can talk about **factual unemployability** of the socially excluded Roma.

The Roma inhabitants of localities who are employed mostly have **a marginal position in the labour market**. Most of all, they have **seasonal or occasional jobs** based on unprotected arrangements. This type of work is marked by low earnings and persistent job uncertainty. Employment contracts concluded for indefinite period of time are very rare in the case of the socially excluded locality inhabitants.⁴⁹

Long-term unemployed Roma as well as Roma who are marginalized in the labour market gradually develop **alternative living strategies** to make their living⁵⁰ such as actual dependence on welfare, debts, unofficial work and other informal economic activities⁵¹. In the socially excluded settings, these strategies and related values (undervaluing education and wage labour, focus on the present, etc.) gradually spread their roots and are being reproduced from generation to generation.

The seriousness of the problem is further intensified by fact that in the socially excluded localities, almost an entire generation of youths has been raised without learning the importance of labour relation. Unemployment is a standard for them. Not only does this generation lack a work ethic, it doesn't even have a chance to establish one.

Considering the above it is clear, that **labour market integration is the key precondition of social inclusion of inhabitants of the socially excluded localities**. Since poor education and qualification levels proved to be the major cause of the current situation, it is necessary to lay a strong emphasis on education of children if the problems are not to intensify in the future. In addition, it is necessary to pursue integration of currently unemployed persons. The field research shows that current **employment policies are inadequate and rather ineffective**. Pro-integration measures must at the same time focus on weakening the internal as well as external factors of labour market exclusion. System changes (alteration of functioning of the social system, penalties for discrimination, increasing employment policy effectiveness) must be developed and complemented by qualification, education, motivation and social competence improvement tools.

⁴⁸ In the Czech Republic, long-term unemployment shall mean joblessness for a period exceeding 6 months.

⁴⁹ Employment in the non-profit sector and public administration is quite frequent.

⁵⁰ Life in socially excluded localities may paradoxically be very costly. The rents and goods in local shops are very expensive. The inhabitants frequently prefer certain expensive items serving as status symbols (e.g. mobile phones, electronics, cars, etc.) over paying for every day needs. In addition to poor money management skills (due to e.g. life strategies focused on the present only), life in socially excluded settings is also marked by "investments" in various addictions (gambling, alcohol, etc.).

⁵¹ For definition of unofficial work and other informal economic activities see subchapter 6.3.2.



6.3.2 Current situation

The reasons for social exclusion from the labour market are complex and complementary and have a mutually intensifying effect. Generally, the major causes can be categorized as follows:

A) Internal factors (low level of human capital and lack of motivation)

- **Low education level.** The majority of locality inhabitants lack any qualification. These people have only basic education in primary or often special schools, in some cases they dropped out of a vocational or secondary school. At the same time, the demand for unqualified workers has been decreasing and such unskilled work is often carried out by workers from Eastern European countries (the Ukraine in particular) for lower wage. The resulting pressure further decreases already low wages in this sector and impairs the position of Roma on both the official and unofficial labour markets. With regard to the low level of qualification of the Roma population, they have very little chance to find a job generating higher than the minimum wage.
- **Poor social competencies.** Socially excluded individuals frequently have difficulty orientating themselves in the majority environment, changing labour market, or welfare system. They are not aware of their rights and duties and unable to obtain the necessary information.
- **Poor health** of many socially excluded locality inhabitants is a relatively frequent hindrance to inclusion into the labour market. The inhabitants suffer from higher illness rates or decreased work ability.⁵²
- Serious problems are also caused by negative impacts of unemployment on mental health. This is sometimes referred to as **long-term unemployment syndrome** which is manifested by giving up on job seeking efforts, taking a passive attitude, and general apathy. In turn, these effects further impair employability of long-term unemployed persons. Employers therefore prefer persons without long-term unemployment experience (i.e. who have not lost their work habits). Return to the world of work is very difficult for long-term unemployed persons so they often quickly lose their job (they have difficulty with reintegration into the labour market).
- **Solidarity networks** based on kinship represent another hindrance to labour market integration. The socially excluded Roma have established such networks as informal insurance against penury. Within these networks, all assets are shared jointly which

⁵² For more information see section 6.5, *Further selected aspects of social exclusion*.

undermines any job seeking efforts. If a member of such network finds a better-paid job, he or she is supposed to share the income with less successful relatives.⁵³

- Increasing **indebtedness of families** living in the socially excluded localities represents another major sign of social exclusion which seriously impairs access to the labour market. In addition to debts for rent or water and electricity consumption, the inhabitants of localities owe for child maintenance, health insurance premiums, unpaid penalties, hire-purchased goods, etc. In some localities, usurers' services are frequently used and in the majority of the localities we noted problems caused by 'fast loans' provided by certain businesses. Families often use a new loan to pay off another loan. **Execution of assets** as well as **execution of welfare benefits** is becoming more and more common, leaving some families without any resources and funds. Indebtedness also has demotivating effects on attempts to seek a job in the legal labour market. Any income from legal employment would be distrained by executors or usurers while income from unofficial employment can be at least partially preserved.⁵⁴

B) External factors (poor level of social capital, system factors)

- **Poorly configured (demotivating) social welfare system.** Welfare benefits paid to families with many children are comparable with or even higher than wages for most jobs available to unskilled inhabitants of the localities⁵⁵ In addition, living on welfare benefits allows participation in unofficial work or other informal economic activities. Even though such income is uncertain, a combination of such types of income in fact provides the officially unemployed person with a higher income than wage from legal employment. This is further supported by the fact that current social system is confusing and unpredictable from the point of view of the socially excluded people.⁵⁶
- Many socially excluded people **work unofficially**⁵⁷, i.e. are employed without a concluded contract and hence without paying tax and other contributions (in that case, both employee and employer breach the law). Illegal workers are often on welfare benefits or disability pensions. The forms of unofficial work differ from locality/region to locality/region and include unskilled jobs such as excavation work, auxiliary construction and demolition work, cleaning work, occasional temporary work in supermarkets, etc. In some localities, the inhabitants work regularly during the entire year while in others they accept jobs only occasionally – if demand exists or if the welfare benefit income is not sufficient. Such unprotected arrangements bear many risks⁵⁸ and the employee is mostly held responsible for all potential consequences. On the other hand, unofficial work helps keep at least basic work habits.

⁵³ Regular income from long-term employment counteracts further participation in the wide solidarity networks (and sharing income with relatives) and provides potential for emancipation of a nuclear family. We can therefore identify two different behaviour patterns: Demographic pattern (represented by affecting the income through demographic acts such as maternity, in addition to relying on the extended family networks), and performance pattern (based on regular income which gradually detaches the individual from the extended family networks).

⁵⁴ In this connection, it is worth considering a bill on personal bankruptcy.

⁵⁵ This is sometimes referred to as **the unemployment trap**. This conception describes a situation when the 'compensation ratio' (the amount of received welfare benefits compared with potentially available wage) is so high that it in fact acts as a perverse incentive to job seeking efforts.

⁵⁶ The generally accepted stereotype that Roma are perfectly familiarized with the welfare system is contrary to the facts.

⁵⁷ In this connection it is worth considering the voices of certain organisations calling for strengthening of cooperation between Police, Municipal Police, Labour Offices, FSW, etc. in detecting unofficial work, and mutually beneficial (i.e. both for employer and employee) legalization of the arrangement.

⁵⁸ Considering the fact that unskilled jobs often require heavy physical work, there is a major risk of injury. Also, the employer may terminate the employment anytime. There is no assurance for the employees that they will receive the promised amount. The time worked in such jobs cannot be considered as contributable service for the purposes of retirement pension claims.

- Many socially excluded people support their household budgets through various **informal economic activities**. These may include both extra-employment profit-making activities leveraging demand for some goods or services⁵⁹ and criminal activities⁶⁰.
- **Limited mobility** (primarily caused by inability to obtain housing) represents another major hindrance for job seekers. It is known that the largest number of socially excluded localities were formed in regions suffering from the most serious structural problems (Ústecký and Moravskoslezský Regions). Some of these localities tend to expand as families attracted by more affordable housing migrate there from other regions. This further increases the **concentration of socially excluded people in regions with generally high unemployment rates**.
- Here we should also mention **discrimination by employers** which mostly has roots in common prejudices and stereotypes regarding Roma workers. Such prejudices and stereotypes are often supported and confirmed by specific negative experience. However, this type of discrimination is very hard to prove.⁶¹
- Many involved organisations (both at the central and local level) are aware of this situation and are endeavouring to act positively in favour of integration of Roma into the labour market by various interventions in the field of employment. The specific tools are described below; here we just state that many frontline organisations consider the **state policy of equalization of opportunities in relation to labour market access to be ineffective**. The tools are in many cases deployed on the nation-wide scale (while only a minority of them seek to reflect specific characteristics of a given locality/client) and usually fail to result in long-term employment of inhabitants of socially excluded localities. There is a lack of active cooperation with specific unbiased employers willing to bring prospects of work to the inhabitants of socially excluded localities who show serious interest and meet necessary skill requirements.

6.3.3 Summary of tools supporting social integration into the labour market

Active employment policy (AEP) measures may play a major role as primary integration tools. These tools consist of state interventions aimed at ensuring work for unemployed or improving their employability.

AEP programmes are carried out by both Labour Offices and NGOs, as well as by businesses. In fact, the Labour Offices have generally not been effective enough in such programmes. In many cases they are considered impersonal and even hostile institutions by socially excluded Roma. On the other hand, they often have the best access to the required information. As mentioned above, information gathered in the field research proved 1) insufficient involvement of inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities in the AEP programmes and 2) low success rate of the AEP programmes.⁶² Such inadequacies can partly be tackled e.g. via identifying, in cooperation with field social workers (or field job advisers), suitable jobseekers. Anyway, it is necessary to understand that the effectiveness of the AEP programmes will remain limited unless simultaneous programmes weakening general barriers to labour market integration are carried out systematically. At least two major hindrances can be identified:

⁵⁹ The most common informal income-generating activities include scrap metal and other material collection; collection of mushrooms, snails, forest and garden fruits; dismantling car wrecks for spare parts; importation of used electronics and furniture (from Germany and Austria) and its sale directly in the localities or to pawn shops and second hand shops.

⁶⁰ Prostitution, sex solicitation, theft and sale/purchase of stolen goods, drug dealing, credit frauds.

⁶¹ Such discrimination is indirect in most cases, e.g. requiring applicants for unskilled jobs to provide evidence of having no criminal record.

⁶² The majority of participants in the AEP programmes (requalifications, in particular) were not able to find or keep a job. Such experience undermines the will to participate in the AEP programmes.

- 1) The situation whereby it is more advantageous to be on welfare with some additional income from unofficial work or any other informal economic activities. The recently adopted Act on Material Penury, entering into force as of January 2007, addresses the issue of 'advantageousness' of welfare dependence. The Act's objectives include increasing motivation for active job seeking⁶³ (via financially advantageous treatment). In addition it is necessary to consider the implementation and potential effects of measures that would establish more stringent rules in relation to checking unofficial work and the origins of scrap metal.⁶⁴
- 2) A growing number of socially excluded families are indebted at such a level that working is not worthwhile for them, since the majority of their income would be used for debt repayment or be subject to execution. It is necessary to search for effective tools for preventing and limiting various forms of debt accrual. Utilization of field social work is a precondition for any effective debt prevention and repayment of current debts. In addition, usurers should be prosecuted and modification of the possibility of making welfare benefits subject to execution as well as the implementation of personal bankruptcy should be considered.

Problem: Low skill level

Low skill levels represent a major barrier to Roma employment. With regard to the current trends in the labour market it is likely that low skilled workers' chances of getting a job will diminish. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on education and development of professional skills of inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities. Considering the importance of the issue, children's education is covered in a separate chapter. In the following text we describe education and skill development tools focusing on adult inhabitants of the socially excluded Roma localities only, complementing the chapter addressing education (see below).

Education of adults

Education of adults comprises several various programmes and activities whose contents overlaps to a certain extent. The programmes and activities include:

- Job clubs and functional literacy development courses (courses on social skills necessary to find and keep employment, i.e. compiling CV, filling out various forms, improving Czech language skills, PC skills, communication skills, telephone conversation, etc.);
- Incentive programmes (courses to increase self-confidence, reduce passivity, provide incentives to further education, support in orientating in the labour market, etc.);
- Increasing education level in order to achieve or improve professional skills (e.g. through certificates of apprenticeship or secondary school leavers' examination /*maturita* in Czech/).

It is advisable that adult education is addressed by a NGO working with the socially excluded people also in other areas (FSW, for example). In relation to supported employment agencies, it proved useful to employ a worker focused directly on the socially excluded Roma (a 'Roma assistant'). In other words, it is important that a service provider maintains direct contact with the locality. Such contact is often missing at the Labour Office level.

⁶³ Contrary to the current arrangement, a person who enters into a job for minimum wage will be financially advantaged as she or he will not lose welfare entitlement. Also persons who can prove that they actively seek for job will be advantaged. The amount provided will be based on the newly specified minimum living level and will be increased if a person works, seeks a job (i.e. is registered in the Labour Office register) or proves that he or she is pursuing improvement in his or her income through work.

⁶⁴ It can be assumed that such work is in most cases work that need to be done in any case even if hiring a worker unofficially would not be worth it due to more stringent sanctions.

Benefits:

- Adopting skills and knowledge improves prospects in the labour market and increase employability.
- The incentive role of a course increases if attendants receive certificate of any kind⁶⁵.
- There is an indirect benefit consisting in the fact that successful leavers realize the importance of education and impart such value to their children.

Drawbacks:

- There are no binding quality standards relating to such services.
- Lack of quantitative data concerning the attendance and completion rate and any following employment of Roma.

Bottlenecks:

- Low motivation to attend and complete courses, frequently related to own (or mediated) experience of failure when seeking a job after completing a similar course.⁶⁶
- Some attendants tend to perceive the unknown environment as hostile, in particular if the programme is carried out in the Labour Office setting.
- Cultural and communication barriers.
- Subjective (and also frequently objective) inaccessibility of courses, particularly to inhabitants in rural areas (the required commuting decreases motivation).
- Impaired accessibility to mothers caring for children (difficulties getting childcare).

Requalifications

Requalifications are the active employment policy tool used to impart new skills or develop current skills of jobseekers. Requalification courses are organised by Labour Offices and subcontracted to external businesses or NGOs. Labour Offices pay the costs of requalification for the attendant and may provide another allowances to cover costs related to attending the course (meals, transport, accommodation, insurance).

Development of social and communication skills required in the sphere of services appears to be a desirable and insufficiently covered segment.

Benefits:

- The requalification courses whose attendants have jobs ensured after completing the course have proved to be effective.
- Attendants adopt work habits even if they fail to find a job after completing a course.

Drawbacks:

- The current system allows primary school leavers to get registered as jobseekers with a Labour Office immediately after completing the compulsory education and hence quit any further education. This behaviour is frequently motivated by the possibility of receiving welfare benefits if a jobseeker takes a requalification course. Such effect is clearly anti integrating!⁶⁷

⁶⁵ On the other hand, many inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities have plenty of different certificates which have failed to help them get employment. Indeed, the linkage to a specific job is therefore crucial.

⁶⁶ For example, attendants can be motivated by providing meal vouchers, travel expenses reimbursement, etc.

⁶⁷ For further details see the analytical chapter covering education.

- Currently, there are quite a number of requalification courses which specify Roma as one of the target groups. Many course providers however admit that they do not know how to motivate Roma to participate in such courses, or they even declare participation of Roma but in fact do not expect Roma to attend their projects.
- It shows that the structure of offered courses often fail to match the educational structure of Roma jobseekers.⁶⁸ Usually requalifications are rather focused on jobseekers who are more educated and short-term unemployed.
- Lack of quantitative data concerning the attendance and completion rate and any following employment of Roma required for evaluation of course efficiency.

Bottlenecks:

- Low motivation to attend and complete courses, frequently related to own (or mediated) experience of failure when seeking a job after completing a similar course.⁶⁹
- Some attendants tend to perceive the unknown environment as hostile, in particular if the programme is carried out in the Labour Office setting.
- Cultural and communication barriers.
- Insufficient cooperation among Labour Offices, social departments of local authorities and employers, if any.
- Subjective (and also frequently objective) inaccessibility of courses, particularly to inhabitants of rural areas.
- Impaired accessibility to mothers caring for children (difficulties getting childcare).

Publicly beneficial work

Publicly beneficial work is a job established within the AEP based on a written agreement concluded with the Labour Office for a definite period of time (up to 12 consecutive months), designed for long-term unemployed and/or difficult to employ jobseekers. Publicly beneficial work consists primarily in unskilled work for the benefit of a municipality, government or other public benefit organisations (for example, maintenance of public areas, cleaning and maintenance of public buildings or roads). The Labour Office provides the employer with up to 100% contribution towards wage of an employee. The same job vacancy can be established repeatedly, however it is in Labour Office's discretion whether it offers the job to a jobseeker who has already worked in such position.

Benefits:

- The tool helps in establishing (or maintaining) basic work habits.
- Executing necessary work for a municipality at low or zero costs for the publicly beneficial work employer.
- Improvement of Roma's status in the eyes of public.

Drawbacks:

⁶⁸ For example, it is ineffective to requalify a jobseeker for administrative work if he or she has problems with the Czech language.

⁶⁹ For example, attendants can be motivated by providing meal vouchers, travel expenses reimbursement, etc.

- From a long-term perspective, publicly beneficial work fails to provide an actual solution of the unemployment issue since the tool offers temporary jobs only (mostly it is not possible to keep the position after the completion of a programme).

Bottlenecks:

- Local authorities are not willing to create such jobs due to increased administrative burden and necessity of continuous checks on the work performed⁷⁰.
- Some local authorities claim that they lack work suitable for publicly beneficial work.
- Labour Offices provide insufficient information to local authorities (and other potential employers) about the tool and related opportunities. Some entities have quite distorted notions of how the tool functions and some even don't know the tool at all.
- Some local authorities have had bad experiences with publicly beneficial workers and therefore, decline to employ the tool.

Socially useful jobs

A tool allowing an employee to create or reserve, upon a written agreement with the Labour Office, a job vacancy for a person who cannot be employed otherwise. Such job vacancy may be created under certain conditions, including, without limitation, for a person below 25 years of age, for socially inadapted persons, or for jobseekers registered with the Labour Office for a period exceeding 6 months. The Labour Office may provide to the employer a contribution towards partial or full coverage of paid wages, including health insurance and social security premiums.

Benefits:

- Creation of work habits.
- Provision of steady income.
- Improvement of Roma's status in the eyes of public.

Drawbacks:

- Risk of creating purposeless jobs (simulated employment)

Bottlenecks:

- Employers' and employees' knowledge of the tool is very poor.
- Lack of vacancies matching the educational structure of jobseekers from the socially excluded localities.

Supported Employment

Supported employment is a tool designed to equalize opportunities for physically (and/or socially) disadvantaged people in the labour market. The supported employment programmes provide support both to clients and employers (for example, help with administration). The service is provided by supported employment agencies and its objective is to support clients into, and at work and to increase client's long-term self-sufficiency. It is a long-term service (although time-limited) including, without limitation, incentives, interviews, work skills development, courses, attendance at interviews with employers, and provider's worker visits to the employer.

⁷⁰ On the other hand, some local authorities which are satisfied with the community service performed by Roma provide the workers with credentials for future employers.

In relation to supported employment agencies, it proved useful to employ a worker focusing directly on the socially excluded Roma (a 'Roma assistant'). In other words, it is important that the service provider maintains direct contact with the locality.

Benefits:

- Creation of work habits.
- Provision of steady income (provided that clients succeed in finding and keeping their jobs).
- Improvement of Roma's status in the eyes of public (provided that clients succeed in finding and keeping their jobs).
- Attendance at interviews with employers and initially at the workplace helps to ensure non-discriminatory practices by employers. Supported employment agencies have generally better communication with employers which in turn increases jobseeker's probability of getting employment.

Drawbacks:

- Supported employment is not identified as a social service pursuant to a new Act on Social Services. Being categorized as 'social rehabilitation through supported employment' is considered disadvantageous by the supported employment providers.

Bottlenecks:

- Insufficient capacity of supported employment agencies (due to time-demanding work with clients).
- Employers are not motivated to employ jobseekers.
- Insufficient information.
- Poor motivation of jobseekers because they have no assurance that they will find a job.

Employment advice services

The tool consists in several related and complementary services provided to clients with impaired access to the general institutional support. These services include both advice (support in seeking a suitable job vacancy, filling forms and compiling applications and CV, labour law advice) and incentives. **Provision of the services directly in the field** (i.e. in the environment familiar to the clients), in cooperation with the field social workers, proved to be effective.

Benefits:

- Provision of steady income (provided that clients succeed in finding and keeping their jobs).
- Improvement of Roma's status in the eyes of public (provided that clients succeed in finding and keeping their jobs).

Drawbacks:

- Poor motivation of jobseekers because they have no assurance that they will find a job.

Bottlenecks:

- Time-demanding work, particularly in terms of establishing good reputation and acquiring client base (new entrants).

6.3.4 Recommended tools

Being the key social issue, the area of employment may seem to be rather complex in terms of identifying alternative opportunities and possibilities to improve labour market access of inhabitants of socially excluded localities. A necessary innovative element is often represented only by various complementary services such as childcare or specific advice services. In the following chapter, we review key tools that have already successfully undergone the 'field-test' or that are, in our opinion, likely to be successful in such test and could become more widespread.

AEP measures aimed at support for employment of people experiencing or at risk of social exclusion

The tool would be employed as analogy to the currently existing **protected jobs** for persons with physical disabilities. It would consist in a job vacancy created by an employer for a socially excluded person⁷¹ based on a written agreement with the Labour Office. Based on such agreement, the Labour Office would pay the employer a contribution towards partial or full coverage of any operational costs. Implementation of the tool would probably require legal analysis of the current situation followed by law amendments.

Sheltered workshops

This tool extends the general practice in relation to people with physical disabilities. Although the protected workshops whose products are sold in associated shops or delivered to the general shop network cannot be considered a comprehensive and universal solution to Roma unemployment, it is certainly reasonable for example in the case of women. In addition, the tool may be modified to other areas, such as "eco-farms" (higher demand for products) or farming in general. As such, the tool would be particularly suitable for rural areas.

Some front-line organisations modify the tool to establish handicraft workshops helping young inhabitants of socially excluded localities to acquire work habits and adopt professional skills (e.g. certificate of apprenticeship). Using the tool for application of alternative punishments is also worth considering.

Support of SMEs of persons at risk of social exclusion

The tool has several forms, so far mostly still in the design phase. The tool would require careful identification of suitable persons who have an interest in and (above all) ability to run a **small business** with certain support. Participation in the programme would be conditioned by adequate education level (apprenticeship, higher education) of participants. The selected participants would be further worked with (long-term). The support may include specific 'business incubator', courses (accountancy, communication skills), micro-credits (provided under strictly defined terms and conditions), time-limited help in soliciting orders, etc. The ultimate objective of the support activities would be establishing viable and sustainable independent businesses.

In this regard, we recommend that the education and support of women in the business should not be neglected. This relates mainly to the service industry, such as hair styling, pedicure, dry-cleaning, cafés, etc.

A part of the expert community has been expressing major concerns about the support of Roma businesses. However, their objections relate to employing socially excluded Roma by "Roma businesses" (i.e. business owned by Roma). Recent experience shows that majority of such businesses provide employment exclusively to family members. Cases of exploitation of Roma employees (other than family members) or withholding promised wages were also reported. Such Roma businesses are often dependent on public tenders and contracts, making such approach hard to justify to the public.

⁷¹ Indeed, the measure requires clear definition of a socially excluded person.

Stimulating employers to employ Roma

Biases and hidden discrimination are the major factors behind the situation when a relatively active and skilled jobseeker is not able to get a job due to his or her "ethnic characteristics" as perceived by employers. The biases are often based on previous negative experience.

In this programme, the motivation of employers could be increased by tax privileges or payment of employee's health insurance and social security premiums from the state budget⁷². This would of course be a voluntary programme. Both the employee and employer would be subject to certain rules and the programme would be terminated if any party breaches the rules. In addition to implementation of the financial allowances, the tool must be linked to other integration tools in the field of employment, emphasize the skill development opportunities for Roma, search for competent jobseekers and work actively with such jobseekers. Sharing and promoting positive examples both among inhabitants of socially excluded localities and employers from the majority society also plays important role.

Short-term contracts

The recommendation of some entities concerning the deployment of a short-term employment contract system is also worth considering. Creating the opportunity to adopt basic work habits and hence increasing prospects in the labour market for the socially excluded people shall be the exclusive objective of such short-term employment contract arrangements. It is likely that the short-term contracts would not become a common element of the labour law because they might be abused by employers. Employers can be motivated to execute such contracts by certain financial incentives.

Social business

Simply said, a social business is an activity whose primary objective is job-making rather than profit-making. In the Czech Republic, the social business sector is rather underdeveloped, but there is an ongoing active discussion on the issue. We consider this discussion relevant and valuable in relation to solution of the Roma unemployment issue. However, we believe that the link between business and profit is crucial because it contributes to actual demand-oriented production of goods or services rather than generating simulated employment.

6.4 Low education levels – basic cause of failure in the labour market

6.4.1 General specification of the issue of low education levels of socially excluded Roma locality inhabitants

The research showed that majority of adult Roma living in the socially excluded localities had finished primary education only, were long-term unemployed and were dependent on the social assistance or support system. Yet successful completion of the primary school programme is a basic precondition of further education and adoption of professional skills necessary for competition in the today labour market. Here, we seek the answer to the question of why Roma from socially excluded localities generally end their education by completing the compulsory education programme (in primary or special schools). **We identify major aspects and causes of failure of Roma pupils from socially excluded localities on their way towards education and professional careers.** Identified causes of failure should serve as a foundation for avoiding mistakes and encouraging efforts to find a solution.

⁷² The effective application of the tool is conditioned by accurate configuration of criteria for selecting specific employees and employers to be involved in the programme. The preferential treatment would apply for a limited period of time which would be sufficient for the employee to restore his or her work habits and get acquainted with the employer and vice versa (i.e. 10 or more months, provided that the employee proves successful during the extended trial period). The tool requires close cooperation between the Labour Office and employer. The employer should regularly inform the Labour Office about employee's performance in order to prevent the employer from making an "unjustified" dismissal of the employee after a short time. It is also necessary to consider the adequate level of net wage – being employed must be worth it for the employee.

In summary, we can state that the major aspects of Roma pupils' failure correspond with five project areas to be primarily covered by frontline organisations, i.e.:

- Projects improving the prospects of children to enter and stay in a primary school.
- Projects providing assistance to primary school pupils in troubles ensuring that they at least complete the compulsory education programme.
- Projects motivating children/teenagers to adopt professional skills rather than rely on welfare benefits.
- Projects focusing on pupils in the upper level of primary school, addressing their transition to secondary schools and completion of their studies.
- Mobility incentive programmes.

The failure of Roma pupils in the Czech education system combined with the resulting inability to compete on the labour market contributes to the further deepening of social exclusion. Czech primary **education tends towards reproduction of educational and social origins** which in the case of children from socially excluded Roma localities causes the education system itself to become an instrument of the social exclusion process.

The field research proved that individuals (and their families, if any) with higher than primary education had the mobility potential necessary to leave a socially excluded locality. Support for education of Roma resulting in adoption of professional skills followed by professional careers therefore plays a key role in tackling the issue of social exclusion of Roma.



In order to cover different approaches and methods of tackling (or "non-tackling") the problem, we employ **two various methods of interpretation**:

- First, we seek **key common factors of failure of the socially excluded Roma in the education system** and in the labour market (see the following chapter, *Identification of key problems*).
- Second, we stress the **activity, project and measure characteristics** that are relevant to tackling the given issue (subchapters addressing both currently used and yet untested tools).

6.4.2 Current situation

Based on the field research in individual localities, we identified two major sets of factors contributing to low success rate of Roma pupils in the Czech education system. The first set emanates from living conditions of Roma families and environment of socially excluded Roma localities ("**internal factors**").

The second set includes factors emanating from the institutional surroundings of a locality (i.e. public authorities, NGOs, education system) and degree of organisations' participation in tackling the issue of education in the socially excluded Roma localities ("**external factors**").

Internal factors

A) Low motivation to learn and compete in the labour market

In our opinion, low motivation is one of the **key causes** of the **current unremedied situation**. Unfortunately, low motivation is constantly being deepened both by Roma (undervaluing of education) and the majority society (unequal access to the labour market based on discriminatory attitudes of employers). Pursuant to the majority of respondents, the current state social support system arrangement plays a major role in this regard (for details see the analytical chapter on employment above).

Roma living in socially excluded localities do not consider education a vehicle for achieving a reasonable professional career, i.e. a vehicle of social integration, and indeed pass on such attitude to their children. In the socially excluded locality settings, there is a lack of good examples (e.g. successful, educated employed Roma) demonstrating the importance of education. Considering the fact that Roma pupils lack natural self-motivation to learn due to absence of such attitude in their families and surroundings, **improvement of self-motivation is the key factor for success of Roma pupils in the education system**.

B) Roma children from socially excluded localities are often unprepared for entry into the compulsory school system

Children from socially excluded Roma localities grow up in an environment in which **preparation for compulsory school attendance is not a priority** (parents often ignore the duty to enrol their children at a primary school, children only rarely attend infant schools/kindergartens). Roma children entering schools are equipped with different apparatus of social and communication skills, impairing their ability to adapt themselves to the new environment.

In addition, they frequently **have poor knowledge of the Czech language** which is another barrier. According to the respondents, the children often use the Roma "ethnolect" of Czech, hindering their absorption of information.

The above-mentioned aspects are the most frequent factors impairing the starting point of Roma children upon entering primary school, causing them to lag behind at school, followed by transfer to special schools. Such trend can be reversed only through **above-standard specific support provided to the children from the outset of their compulsory school attendance (or even before, if possible)**.

C) Failure of Roma pupils in primary schools followed by transfer to special schools⁷³

⁷³ Currently, the term 'special school' (*zvláštní škola* in Czech) has been replaced by the term 'practical primary school' or 'special primary school' (in Czech, *škola praktická* and *základní škola speciální* respectively).

Low success of Roma pupils in tuition is a widely known fact emanating from the living conditions in the socially excluded localities. The **major reasons** for such failure include, in particular:

- Adverse conditions in households which prevent children from home preparation and learning (overcrowded flats, sometimes without power supply and without basic amenities);
- Frequent absenteeism (for details see below);
- Poor home preparation, unwillingness or inability of parents to help children with learning;
- Schools which fail to respect and meet specific educational needs of Roma pupils from socially excluded localities, for example by changing teaching methods or school organisation (for specific activities see the following chapters).

Education failure of children from socially excluded Roma localities often leads to transfer of pupils to special schools. The following figure illustrating the level of ghettoisation of primary and special schools shows that special primary schools are the institutions with higher percentages of Roma pupils.

The research showed that the situation varied from locality to locality. In some localities, transfer of Roma pupils to special schools is a general trend. Frequently it results from the request of parents who seek an environment with lower demands ensuring a safer experience for their child with less chance of failure. Many parents also attended special schools so they have higher confidence in the school because they know the environment and teachers. The parents often make the decision based on which school is attended by other children in the family. Roma families tend to enrol all their children at the same school.

In other localities, the number of Roma pupils in special school is minimal; parents are aware of the situation and reject the transfer of their children to special schools. In rural areas, it is, paradoxically, better if the special school is in a remote or difficult to access site. In such cases, parents reject transfer to the special school because of the necessary commuting and insist that their children should attend a mainstream primary school.

D) Absenteeism of Roma pupils

The vast majority of schools deal with the issue of frequent absences of pupils from socially excluded Roma localities. Absenteeism has been shown to be one of the key reasons for the relatively poor school performance of the majority of Roma pupils⁷⁴. The respondents admit that parents often support the absenteeism by excusing their children for all their school absences⁷⁵ (also referred to as 'hidden absenteeism'). Parents are driven by concerns about losing social welfare entitlement pursuant to Act No. 422/2003, on social need, specifying the upper threshold of unexcused absences⁷⁶ which, if exceeded, may cause withdrawal of social benefits from a family.

The schools mostly tolerate parents' excuses because they don't want to be perceived as 'snoops' and hence disturb the already complicated and fragile relationships with Roma parents. It is also easier to accept the excuse than face the difficult problem head on.

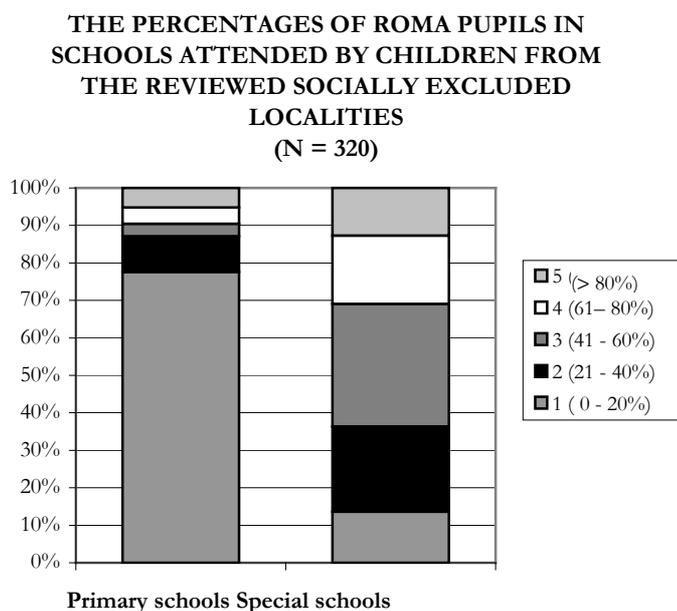
In localities with commuting children, we identified a problem of frequent absences by the end of month when families have no money to pay fare. In the winter months, there is also a problem of absences of children from predominantly rural remote localities in longer walking distance.

⁷⁴ For details see, e.g. Hule, Daniel, "Monitoring efektivitu přípravných ročníků" (*Monitoring the effectiveness of preparatory grades*), Prague 2004, pp. 23 and 50, commissioned by the MoEYS.

⁷⁵ This is supported by the fact that schools, in their school rules, define how to excuse missed lessons.

⁷⁶ The threshold is 10 unexcused absence from lessons per month.

Figure 13 – The percentages of Roma pupils in schools attended by children from the reviewed socially excluded localities



*The data presented in the Figure 13 is based on information from 359 primary and special schools (the different number of respondents in the diagram is due to the fact that 39 schools failed to provide this information).

E) Low number of students from socially excluded localities in secondary schools and vocational schools

The markedly low number of Roma students from socially excluded localities in secondary education is **one of the major reasons for Roma's failure in the labour market**. Self-motivation of the Roma population from socially excluded localities regarding secondary education is very low (see also above in relation to primary education). After the children's completion of compulsory school attendance, Roma parents sometimes prefer to **register them with the Labour Office** because if the children enrol in a requalification course then, they are immediately entitled to an unemployment benefit and hence immediately able to **support the family budget**.

Combining problems with adaptation to unknown environment, commuting or boarding house housing, the transition from a primary to a secondary school represents another key barrier on the Roma children's way to higher education. Socially excluded Roma children have difficulties in adapting to new environments and suffer deeply from separation from their families. They lack fundamental (or common, from the majority society's perspective) skills necessary for independent life (using public transport, time management skills, communication skills, etc.). Therefore, the majority of Roma students terminate their studies during the first months of their secondary school attendance.

External factors

The major problems described in the following section **are based on the approach of organisations and bodies involved in and affecting this area** or designing the general educational system in the Czech Republic. These organisations include: Ministry of Education, Youths and Sports of the Czech Republic ("MoEYS"); Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic; Educational or Social Departments of municipal and local authorities;

Educational or Social Departments of regional authorities; schools and educational institutions (kindergartens, primary and special schools, secondary schools, vocational schools, recreational activity providers, Pedagogical Psychological Advice Centres), Labour Offices, NGOs.

A) Low level of cooperation and coordination among involved organisations

Social exclusion and its possible solutions are rather multi-disciplinary in their character. Currently, a **common strategic approach is missing** and solutions are often unsystematic, partial and mutually inconsistent between organisations involved. Realizing severity of the problem, officials **tend to exclude their responsibility for the given issue** (this attitude is evident mainly in local/municipal authorities and their Social and Educational Departments – i.e. 'hot potato effect'), blaming others for the current situation and denying cooperation in search of possible solutions. In some municipalities, this issue is not addressed at all.

The entire situation here, probably more than in any other area, suffers from the scenario whereby **'the left hand doesn't know what the right hand does'**. In the vicinity of the majority of localities, there are at least a few individuals who have basic information about the developments at the given place. However, officials are not interested in such information or, if interested, they obtain it from inappropriate sources.

Services overlap in the majority of municipalities served by multiple organisations (this fact is often subject to partially justified criticism). However, there is no coordinating/responsible body mediating communication between individual organisations based on analysis of actual local needs and currently offered services in order to ensure meaningful and effective utilization of organisations' capabilities and to complement their activities. Such arrangement would improve the effectiveness of fund allocation, address the needs of local community, and preclude the current criticism.

Poor cooperation of kindergartens, primary schools or Pedagogical Psychological Advice Centres (PPAC) with Roma families in relation to care for children with delayed compulsory school attendance has also significant impacts. In the field, we frequently noted that a PPAC or school psychologist recommended delaying compulsory school attendance of a child without suggesting any organisation that would provide the child with pre-school 'preparation' care. One year later, the enrolled child shows no improvement in such cases⁷⁷. This situation may also result from a lack of political support at the local level, leading to non-coordination and a tendency to sidetrack the issue out of the focus of the majority society.

The field research showed another important factor which was **the inability or rather unwillingness to recognize who is Roma**. Frequently, they are particularly officials and headmasters who claim that they do not distinguish Roma from non-Roma since all citizens of the Czech Republic should be approached equally, or who present data about negligible number of Roma in their municipality pursuant to the census, giving them the grounds to strictly reject the necessity of any specific activities focused on socially excluded Roma.

B) Poor knowledge of social inclusion tools

The level of knowledge relating to existing tools and measures to tackle the issue of Roma minority education (as well as other areas that constitute social exclusion) varies within the Czech Republic. **Unfortunately, poor knowledge is prevalent** both among the central and local authority employees and school staff. In many municipalities, poor or even zero knowledge

⁷⁷ Some headmasters are aware of the problem and address it on their own, e.g. motivate such children to attend the school 'informally' in order to get used to the environment. This indeed is not a generally applicable solution but rather an attempt by wise headmasters to help Roma children entering the school.

results in failure to employ available aid tools. Roma integration activities are not coordinated in many municipalities and there is a lack of any related cooperation of individual organisations.

Poor utilization of available tools is **common especially in rural areas and small towns.** Here it is appropriate to mention that our field research included, in addition to its main focus, dissemination of information and a certain stopgap information campaign. Responses of certain respondents revealed that this was the first time they had come across such tools or that they had rather distorted information about the tools. It is possible to claim, to a certain extent, that poor knowledge of the tools relates to the above-mentioned issue of insufficient process coordination. Generally, knowledge of usable tools is evidently deficient outside Prague and regional towns. The responsibility for this situation explicitly lies with government bodies under which competence such issues primarily fall.

C) Insufficient capabilities and/or willingness to tackle Roma integration

Tackling the issue of Roma integration puts enormous demands on involved organisations and bodies in terms of education and capabilities of their staff. Generally speaking, the **level of education of such staff is not adequate to the importance and severity of the problem.** This, to a certain extent, indeed relates to poor knowledge of the tools, supported by unwillingness to proceed to a solution. This situation, which is evident in particular within local governments and schools, is based on several factors:

Local and municipal authorities:

- There are no strategic plans on how to tackle Roma integration in the field of education (mainly due to the fact that the Roma integration issue is not generally addressed in strategic plan policies);
- Authorities face shortages of staff able to tackle the Roma integration issue (in particular, in terms of skills and experience of the staff);
- Authorities are reluctant to support measures resulting in weakened consequences of social exclusion of Roma for fear of being accused of positive discrimination.

Schools:

- Schools with high numbers of Roma pupils face churn of majority pupils, leading to **ethnic homogenisation of schools.** Many schools therefore reject pro-Roma activities for fear that they would be considered a 'Roma' school, initiating outflow of non-Roma pupils;
- Kindergartens are not involved in integration programmes, which represents another substantial gap in the puzzle covering pre-school and school education;
- Schools face a lack of funds necessary for development of alternative educational activities, teachers' training and provision of recreational activities. Many schools a priori reject any advantageous treatment of Roma pupils since, in their opinion, it would be to the detriment of pupils from the majority society;
- Difficulties in establishing relationships and communication between schools and Roma families result in the problem being sidetracked. Many schools regard Roma pupils as 'necessary evil' that requires no indulgence.



6.4.3 Summary of social integration tools employed in education

The importance of education as an integral part of social integration is generally accepted and emphasized. Many of the existing tools are relatively widespread, however there are still large number of schools and education institutions which lack adequate knowledge of opportunities in the field of social integration. This was the major reason for compiling the following summary of existing tried and tested options, followed by descriptions of new and uncommon activities or projects. The following subchapters specify projects or activities which are currently being fully or partially carried out, followed by a subchapter describing activities which are more-or-less new or which are not being carried out in the field and may be included in the areas of ESF utilization.

6.4.3.1 Pre-school education

Preparatory grade (grade 0)

Preparatory grade (or grade 0) is a support measure designed to improve skills of socially disadvantaged children before they enter the compulsory school system. Preparatory grades may be established, with the regional authority's consent, by local authorities, an alliance of local authorities, or regional authorities, provided that at least 7 children are enrolled in the class. A headmaster is responsible for decisions on enrolling children in the preparatory grade based on requests from their parents or guardians and upon a written recommendation of the school advice facility (Act No. 563/2005 Coll., on schools). The preparatory grade may be established with a kindergarten, primary school or special school (primary practical school, primary special school, etc.).

Many respondents argue against the preparatory grade being established with special schools because it often results in the majority of preparatory grade leavers entering the special school (children have adapted to its environment) instead of a mainstream primary school. Only rarely have special schools attempted to ensure their preparatory grade leavers are enrolled at mainstream primary schools. This is common mainly in municipalities with effective cooperation between schools and Pedagogical Psychological Advice Centres, i.e. if the schools cooperate as partners rather than act as competitors fighting for pupils. In practice, establishment of a preparatory grade in combination with a position of the teacher's assistant for socially disadvantaged children proved successful.

Table 1 – Preparatory grades in the schools attended by pupils from reviewed socially excluded localities

Number of schools	Primary schools	Special schools	Total
Preparatory grade established	37	31	68
Preparatory grade not established	196	95	291
No information provided	17	7	24
Total	250	133	383

Benefits:

- Children become accustomed to a school environment and regime. They are better prepared for compulsory school attendance. They receive special pedagogical care (speech therapist, special pedagogue).
- Preparatory grades provably lead to a decrease in Roma pupil absenteeism⁷⁸.
- The school maintains closer contact with families of pre-school children, the school and parents gradually get acquainted and mutual trust is built.
- No school fee must be paid so parents frequently use this option.

Drawbacks:

- Preparatory grades are considered a segregation measure by several people (Roma children are not integrated in a class with majority children).
- Only 10 months are available to develop skills and knowledge of children (compared with 36 months in kindergartens); this is insufficient in many cases.
- The probability that a child enrolls at a mainstream primary school decreases in preparatory grades established with special schools (see above).
- Preparatory grades compete with kindergartens, taking away their potential pupils. Roma parents prefer preparatory grade, if established, over kindergartens (kindergartens are paid for by parents except the last grade⁷⁹). Representatives of local authorities sometimes complain about redundant budget financial support of the both tools (waste of money).

Bottlenecks:

- Many respondents pointed out that establishment of preparatory grades caused financial duplication. Preparatory grades draw off finances from kindergartens, diluting financial support allocated to pre-school education. Effective coordination at the local level may contribute to elimination of this bottleneck. Appropriate officials shall continuously review number of pre-school children who would require pre-school education, evaluate the offer of kindergartens and assist in establishing a preparatory grade in selected schools, if required by actual demand.
- Arguing that there is insufficient demand by Roma parents, some headmasters decline to establish a preparatory grade.
- Schools are concerned about being labelled a 'Roma' school due to establishment of a preparatory grade (concerns about outflow of non-Roma pupils, see above).

⁷⁸ For details see Hule, Daniel, "Monitoring efektivitu přípravných ročníků" (*Monitoring the effectiveness of preparatory grades*), Prague 2004, commissioned by the MoEYS.

⁷⁹ In the last grade, only boarding is paid by parents while parents may apply for a state social support benefit covering this fee.

- Poor motivation of Roma parents to enrol their children in a preparatory grade, often due to their distrust of the school or lack of information.
- It is difficult, particularly in rural schools, to enrol the required minimum number of pupils (see above).
- Insufficient pre-school child education skills of some primary school teachers.
- Poor awareness among headmasters and Education Department staff of actual opportunities to establish and fund preparatory grades; headmasters' concerns about increased administrative burden.

Out-of-school preparation of children in 'pre-school clubs'

Pre-school clubs are designed to prepare children from socially excluded localities for compulsory school attendance at primary schools. Pre-school clubs are most often established by NGOs as well as by local Social Departments in some municipalities. The clubs are frequently established right in the locality and are open either regularly or on certain days in the morning only. Establishers specify their own rules governing the operation of the facility; the vast majority of pre-school clubs are attended for free. In some clubs, parents are required to pay a symbolic price for snacks (for example, CZK 6 per day)⁸⁰.

Benefits:

- Children receive proper pedagogical care improving their preparation for compulsory school attendance.
- Club staffs prefer education of children at mainstream primary schools rather than at special schools. The majority of children advance to mainstream primary schools with which the clubs often cooperate.
- The staffs work with parents. They inform parents about primary school enrolments and other schools in the community and motivate them to work with children, imparting the importance of education to them, etc. The service is provided directly in the locality; such facilities are closer to the parents and therefore more popular than services outside the locality. Roma parents appreciate not so strict daily regime (they can bring and take out their children anytime, they can stay with the children at the club, etc.). To avoid boarding fee (which is a frequent barrier precluding parents from enrolling their children at a kindergarten), parents often take children away before lunch.

Drawbacks:

- Increasing segregation of Roma children from excluded localities (children are kept out of contact with the majority environment and its different communication and behavioural patterns, etc.).
- Pre-school clubs providing their services directly in excluded localities fail to support active and responsible approaches by children's parents (no payments are required, parents are not required to accompany their children on their way to the club because it is close to their house or the club workers are responsible for accompanying the children).
- Having been established by NGOs in most cases, these facilities face a lack of money or uncertain financial support due to possible termination of a grant anytime in the future.

⁸⁰ For example, Khamoro Charity School in Olomouc. Parents are required to pay CZK 200 per month per child as a contribution to boarding, teaching aids, and various events. The service (although paid) is appreciated by parents. This year, Charity School has opened 2 classes. In each class, there is 1 teacher and 1 teacher's assistant. A speech therapist visits the classes once per month and currently, Charity School is establishing cooperation with a psychologist who will participate in elaboration of individual work plans for children.

- If the club is established by a local Social Department (the second major establisher), it is often in conflict with interests of Education Department which establishes preparatory grades. This again leads to ineffective utilization of funds, creating grounds for criticism of the social integration tools.

Bottlenecks:

- Uncertainty related to lack of long-term and continuous funding of the service if the club is established by a NGO. The lack of money can also be reflected by unsuitable premises (small rooms, inadequate equipment, lack of specialists personnel, etc.).
- Parents often distrust a new or unknown club provider. Establishment of mutual relationships is a time-demanding process.
- In rural areas, there is often no organisation (NGO) which would be able to provide this service, or there are not enough pre-school children in a locality. Transportation of children may also be regarded a barrier if the service is provided in other municipality. Generally, pre-school clubs are more often in towns due to the above-mentioned reasons.

6.4.3.2 Primary education

Teacher's assistant⁸¹ for socially disadvantaged children

Teacher's assistants help teaching staff in schools (or other institutions) attended by large number of socially disadvantaged pupils. The teacher's assistant helps children overcome communication barriers and adapt to the school environment. Teacher's assistant's tasks include supporting teachers during lessons and communication with pupils, communication with parents and Roma communities as well as organisation of recreational activities suitable for Roma children. A school with a teacher's assistant opens to the surrounding community and becomes a friendlier place. The primary objective is to create a school environment that is safe and convenient for Roma children.

The teacher's assistant serves as a role model for Roma children, demonstrating that even a Roma can obtain a reputable job and that education is meaningful. The support of teacher's assistant in communication with parents is invaluable. The teacher's assistant serves as a link between family and the school. In the school, the teacher's assistant acts as a representative of a community while in the community he or she represents the school. The teacher's assistant brings a sense of understanding into the school. He or she understands both the minority and majority cultures to the necessary extent and is able to foster mutual cooperation and communication of both sides. His or her work helps improve relationships between school and family.

A teacher's assistant position is established based on a headmaster's request filed with the Education Department of the appropriate regional authority which in turn submits the application to the MoEYS. There is no required minimum number of socially disadvantaged pupils at a school necessary for establishing the position specified by the governing law and regulations.

It must be noted that ethnic origin cannot be the major or even exclusive criterion for the teacher's assistant position. It is necessary that a teacher's assistant has a proper educational background and skills, continually cooperates with teaching staff and participate in further training.

It is suitable (and has proved successful) to prepare both teacher's assistants and all teaching staff for the upcoming work and cooperation under the new arrangement.

⁸¹ Formerly the 'Roma assistant'. Creation of this position is based on Section 16 of Act no. 561/2005 Coll., on schools, defining three criteria for determining that a certain child comes from a socially and culturally disadvantaged environment (i.e. the school is entitled to request funds to support teacher's assistant). The criteria are: 1. Family environment marked by low sociocultural status; 2. The child is exposed to socially pathological phenomena; 3. The child has been subjected to compulsory institutional or protective care or enjoys the asylee status.

The teacher's assistant system (including payroll) is financed through the Development Grant Programme of the MoEYS.

Table 2 – Teacher's assistants in the schools attended by pupils from reviewed socially excluded Roma localities

Number of schools	Primary schools	Special schools	Total
Teacher's assistant position established	64	63	127
Teacher's assistant position not established	169	63	232
No information provided	17	7	24
Total	250	133	383

Benefits:

- A teacher's assistant serves as a positive role model even for non-Roma children. He or she demonstrates that a Roma can get a reasonable job and that education is important.
- The work of a teacher's assistant significantly improves school attendance and achievements of pupils. The teacher's assistant builds and reinforces Roma children's and parents' trust in a school and prevents (often culturally-based) misunderstandings between a family and school.
- The teacher's assistant is an expert familiarized with the environment from which the children come, and is aware of specific behavioural and habitual differences which he or she doesn't take as insolence, discourtesy or negligence. He or she is able to motivate others to behavioural changes.

Drawbacks:

- Parents rely excessively on communication with teacher's assistants. This may increase their passivity in relation to communication with a school as an institution.
- A teacher's assistant may be perceived by some people as supporting only a certain group of pupils. Some residents in a locality may reject cooperation or communication with a teacher's assistant coming from a Roma environment or locality composed of multiple unrelated and antagonized families.
- Uncertain funding necessary to pay the position. In the current system, the school is required to apply for the funds every year, which places an excessive administrative burden on its staff. At the same time, there is no assurance that the school will get the subsidy and hence the school and teacher's assistant execute agreements for definite periods of time. This indeed demotivates teacher's assistants as well.

Bottlenecks:

- Negative headmasters' experiences with work of teacher's assistants in the past. Headmasters suspect potential conflicts arising from mediated communication (school – teacher's assistant – family).
- Headmasters of schools which have established the teacher's assistant position are concerned about being perceived as a 'Roma school' by the public.
- Teaching staff may take a disparaging attitude towards the teacher's assistant due to his or her education level or underestimating his or her role. It is necessary to thoroughly describe and explain the role and importance of the teacher's assistant.
- Considering the educational situation in Roma communities, it is not an easy task to find a suitable candidate for the teacher's assistant position who meets the school's requirements and is respected by the community.

- Claiming that employing a teacher's assistant advantages a selected group of children and represents positive discrimination, many headmasters who "make no difference" between Roma and non-Roma pupils decline to employ a teacher's assistant.

Complementary teaching programmes executed by schools

No special complementary teaching activities are carried out in the vast majority of schools. Generally, schools offer pupils support via teachers to whom children may turn for explanation of specific matters. Schools with their own special complementary teaching programmes are rather rare. In large municipalities, NGOs cooperate with schools, offering in-school, in-home or external (in NGO premises or less often in local authorities premises) complementary teaching (see below).

Benefits:

- Complementary teaching supports pupils' ability to attain knowledge, improves their actual school achievements and ideally allows them to leave the school with good results.
- Teachers know the specific needs of individual pupils and can meet them operatively or instruct the relevant complementary teaching provider.
- Utilization of school premises – children and parents from a locality perceive their school as an institution committed to helping them.

Drawbacks:

No major drawbacks have been identified in relation to this tool.

Bottlenecks:

- Complementary teaching is dependent on teachers' readiness to dedicate their free time to children (generally, this activity is not remunerated). A few projects addressing complementary teaching, which are financed through the ESF, represent a slight move in this context.
- Low motivation of children to attend the complementary teaching programmes is based on generally low willingness to learn (see above).
- Way to and from the school in the afternoon hours, particularly in rural areas where children must commute (no buses departing late in the afternoon, parents cannot accompany children on their way to and from the school, etc). The fact that children often do not eat their lunch at the school (parents are not able to pay for it) represents another factor complicating children's attendance in complementary teaching.

Complementary teaching programmes executed by NGOs

Particularly in large municipalities, there are NGOs providing educational support to children from socially excluded localities, e.g. through complementary teaching, home preparation, or motivation to further education. Complementary teaching programmes are often combined with various recreational activities available to children. In contrary to the complementary teaching programmes executed by schools (where a teacher knows pupil's needs), the tutors must initially ascertain the needs. In this case, communication between the service provider and a school is crucial. Complementary teaching can be provided to pupils individually thanks to volunteers who frequently work in this area. It is necessary to maintain long-term cooperation and establish mutual confidence between the volunteer and client. At the same time, the provider must have sufficient number of volunteers available.

Below we specify specific factors relating to individual complementary teaching options:

A) In-home teaching

Mutual trust is crucial for functioning of in-home teaching. This option is the preferred option by Roma children.

Benefits:

- Individual approach in a familiar environment.
- Volunteers recruited from pedagogical or other (social) universities acquire unique skills and experience with Roma children and ethnic minority environments and are enthusiastic about the work.
- A relationship between a family and volunteer is established, shaping the general approach towards the minority and majority.

Drawbacks:

- The complementary teaching requires a long-term programme, supported by bilateral feedback. This makes this activity quite time demanding.
- Children stay in their locality and the service is laid at their feet, leading to children's and parents' passivity. Children are deprived of contact with the environment outside the locality.
- Different education approaches of school and tutors may result in inconsistency between school and complementary teaching.

Bottlenecks:

- The programme requires a sufficient number of suitable volunteers (a problem in small municipalities).
- Families often provide inappropriate background and conditions for provision of the complementary teaching service.
- Vast effort, time and money are necessary to motivate children to participate in the complementary teaching programmes.

B) External teaching

Children attend a complementary teaching programme in NGO premises often located outside the locality. They have to leave their flat and meet with other children. Complementary teaching is often combined with other activities and services, such as vocational advice, pedagogical psychological advice, etc.

Benefits:

- Clubs may be located in the locality, avoiding the need to commute outside the locality.
- The complementary teaching programme is conveniently combined with other activities and services including recreational activities, motivating visits in plants and businesses, and expert advice.
- Effective form of cooperation with children, combining collective and individual care (volunteers).

Drawbacks:

- Children are deprived of contact with the environment outside the locality.

- Potential inconsistency between school teaching methods and complementary teaching methods.

Bottlenecks:

- Parents' and children's motivation to cooperate requires more extensive effort than in the case of in-home teaching. Children must get familiarized with an unknown environment.
- It is difficult to maintain long-term regular attendance, especially in the winter months. The attendance may also be affected by costs connected with commuting.

Specialists⁸² in primary schools

Cooperation with specialists enables early identification and resolution of problems.

Benefits:

- Individual approach improves children's position in the school, reinforces their self-esteem and affects their relationships with others.
- Children receive high quality care.
- Providing an early solution, specialist care prevents conflicts or sprawling problems.

Drawbacks:

- A child may feel stigmatised by attending the specialist care.
- Cooperation with the family is crucial.

Bottlenecks:

- Hiring (and indeed paying) specialists represent a major hindrance, particularly for schools in small towns and villages. However, one specialist may cooperate with multiple schools, enabling the schools to share costs.

"All-day school"/"community school" programme

Within the 2005 Roma integration support activities, the MoEYS supported a pilot "All-day School Programme" executed in five schools with high number of socially disadvantaged pupils. The programme focused on enabling pupils from socially and culturally disadvantaging background to achieve better school performance and success through specific activities combined in a comprehensive primary school educational programme. In addition, the programme efficiency and costs were tested.

Offering all-day programmes customized to match local community needs, community schools apply a similar approach (however, focused not exclusively on Roma). Community education supports lifelong learning as a tool to improve quality of life⁸³.

Benefits:

- School becomes integral part of the everyday life of families, increasing family members' motivation to learn.
- Allows participation of parents in school operation.

⁸² A special pedagogue, ethopedic specialist, speech therapist, psychologist, social worker, etc.

⁸³ Primary school in Predlice may serve as a good example of a functioning community school in Roma community, with community coordinator position established (Nová škola supported by Mott Foundation).

- Recreational activity offer may help retain majority pupils at the school.
- Offer of adult education.
- Improved relationships between locality residents and the majority society.

Drawbacks:

- Increased number of Roma parents at the school may cause the school to be perceived as a 'Roma school'.

Bottlenecks:

- This concept has a major impact on the operation of a school. Headmaster's commitment and support of teaching staff and local authorities are crucial (and often hard to obtain).
- This integration method is demanding in terms of school capability development, both financial and human resources.
- A community school programme must proactively match needs of a community. In particular, development of mutually trusted environment and cooperation is time-demanding.

"Step by Step" educational programme ("Zacít spolu" in the Czech Republic)

'Zacít spolu' is an educational programme emphasizing an individual approach to children and close cooperation between families, schools and the wider community in the field of raising and educating children. The programme is committed to supporting and enforcing the inclusion of children with special needs (children with outstanding talent, children with development disorders, children with disability as well as children from ethnic minorities). The programme highlights stimulating environments such as an unconventional layout of classrooms using so-called activity centres, cooperative learning, project-based teaching and integrated thematic teaching.

The 'Zacít spolu' educational programme can be applied in kindergartens and the lower primary level.

Benefits:

- Individual approach motivates children to learn.
- Work methods that are closer to Roma children and improve their school performance.
- Facilitates family, school and wider community cooperation in the field of raising and educating children. It is not easy to build such relationships particularly in socially excluded Roma settings.

Drawbacks:

- A working method suitable for kindergartens and the lower primary level only.

Bottlenecks:

- To implement the programme, schools must thoroughly redesign their existing work methods including teaching staff's perception of the teaching and learning process. This involves many complications.
- The method is time demanding and, above all, financially demanding.

Teaching staff training

Ongoing training of the entire teaching staff rather than selected teachers is one of the fundamental tools indirectly contributing to improvement of success rate of Roma pupils in

primary and other schools. The offer of training types is relatively wide in the Czech Republic; however the courses are implemented by a minimal number of schools. This is indeed caused by the lack of money to pay the trainers as well as time constraints of teachers.

The importance of the teachers' training is often better appreciated by schools with a high share of Roma pupils than by mainstream schools. Main topics of further training courses include: Cultural and social specifics of Roma in the Czech Republic; intercultural coexistence, child raising in the Roma family; evaluation of school maturity of Roma pupils; antibias training; role of, and cooperation with, teacher's assistant; multicultural education; special pedagogy; EUROMANAGER project (ESF training of school employees)⁸⁴; seminars on educational programme design; pre-school children education training for teacher's assistants; etc.

Benefits:

- Further training of teachers improving their approach to children with non-mainstream background and establishing an inclusive environment.
- Improved communication with Roma pupils and parents; apprehending and respecting differences and their causes.
- Favourable implications within the entire school climate.

Drawbacks:

No major drawbacks have been identified in relation to this tool.

Bottlenecks:

- Schools are not able to differentiate between discrimination and a processes designed to equalise opportunities of pupils coming from socially and culturally disadvantaged environment. In order to avoid advantaging a specific group, the schools rather recede from implementing any school educational system modifications.
- Changes in thinking and approach are directly linked to personal motivation of individuals and require time and money.

Project focusing on improvement of school performance and integration of Roma pupils

The schools which were subject to this research were involved in various types of major or minor projects of which some were, to a certain extent, linked with the above summarised methods and activities. Selected projects described at the end of this subchapter⁸⁵ are included as inspiration to readers.

Major project areas include:

Drug prevention; fighting absenteeism and improving school attendance; support in transition to the upper primary level and secondary schools; support of Czech language teaching; orientating in the society – workshops for pupils from socially weak families, equipment and fixtures in a trial flat, using public transport, shopping, etc.; Roma language literary competitions; reintegration of pupils from special primary schools; division of the 1st grade into two micro-classes – individual work with pupils; motivation of pupils and parents – meetings with famous athletes, successful Roma, positive role models; 'career days' – advice; occupational advice centre at school; motivation centres; health, medical and hygiene projects; etc.

⁸⁴ Provided by e.g. Regional Information Centre Nový Jičín.

⁸⁵ We describe selected activity types implemented in certain schools without stating names of specific projects. Our aim is to provide inspiration to readers rather than compiling an exhaustive list of projects.

6.4.3.3 Secondary education

Although the research project assignment defines primary education as the main focus area, in our opinion, the link and cooperation between primary and secondary schools is crucial for success of school leavers in the labour market. We therefore gathered basic information in this field as well, although on a smaller scale.

The following two chapters are based on information provided by primary school headmasters and NGO representatives who tested and implemented programs focusing on integration of Roma pupils in secondary schools. Except for certain exceptions, we have contacted no secondary school or vocational school attended by Roma students.

Although some schools encourage their pupils to continue studying, the research shows that the number of pupils who want to attend secondary schools and who are finally enrolled depends to a great extent on the family environment. Pupils must be worked with systematically already as early as at primary school to ensure that they apprehend the importance of vocational training and have positive role models motivating them to continue studying.

Scholarships for Roma students

The MoEYS carries out a subsidy programme called "Support of Roma secondary school students". The subsidies are provided to schools and aimed to support Roma pupils who are Czech citizens and whose families suffer major difficulties due to costs related to secondary and vocational education.

The subsidies may be requested up to total amount of CZK 7,000 per pupil/student to support pupils/students who have no unexcused absenteeism and major disciplinary problems. The funds provided are intended to fully or partially cover the following costs:

School fee

Intended exclusively to cover the school fees in private or higher vocational schools (VOS) or complementary courses (compulsory and not paid by a school).

Boarding

Intended exclusively to cover cost of meals provided by the school and school catering facilities. Not to be used to cover food purchased in shops, meals in restaurants, meal vouchers, etc.

Lodging

Intended exclusively to cover cost of accommodation provided by school in a school facility, if necessary for a student. Not to be used to cover any accommodation not provided by the school.

Travel

Intended exclusively to cover travel expenses related to commuting to a school located outside the municipality where the student resides.

School material and textbooks

Intended to cover costs of textbooks, exercise books and other school supplies; in exceptional cases it can be used to cover purchase of other exceptional items, such as typewriter, sewing machine, PC, etc., provided that the school confirms that such item is necessary for studying and home learning. The allowance for exceptional items as specified above is provided once per the term of study only.

Protective equipment

Intended to cover costs of protective equipment requested by the school pursuant to Government Directive No. 495/2001 Coll., dated November 14, 2002, listing the covered protective equipment.

Benefits:

- The tool partially alleviates the financial difficulties suffered by families whose children study at secondary schools.

Drawbacks:

- Focusing the tool exclusively on Roma students is somewhat irrational. The tool would be far better justified if it reaches all students from socially weak families irrespective of their ethnic background. The allocation of funds would then indeed need to be subject to more detailed arrangements.
- The tool is generally insufficiently motivating, failing to prevent Roma students from leaving secondary schools in the first few months. The tool has no substantial impact on retaining Roma students. In addition, it helps solve financial problems related to studies but fail to motivate better school performance.

Bottlenecks:

- The provision of funds is subject to a decision of a regional coordinator of Roma advisors. The regional coordinator "certifies" whether a specific applicant is or is not a Roma based on subjective criteria. This aspect may make the process non-transparent.
- Increased administrative burden for schools which participate in the subsidy application process.

6.4.4 Recommended tools

The following subchapter reviews tools rarely employed in practice. Their inclusion is intended to inspire readers. The subchapter is divided into two parts (A and B). Part A contains pilot-phase tested tools while the part B provides ideas which still need to be tested and finalized.

A) Pilot-phase tested tools

6.4.4.1 Pre-school education

Considering negligible number of Roma children attending kindergartens, we have addressed 14 kindergartens only. We monitored methods of work with Roma children and parents and measures implemented in order to attract Roma parents to enrol their children. This form of pre-school education is barely used, resulting in the existence of a considerably smaller number of social integration tools aimed specifically at Roma children.

Kindergarten teacher's assistant for socially disadvantaged children

In the Czech Republic, there are approximately 20 kindergartens which had or have established the position of teacher's assistant. The vast majority of teacher's assistants employed in kindergartens emerged from Step by Step's Kukadla-Jakhora project. Aimed at school maturity improvement of Roma children, this project addressed advanced pre-school preparation, support of proper primary school selection and fostering a successful start at the lower primary level. It was carried out in Brno, Ostrava and Pardubice. The project successfully introduced the teacher's assistant position in several kindergartens and later ensured involvement of Roma parents who enrolled their children at kindergartens.

Benefits:

- Increased attendance of Roma children at kindergartens is a suitable integration solution.

- The teacher's assistant serves as a positive role model for children.
- Representing the local Roma community, the teacher's assistant is a trusted person for Roma children and their parents living in socially excluded settings. (Especially if the teacher's assistant was selected in a strict selection procedure.)
- The teacher's assistant supervises and ensures regular attendance of Roma children at kindergartens (assistant's job description may include accompanying Roma children on their way to kindergarten).
- Roma parents have increased confidence in the kindergarten.
- Improved communication between the kindergarten and Roma families.
- The teacher's assistant is an expert familiarized with the environment from which the children come, and is able to prevent misunderstandings between parents and teachers frequently caused by cultural differences (different child raising methods, communication, etc.).

Drawbacks:

- It is often very difficult to find a suitable candidate for the position. Being Roma cannot be the sole criterion; the candidate must demonstrate actual professional skills.

Bottlenecks:

- Low motivation of kindergartens to participate in addressing the issue of education of Roma children from socially excluded localities. Kindergartens take a negative attitude towards any changes in their habitual practices.
- Low motivation of Roma parents to enrol their children at kindergartens. This is usually supported by the necessity of paying the boarding fee and accompanying children to kindergarten.
- Selection of a suitable teacher's assistant.
- Failing to apprehend the integration principle, several regional authorities officials provide no support for the creation of new teacher's assistant positions. Regional authorities co-fund the costs related to the teacher's assistant position. Frequently, officials claim that it is sufficient to support one selected kindergarten within a municipality. However, this approach clearly contradicts the meaning of integration.
- Headmasters' concerns about potential conflicts caused by mediated (or doubled) communication (kindergarten – teacher's assistant – Roma parents). Headmasters' concerns that the kindergarten would be perceived as 'Roma', causing an outflow of majority pupils.
- Under the current system, it is necessary to apply for funds covering costs related to the teacher's assistant position including salary at the beginning of each year⁸⁶.

Preparatory grade at kindergartens

Benefits:

- Free of charge if parents are allowed to take their children away before lunch (so they are not required to pay meals).

⁸⁶ Teacher's assistants system (including payroll) is financed through the Development Grant Programme of the MoEYS.

- Children receive proper pedagogical care improving their chances of successful commencement of primary school attendance.
- Children experience an environment that is different from life in the socially excluded locality, and they develop cultural and societal habits not present in their family settings.
- Children are getting used to a daily school regime and get better prepared for primary school attendance.

Drawbacks:

- After a short period of twelve months, the child must again get used to a new environment and new teachers at a primary school. Ten months of the preparatory grade experience is often too short to develop social and cultural habits necessary to attend a primary school.
- Preparatory grades are often composed mainly of socially disadvantaged children who are not integrated into classes with majority children.

Bottlenecks:

- Roma parents from socially excluded localities generally avoid kindergartens so they also usually avoid preparatory grades at kindergartens. They are not exposed to the necessary information.
- Frequently, the distance of a kindergarten from the locality causes Roma parents to fail to enrol their children.
- Missing motivation of kindergartens to participate in addressing the issue of education of children from socially excluded localities. Kindergartens perceive no reason, and there are no incentives for them, to implement any support measures addressing socially disadvantaged children. Kindergartens do not consider themselves organisations responsible for addressing this issue.
- Generally poor knowledge of tools available to address the issue of education of pupils from a socially disadvantaged environment.
- Kindergartens' concerns that they will be perceived as 'Roma' kindergartens by the majority society, causing an outflow of majority pupils who duly pay the fees.

Projects focusing on families with children

Representing a new type of support, projects focusing on Roma families with pre-school and school children seek to teach parents how to prepare their children for compulsory school attendance or support them in home learning. This support is provided by workers who systematically work with parents and children directly in their households⁸⁷.

'Parent clubs' where parents collectively learn to help their children represent another alternative of such support. For example, the Centre for Roma Mothers with Children in Vsetín has already been cooperating with families and schools for three years. This facility represents a specific maternity centre. As part of the support, women (and men, if present) may receive further (e.g. informal) education (legal awareness, drug issues, job seeking, health and hygiene).

Benefits:

- Transfer of responsibility to parents.
- Children are better prepared for the compulsory school attendance.
- Informal method of information exchange.

⁸⁷ For example, this type of service is provided by Rosa Kladno.

Drawbacks:

- High staffing requirements if the service is provided directly in households.
- Children are kept out of contact with the majority environment and its different communication and behavioural patterns.

Bottlenecks:

- Development of trusted relationship between providers and Roma families.
- Roma parents' low interest in participating in the programme.

6.4.4.2 Primary education

Lowering the number of pupils in a class

Roma children from socially excluded localities entering primary education are poorly equipped. The objective of this measure is to ensure that teachers apply an individual approach to socially disadvantaged children, increasing their educational prospects.

Lowering the number of pupils in each class poses high demands on staffing, finance and space. The current normative-based school financing system (pursuant to the number of pupils) handicaps schools which apply measures to lower the number of pupils in classes. A school can implement such measures provided that it has secured other sources of finance⁸⁸.

Dividing 1st grade into two microclasses represents a suitable alternative⁸⁹.

Benefits:

- More individual approach towards pupils.

Drawbacks:

No major drawbacks have been identified in relation to this tool.

Bottlenecks:

- Schools receive funds from the state budget according to their number of pupils; financial demands of the tool are the main barriers of its implementation.
- The tool is demanding in terms of staffing, space and classroom equipment.

Increased number of Czech language lessons

Roma children entering primary education show poor knowledge of the Czech language. This fact impairs their ability to understand the material taught and decreases their prospects for success. This handicap can be eliminated by individual care⁹⁰.

Benefits:

- Application of early solution improves child's school performance in other subjects, motivating him or her to further work.

Drawbacks:

No major drawbacks have been identified in relation to this tool.

⁸⁸ For example, the primary school in Ústí nad Labem – Predlice managed to cover funds missing due to decreased normative from the budget of the Educational Department of the City of Ústí nad Labem.

⁸⁹ For example, Skrobálkova primary school in Ostrava.

⁹⁰ For example, Zlonice primary school has practical experience in employing this tool.

Bottlenecks:

- Headmasters' ability to identify and solve this issue.
- Staffing and financial capacities required for individual care.
- Insufficient motivation of children.

Complementary primary education courses

A primary or secondary school may, after discussing with its establisher, offer courses to complete primary education of attendees in compliance with the framework primary educational programme in the following forms:

- a) Daily studies
- b) Distance studies

The tool's **benefits** are clear and are mainly related to increased labour market prospects of the course graduates.

Drawbacks:

No major drawbacks have been identified in relation to this tool.

Bottlenecks:

- Very low number of courses offered.
- Necessity to travel to the courses, and related costs.
- Low motivation of potential course attendees.
- Poor awareness of this option on the side of both course providers and attendees.

Preparation for secondary school entrance examinations

Our researchers noticed projects focusing on upper primary level pupils and preparation of Roma pupils for the secondary school entrance exams in large towns only. The majority of such projects are carried out by NGOs. The project services are provided either in households, schools or NGO premises, or exceptionally in Pedagogical Psychological Advice Centres. The service usually combines a specific form of complementary teaching with recreational activities. NGOs closely cooperate with schools and Pedagogical Psychological Advice Centres, which provide qualified aid in selecting appropriate secondary schools.

Benefits:

- Children are systematically prepared for secondary school entrance exams and receive support to be utilized in further studies.
- In clubs, children meet other pupils and enjoy new experiences.

Drawbacks:

No major drawbacks have been identified in relation to this tool.

Bottlenecks:

- Low motivation of children and parents to continue studying (for details see above).

- Parents and children lack sufficient and quality information about school offer and available advice services.
- Since the household environment is unsuitable for complex and regular home preparation and learning of children, the effect of the in-home alternative of the tool is poor.

Mentoring

A mentor is an adult (a volunteer, mostly students) of appropriate age who, within the mentoring project, creates deeper bonds with a child. The mentor provides individual care and support to a child, creating a trusting and safe relationship. The mentor both provides support in school preparation and offers other activities (cinema, exhibitions, trips). Respecting the child's origin, the mentor introduces him or her to a new lifestyle⁹¹. The relationship enriches both parties.

Mentoring is one of few projects supporting Roma pupils in the upper primary level attendance. The upper primary level period is crucial for further studies of Roma pupils. Experience shows that parents' support diminishes in this period since children are expected to quit further studying and to register with a Labour Office. Also, the school results of Roma pupils often get substantially worse in the upper primary level. A suitable mentor can play a very positive role in all the above mentioned aspects of the issue.

Benefits:

- Individual approach, improved attitude towards school.
- A mentor serves as a positive role model, which the localities often lack.

Drawbacks:

No major drawbacks have been identified in relation to this tool.

Bottlenecks:

- Ensuring sufficient number of mentors in localities not within large towns (lack of volunteers).
- The work imposes demands on the mentor's personality; risk of the burnout syndrome (in particular if the mentor is required to participate in resolving certain family problems).

Transport of pupils to and from school

Transport to and from school represents a problem, especially in rural localities and localities on outskirts of large towns. The problem is caused both by poor public transport availability and related cost for parents. Some schools or NGOs operate a school bus/minibus taking children to and from school.

Benefits:

- Timely and regular attendance of children (e.g. no adverse effects from weather conditions).
- Decreased costs incurred to families in relation to school attendance of their children.

Drawbacks:

- Reduced flexibility to select recreational activities or other out-of-school activities because the children must usually use only one specific bus to get home right after school.

⁹¹ For example, Rozlety project of Nová škola o.p.s. (a charity).

Bottlenecks:

- Besides the financial costs related to purchase and operation of the bus, there are no other major bottlenecks identified. The acquisition and operation cost can be shared by multiple schools.

6.4.4.3 Secondary education

As mentioned above, the number of integration tools focusing on Roma students is very low in the Czech Republic due to a very low number of Roma students in secondary or vocational schools. We noted the following tools:

Secondary school teacher's assistant for socially disadvantaged children

This tool's benefits and drawbacks are similar to the above-mentioned (see Primary education). The small number of Roma students within a school can cause the secondary school assistant's capacity to be under utilized. One teacher's assistant can hence cooperate with multiple secondary schools, which can share the related costs. However, this arrangement is not allowed under the current legal regulations governing the tool.

Completion of secondary education via distance study plus mentoring

Extension of the offer of distance study in secondary and vocational schools completed with support of a mentor who accompanies the student and provides him or her with necessary study support appears to be a suitable but less utilized tool. The tool can be combined with transport and other cost allowances (similar to scholarships for Roma secondary school students).

Work-motivating activities

Some schools (mostly secondary schools, but also few primary schools) and NGOs organise various visits to acquaint children and teenagers from socially excluded families with the environment outside their lifestyle. Being under expert supervision, children get acquainted mainly with a specific work environment or, ideally, they can talk with a Roma employee who may at the same time serve as a motivating element (a positive role model).

Some primary schools organise visits to secondary schools. Such visits may also be attended by parents, giving them the opportunity to get familiarized with the environment to be attended by their children in the near future.

Lack of work motivation and poor labour prospects cause children from socially excluded Roma localities to lose any motivation to study. Therefore, it is suitable for such programmes to include both visits in vocational schools or manufacturing plants and repeated visits to elite workplaces such as banks, media, luxury shops, hotels, etc., in order to improve the motivating element of the tool.

B) Untested tools

Accompanying children from socially excluded localities to kindergartens

Accompanying children to kindergartens proved to be a good practice at kindergartens working with children from socially excluded localities. Accompanying of children often falls within the job description of a teacher's assistant who goes each morning to families whose children have not shown up at kindergarten. There is another suitable, however not used, option consisting in cooperation with Roma parents (e.g. in case a kindergarten has no teacher's assistant) who designate an attendant accompanying their children. It is possible to cooperate with a suitable

selected mother, or several mothers can accompany the children alternatively. A specific solution must indeed be adapted to the actual needs.

Project focusing on children with delayed compulsory school attendance

A high percentage of interviewed school employees highlighted the gap in support relating to children from socially disadvantaged environments who were allowed delayed compulsory school attendance. The current education system includes no tools focusing on children with delayed compulsory school attendance due to social disadvantage. After being diagnosed upon enrolment at a primary school or in a Pedagogical Psychological Advice Centre, children often rejoin the non-stimulating environment of the excluded locality. Children's prospects for improvement of their preparedness for school are very poor unless they attend kindergarten or another pre-school facility. In our opinion, this gap provides wide opportunities for Pedagogical Psychological Advice Centres, which in cooperation with schools and relevant NGOs can seek solutions ensuring that children with delayed compulsory school attendance do not drop out of the education process and use their spare time to improve their preparedness for primary school attendance.

Advance complementary teaching

Advance complementary teaching is an interesting tool, which was employed in a few cases. Children from socially excluded localities start the school day slightly earlier and their teacher briefly presents them with the material to be studied on that day. Children are able to better apprehend the material and prepare for common lessons. The teacher is able to pay more attention to certain aspects of the given topic and to respond to specific requirements of children.

This tool, although not widespread, seems to be very suitable for general use. Because children are prepared in advance for a given topic, they suffer less stress. Advance teaching seems to be a tool that can, to a certain extent, replace complementary post-school teaching, which has rather negative connotations.

Improved cooperation between primary and secondary schools

Representatives of selected secondary schools identify upper primary level pupils who show skills necessary to study at secondary school. They work closely with such pupils on certain topics (whether before or after the school day) and the pupils gradually become acquainted with the secondary school environment. In addition, teachers of the primary school attended by such pupils emphasize the subjects that are suitable and necessary for secondary school studies, and motivate pupils to continue studying. This tool may ideally be combined with the mentoring programme.

Performance-based scholarships

Performance-based scholarships are considered a key motivating tool both for students and their families. The field research clearly shows that many socially excluded Roma children quit secondary education because their families made them register with a Labour Office and contribute to the family budget. The scholarships for Roma students mentioned earlier in this document fail to address this problem. The funds provided are used to cover costs related to study and do not flow directly to a family budget. On the other hand, the performance-based scholarships may, to a certain extent, help solve this problem. The tool may also motivate families to support their studying children.

Proper setting of criteria governing provision of the performance-based scholarships is crucial. The performance-based scholarship should be used for secondary school students only. In our opinion, the tool's target group should not include solely socially excluded Roma students⁹², but for example students from incomplete low-income families, or students whose parents have primary education only, etc.

⁹² Due to the potential public dislike of such one-sided support measure.

Boarding schools (a British model)

This model of somewhat "elite" schools is based on maximum efforts to erase social differences between students. Boarding schools are private schools with very high school fees and a detailed system of performance-based scholarships awarded to exceptional students from socially weak families. Spending all their leisure time (except holidays) within the school premises or attending school-organised events, the students are to a large extent disaffiliated from their original family environment. In relation to Roma students, this model provides certain potential to support their migration into the majority society.

In our opinion, the tool is very resource-demanding, especially in terms of methods to search for talented Roma primary school pupils. The tool requires a highly individualized approach to, and close work with such children in order to ensure their excellent performance to qualify for the scholarship. This tool may result in conflict between a family and the child, who may feel ashamed of his or her family, which could be considered a certain drawback.

We assume that expansion of schools of this type should be a Czech education system's target status to be gradually achieved, particularly in terms of preparation of pupils as well as through deployment of partial tools supporting the functionality of the "boarding school" model.

Education of young mothers whose maternity forced them to prematurely leave the education system

Many Roma girls living in socially excluded localities prematurely leave school benches due to pregnancy and maternity. Their situation prevents them from further studying in secondary schools. Among the tools which seek to return young mothers to schools we noticed specific educational programmes with adapted arrangements combined with, for example, childcare service.

6.5 Further selected aspects of social exclusion

6.5.1 Risk phenomena

Labour market exclusion (and generally, life in the socially excluded environment) has a number of negative impacts on inhabitants of the localities. Primarily, the inhabitants are forced to seek alternative ways of making their living. The inhabitants are mostly dependent on social welfare and they often raise their income through unofficial work or other informal economic activities⁹³ that frequently verge on law violation. **Beside the fact that many inhabitants of the localities in fact more-or-less violate a law⁹⁴, they are also more likely to become victims of a crime compared with the majority society.** This concerns various forms of abuse of the adverse situation of the socially excluded individuals, such as usury, financial (credit) frauds, drug dealing, sex solicitation as well as organising unofficial work. Such crimes are committed both by other socially excluded individuals or individuals (institutions) from mainstream settings. There is a risk of potential or existing propagation of various forms of crime outside the locality and future escalation of the problem in line with social exclusion build-up, unless the central and local governments implement a systematic solution of the problem.

⁹³ For more information see chapter 6.3, *Impeded access to the labour market*.

⁹⁴ It is necessary to note that the higher crime level in socially excluded environments is caused by adaptation of inhabitants to such environment and not due to their ethnicity. It is therefore senseless (and dangerous) to talk about specific "Roma criminality".

Problem: Indebtedness

Indebtedness of families living in the socially excluded environment represents one of the major barriers of their integration and causes their further social sinking⁹⁵. Many families have debts for rent, water or energy consumption, lease-purchased goods, fines, etc. They often try to solve their situation (pending execution or eviction) by further loans from usurers or fast-loan companies at high interest rate (such monthly interest rate may reach as much as tens to hundreds per cent). Fast growing debt shortly reaches a level that such families which mostly depend on social welfare are in fact unable to pay. Unable to find their way out, indebted families get trapped in an endless circle of repayments and more loans. Therefore, debt prevention and debt avoidance should be the key targets on our way towards integration of socially excluded people.



Field social work (FSW)

For details see section 6.5.2, *Poor social competencies*.

Czech State Police's assistant

This is a crime prevention tool based on cooperation of the Czech State Police with local governments, NGOs and the general public. Assistants act as intermediaries between inhabitants of the socially excluded localities and the Czech State Police. They inform the inhabitants about potential risks and threats, mediate contact between victims and the Police, foster confidence of locality inhabitants in the Police, and help increase the rate of solved crimes of specific types. The specific job description of the assistants varies from place to place in line with local conditions⁹⁶.

Benefits:

- The Police develop expert capabilities to solve social exclusion from the criminality perspective.
- Inhabitants of the locality feel safer provided that mutually positive relationship has been built.

Drawbacks:

- A potential conflict of interest arises if the tool is interlinked with FSW; the FSW could lose the hard accomplished confidence of locality inhabitants.

⁹⁵ For details on impacts of indebtedness see *Problem: Rent dodging* (6.2.3.1) in chapter 6.2, *Impeded access to quality housing*, and *Internal factors* (6.3.2) in chapter 6.3, *Impeded access to the labour market*.

⁹⁶ For example in Ostrava, the tool has been used primarily to *fight usury* (two local NGO workers has been serving as assistants since 2003) while in Cheb, it has been deployed to *tackle the issue of child prostitution* (two workers of local authorities has been serving as assistants since 2004). Both projects are funded by the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs within the "Field Social Work Support Programme". In Ústí nad Labem, an assistant has been primarily involved in *preventive work in schools* attended by children from socially excluded localities (the assistant has been an employee of the District Directorate of the Police of the Czech Republic, Ústí nad Labem, since 2005 and the position has been established within the Active Employment Policy). The tool is currently employed in Most and its implementation is planned at some other places (Brno and Prague 5).

Bottlenecks:

- Infiltration into the locality, building confidence.

Prosecuting the usurers

In Moravskoslezský region (north Moravia), central and local governments have established several anti-usury working groups whose activity has been based on cooperation with local governments, NGOs and inhabitants of the socially excluded localities (via Police's assistants).

Bottlenecks:

- Reluctance of victims to testify against usurers.

Emergency Social Fund

Provision of interest-free loans to individuals at risk of social exclusion may serve as a tool to prevent, or free from, dependence on usury (or fast-loans). The loans are provided under strict and clear conditions, such as:

- A person (or family members) is a recipient of social welfare or has a job so it is likely that he or she will be able to repay the loan;
- A service on behalf of the municipality or NGO may be required instead of paying interest;
- A FSW works with a family, helping them comply with the schedule of payments (the FSW's aim is to teach the family to achieve greater self-sufficiency (economical household management, at least short-term employment) in order to eliminate the need for future loans).

The tool was employed by an international company and NGO⁹⁷; ideally, such projects should be implemented by local governments in the future.

Benefits:

- The preventive aspect of the tool represents the major benefit. Emergency Social Fund loans avoid further social sinking of families caused by their indebtedness due to usury or fast-loans.
- Families learn how to manage their daily household financial needs (if the tool is combined with guidance provided by a FSW or similar worker).

Drawbacks:

- Risk of funds being utilized in contrary to the fund rules, i.e. misuse of the tool.

Bottlenecks:

- Local authorities are very sceptical about the tool. They will not provide loans to anyone who is already their debtor (e.g. for rent, etc.).
- Extremely problematic tool in terms of financial sources.

⁹⁷ The tool was tested as part of the "Emergency Social Fund" pilot project funded by the Prague Office of UN High Commissionaire for Refugees in 2001. In addition, Partners Czech, Pardubice was also very active in this field.

Untested tool:

Strict control of high-interest loan companies

Czech law requires that any fast loan company must check whether the loan applicant has a job. According to some information, some employees of such companies ignore this requirement in order to conclude a higher number of contracts and receive higher remuneration. Fast loans often entail issuance of counterfeited employment certifications and similar deceptions.

Drawbacks:

- Limitation of fast loans to socially excluded families may in turn increase use of the usurers' services.

Problem: Addiction, prostitution

Individuals who are excluded from the labour market for a long time and whose life is not organised based on work morale frequently suffer from apathy and may be more exposed to various addictions (drugs, alcohol, gambling).

Streetwork

Streetwork is a set of low-threshold services for clients suffering (most often) from drug addiction and/or for prostitutes. Since clients are not motivated or able to find support on their own, front-line workers proactively search for potential recipients of their services.

Benefits:

- Prevents further health and social degradation of socially excluded individuals.

Drawbacks:

No major drawbacks have been identified.

Bottlenecks:

- Unwillingness of Roma drug addicts to contact professional support.
- For certain inhabitants of localities, prostitution represents an important source of income.
- There are only a few qualified service providers familiarized with specific aspects of the Roma drug scene⁹⁸.

Prevention (drug addiction, crime, prostitution incl. child prostitution)

Irrespective of their key focus area, the prevention projects are targeted to prevent and reduce effects of social pathological phenomena. This objective is mostly achieved via identifying and addressing people from a project's target group (mostly 'disorganised' children and youths with risky lifestyles) and providing them with meaningful recreational alternatives. The partial objectives of the prevention projects include development of social competencies and strengthening the abilities and skills necessary to tackle serious life situations using one's own capabilities. Prevention projects are carried out by a number of more-or-less specialized organisations, including schools, FSW, Czech State Police, Municipal Police, special social supervisory workers providing care to specific target groups (*kurátor* in Czech), NGOs providing recreational activities and/or information campaigns. Their services are provided with varied intensity. Some organisations organise one-off or weekly activities while other operate low-threshold centres open daily or cooperate with schools, providing series of lectures or interactive

⁹⁸ Roma addicts often start to abuse drugs at a young age; sometimes, the drugs are abused by entire families; Roma addicts ignore expert support, etc.

seminars. Local authorities and the Municipal Police or Czech State Police are also active in this field, organising children's camps, child days, etc. At first sight, there are plenty of service providers of this type in the Czech Republic, however their factual impact is questionable especially with regard to continuity and quality of the service.

Benefits:

- In the long-term, prevention is less costly than solving problems later when they escalate.
- Through the preventive programmes, participants develop their social competencies, share information, learn, etc.

Drawbacks:

- There are no drawbacks connected with the sole implementation of the tool. However, its factual impact is questionable.

Bottlenecks:

- Lack of quality service providers, particularly in rural areas⁹⁹.

Czech State Police's assistant

See above the subchapter *Problem: Indebtedness*.

Roma mentor

The mentors work with Roma clients of the Probation and Mediation Service who are at risk of social exclusion. The mentor encourages Roma clients to duly execute alternative punishment, motivates them and helps them with related problems, such as seeking a job or housing. Mentors should come from the Roma minority and should be real experts thoroughly familiarized with the locality environment and inhabitants. Currently, the service is deployed within the "Mentoring System in Criminal Justice" project carried out by the Association for Probation and Mediation in Justice in cooperation with the Probation and Mediation Service. The objective of the project is to develop a network of mentors covering the majority of the Czech Republic territory.

Benefits:

- Avoids prison sentences for persons who have been condemned to an alternative punishment, due to their failure to comply with the alternative punishment conditions.

Drawbacks:

No major drawbacks have been identified.

Bottlenecks:

- Lack of suitable candidates for the position (necessary communication skills and other rigorous demands of this position).

Community service

Community service is an alternative punishment to prison terms. The offender is not sentenced to prison but instead of it, he or she is ordered by a court to work (50 to 400 hours) for the municipality, an organisation or a private person. Performed for free in the offender's free

⁹⁹ It is necessary to note that schools should play a major role in this regard since rural areas often lack any NGO that would be able to provide prevention programmes.

time, the community service should serve as a certain compensation for loss or damage caused by the offence while the entire society should benefit from it. The work should be of benefit both to the offender and society, shall correspond with offender's skills and knowledge and shall provide moral benefit to the offender¹⁰⁰. If the offender fails to duly perform the assigned work, a court may be requested to recall the alternative penalty and impose a prison sentence.

Benefits:

- The offender is not exposed to negative influences in a prison, he or she stays with the family.
- Development and maintenance of basic work habits.

Drawbacks:

- The tool has negative impact on willingness to execute publicly beneficial work since it is often mistaken for the community service (e.g. alternative punishment) by the general public.

Bottlenecks:

- Local authorities are not willing to create such jobs due to increased administrative burden and necessity of continuous checks on the work performed.
- Some local authorities claim that they lack work suitable for community service.
- Some local authorities have had bad experiences with community service workers and therefore, decline to employ the tool.

6.5.2 Poor social competencies

The integration prospects of many inhabitants of the socially excluded localities are aggravated by their poor social competencies, i.e. their inability to orientate themselves, appropriately act and communicate in the majority environment (in offices, in particular). Socially excluded individuals suffer from ignorance of, or are unable to enforce, their rights. The following pages address this problem only briefly since its solution (i.e. stimulation of social competencies) is closely related to education and employability¹⁰¹.

Problem: Contacting institutions

Field social work (FSW)

Field social workers provide, free of charge, individual services to individuals and families in trouble. The services are provided directly in the native environment of clients and include support in dealings with authorities and other institutions contacted by individuals at risk of social exclusion (e.g. schools, employers, landlords, etc), support with administrative proceedings, provision or mediation of legal advice provision¹⁰², etc. Besides supporting individuals from socially excluded localities, the FSW preventively supports families at risk of "sinking" into such locality. The FSW's objective is to increase clients' skills and ability to tackle problems on their own.

¹⁰⁰ E.g. cleaning of roads and pavements, maintenance of public lawns and planting, removal of illegal posters, painting of park benches, disposal of waste dumped in public, snow removal, local road and pavement graveling.

¹⁰¹ See chapter 8.4, *Recommended system measures to stimulate social competencies*, and *Education of adults* in chapter 6.3.3, *Summary of tools supporting social integration into the labour market (Impeded access to the labour market)*.

¹⁰² A FSW organisation (a NGO or authority) which employs no internal legal advisors should have an external advisor.

The FSW is provided by local governments and NGOs. Both options have their own specific aspects. FSWs employed by local authorities may run into the conflict of interests if they must protect clients' interests against their own employer. On the other hand, FSWs employed by a NGO are not subject to such pressures however they sometimes have very difficult situation dealing with authorities (impeded access to information). In communities receiving both local authorities' and NGO's FSW services, the field social work could be perceived as overlapping by some organisations.

Benefits:

- From the long-term perspective, prevention is less costly than subsequent measures addressing escalated social exclusion.

Drawbacks:

- The effective functioning of the FSW is conditioned by establishing close relationships with the client families. Such relationships are developed on a long-term basis so the positive effects of the FSW are relatively delayed.
- Poor FSW may deepen passive attitudes of inhabitants of the socially excluded locality; the inhabitants get used to a FSW managing everything instead of them.
- Local authorities sometimes tend to lay the entire agenda (as well as responsibility for solution) related to inhabitants of socially excluded localities on the FSW.
- The FSW is exposed to the burnout syndrome unless the employer's organisation provides proper background (clear assignment, coordination, consultations available, supervision).

Bottlenecks:

- Poor local authorities' knowledge of benefits of the tool causes that the tool is rarely employed.
- Lack of qualified FSW candidates.
- Non-continuity: subsidies are provided on a yearly basis, giving organisations no assurance that they would be able to provide the FSW service in the following years; inconsistency of the service. Delayed (up to six months) payment of subsidies.

Social and civic advice centres

Advice centres provide, free of charge, advice, information and discreet aid to all comers. The most frequent areas addressed by the advice centres include housing, employment, family, and social aid. In relation to socially excluded individuals, free legal advice is the key area.

Benefits:

- The tool improves legal awareness of clients, supporting them in self-enforcement of their interest.
- The advice centres are often the only source of information of such type available to inhabitants of the localities.

Drawbacks:

- An advice centre is not always able to reflect specific problems and needs of Roma clients.

Bottlenecks:

- Often very poor knowledge of locality inhabitants about existence of an advice centre.

- Low objective or subjective availability of the service. It is better when the qualified advice services are provided by a NGO operating directly in a locality and such services are combined with other activities. Socially excluded individuals usually do not leave the familiar environment of their locality and are therefore deprived of necessary information.

Community centres

There are several concepts of community centre operation and even the definition of the term is not unified. This fact determines divergences of work and description of activities of individual centres. However, the majority of centres at least partly serve as low-threshold facilities for children and youths. Besides recreational activities, the centres provide complementary teaching programmes, sometimes combined with "morning school" for children from the locality or evening clubs for various target groups (men, women, elderly).

Benefits:

- Prevention of undesirable phenomena among children and youths.
- Development of social competencies.

Drawbacks:

- Centres intended exclusively for inhabitants of a locality in fact deepen their segregation from the world of majority (particularly if the centre operates directly in a locality).

Bottlenecks:

- Establishment or operation of a centre is sometimes prevented by inability of individual kinship groups living in a locality to cooperate at least to the minimum necessary extent.

6.5.3 Impaired health

Although there are no sufficiently valid research data available, several sources indicate that **many inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities suffer from impaired health**. For example it is estimated that the share of persons on full or partial disability pension is several times higher among inhabitants of the localities than in the total population of the Czech Republic. From time to time, media inform about epidemic of hepatitis or dysentery hitting a locality. NGOs supporting people suffering from various addictions (drugs, alcohol, gambling) inform that the vast majority of their clients are represented by inhabitants of the reviewed localities or Roma in general. There are, of course, many other examples available. Given the fact that living conditions are gradually deteriorating in at least some localities, it can be expected that health of their inhabitants will also get worse in the near future.

Here, we identify a few causes of such unfavourable status or development:

- People living in the socially excluded localities have often **impeded access to general health care**. There are several reasons for that. Besides the objective cause, i.e. spatial exclusion of some localities, there are also subjective causes such as poor health care knowledge of inhabitants, distrust of physicians and other medical personnel, as well as stereotype-based approach of some medical personnel towards people considered to be Roma.
- **Many houses and flats** in the socially excluded localities **fail to meet basic hygienic housing conditions**. Such buildings have wet masonry and mould, some flats are difficult to heat. A number of families living in the localities under review lack their own source of hot water and share toilets with their neighbours. Hot water (and sometimes even drinking water) is not available at all in some cases.

- Health of socially excluded individuals is affected by their **poor lifestyle**, especially poor **eating habits** (irregular alimentation, too much sugar and fat), **smoking** (often in the presence of children or during pregnancy) and **alcohol or any other addictive drug consumption**.

Health assistant¹⁰³

A health assistant provides assistance, advice and information to inhabitants of socially excluded localities. Health assistant's work must be founded on trust, interest and voluntary approach of targeted individuals and is focused on motivating fellow-citizens (to preventive medical examinations, healthy life style, avoiding risky sexual behaviour, prevention of premature maternity, observation of child vaccination schemes). The health assistant acts as intermediary between health facility personnel and socially excluded individuals and cooperates with FSWs, special social supervisory workers (*kurátor*), anti-drug coordinators, and social workers of local authorities.

Benefits:

- Improved communication between socially excluded individuals and physicians and medical personnel.
- Health assistant's activity can, in the long-term, gradually improve health of inhabitants of the localities.
- A source of information for inhabitants of the localities.

Drawbacks:

- Unclear job description, the service is sometimes mistaken for FSW.
- It is not clear how locality inhabitants will accept a worker.
- In some towns, the workers are provided with insufficient background support (lack of office premises, work from home).

Bottlenecks:

- Poor knowledge of local authorities (potential service providers) about existence of the tool.
- The position is not likely to be established by small local authorities. (Two or more local authorities may agree on hiring a single health assistant providing service in multiple nearby localities).
- Unclear financial arrangements¹⁰⁴.

Untested tool:

Information campaigns focusing on family planning, sexual education, childcare, safety

Socially excluded localities are often in fact cut off from any external information sources or their inhabitants are exposed to distorted information. This is a major problem especially in health care. It is not possible to rely on traditional media information distribution. Considering

¹⁰³ Nation-wide functioning of the health assistant system is pilot-tested within an ESF-funded Sastipen project carried out by DROM (a NGO from Brno).

¹⁰⁴ Currently, DROM is carrying out a two-year project; after its completion, most of municipalities where health assistants operate will have no money to retain the service. (This already happened earlier when the project was tested in Ostrava: workers had to be dismissed because the subsidies had not been approved in due time.)

insufficient coverage by FSWs and health assistants, it is necessary to seek alternative methods to spread required information among inhabitants of the localities.

7. RECOMMENDED STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

The following chapter describes the concept of the strategy for change recommended by the authors in order to define a basic framework necessary to initiate the process of integration of socially excluded Roma inhabitants into the majority society in the Czech Republic. The four subchapters contain the following:

- Summary of major factors in the development of the social exclusion process in the Czech Republic based on the aspects as defined above in individual topical chapters;
- Key principles to be included in a successful change policy;
- Major barriers that must be broken through in order to initiate the change policy;
- Summary of the development process of the change policy (specially aspects relevant to central level entities) followed, in the subsequent chapter, with recommendations of system measures whose application appears, from the perspective of front-line organisations, to be a crucial precondition of change policy implementation.

The chapter is above all aimed at representatives of government authorities holding the authority to perform a number of system changes that would help create the environment necessary to enable initiation of the change policy development process as well as to provide necessary support for those directly involved in the change, i.e. local governments. Representatives of local authorities form another target group of this chapter.

7.1 Development tendency and dynamics of socially excluded localities

The set of Roma localities experiencing or at risk of social exclusion is very diversified and is subject to continuous development and changes. This is a dynamic phenomenon or specific social economic process rather than a set of stabilized communities. From the perspective of the last decade it is evident that social exclusion and concentration of Roma into more or less segregated localities increase in terms of both number of localities as well as inflow of further socially excluded families and individuals. This fact leads to a hypothesis that in the Czech Republic, the level of social exclusion of Roma is generally increasing. Moreover, it is undeterminable how many Roma, thus far living in the majority environment are at risk of falling into any of the localities.

Ethnic homogenisation of the localities

Swollen by further families and individuals, especially the most populated localities in the north regions of the Czech Republic are increasing in concentration and proportion of socially excluded Roma to the total number of citizens as well as relative proportion of socially excluded Roma living in the localities to the total number of Roma population in the Czech Republic. We are also witnessing further ethnic homogenisation, particularly in large localities composed of Roma as well as non-Roma inhabitants who are gradually taking the position of a minority. Roma mostly migrate into the localities and/or among them while the majority population migrates out of the localities (especially those localities where a Roma population prevails); from non-Roma inhabitants only individuals and families who are at risk of social exclusion stay in the localities. This trend deepens social exclusion of Roma and increases ethnic homogenisation of the localities.

Descriptions of individual reviewed localities as well as the statistical and typological analysis show that the larger (more populated) the locality is, the larger "gravitation" it emanates towards other socially excluded Roma and the larger potential exists for crime and other problematic phenomena. There is a risk that such phenomena would propagate from (especially large) localities to their vicinity, worsening local criminality, drug abuse or prostitution.

Socially excluded localities do not exist in vacuum. Their occurrence is more likely in regions suffering from above-average social (unemployment) and structural problems (poor education levels, poor labour and job structure). Therefore, highly populated and trouble-making localities impair the situation not just in their host towns but also "contaminate" entire regions. Applying their own rules of life and social and economic behaviour, which contradict the work- and profession-based construction of social structure and way of life of the majority population, the localities represent a real alternative and antithesis to social inclusion. **The localities** not only represent the imaginary bottom of the Czech society but they **contradict the market-based system differentiated by work**, profession, performance and income.

Idle capacities of educational institutions

One look at classes in primary schools operating near socially excluded localities shows that educational paths of the majority of socially excluded Roma pupils mirror those of their parents. With certain exceptions, these children are likely to bypass the labour market right after they leave school, tending towards dependence on social welfare, which can immediately support the family budget without spending money on further education and skill-building. Adapted to social exclusion, life strategies and values are reproduced and strengthened from generation to generation, forming the environment and way of life in which the children are upraised. They perceive the way of life based on such strategies and values as more natural than normal life of the majority.

Primary education, with rare exceptions, so far fails to mitigate, or even overcome the inter-generation reproduction of the life strategies applied by inhabitants of localities to adapt to social exclusion. In contrary, it tends to accept, legitimise and validate such strategies, making social exclusion a natural world for Roma children and a "Roma characteristic" from the point of view of the majority society and its socioeconomic and educational system.

Importance of field social work

FSW is a minimum precondition for initiation of the inclusion process in the Czech Republic. FSW can be provided either by local authorities or NGOs¹⁰⁵. The purposes of FSW are to proactively identify and provide individual aid to individuals or families in need. Operation of a FSW inhibits further social degradation and sinking of the socially excluded localities as well as prevents inflow of families that have thus far been living in the majority environment. Familiarized with the environment, a FSW further represents one of the basic preconditions for effective employment of other social inclusion tools. Due to the above mentioned reasons, FSW should be a standard tool used wherever people are at risk of social exclusion (not solely municipalities with relative high number of socially excluded inhabitants). For the tool to operate effectively enough, FSW must be provided at adequately professional level, i.e. provided by workers with standard expert skills and experience, sufficiently backed by relevant organisations or authorities.

It has been revealed that in many cases socially excluded localities have been swollen by families whose members have had jobs or wanted to work and live in accordance with the common standards of the majority. FSWs are able to identify such families and help them achieve conditions allowing them to leave the locality or prevent them from moving into to such locality. Therefore, quality social work in localities should become a cornerstone of change initiation.

¹⁰⁵ Both options have their benefits and drawbacks (for details see the analytical chapters above).

Municipalities' contribution to formation of socially excluded localities

Formation and existence of the localities are not exclusively a consequence of spontaneous transformation and the privatisation processes. Another aspects contributing to formation of socially excluded localities include specific policies and political interests at the local government level, synergies of economic and business practices in the property market as well as financial services, short-term credit provision or usury and intentional provision of debts to inhabitants of socially excluded localities. Actual social support provided to socially excluded families is hence substantially decreased and its major part is channelled outside the original purpose. Under the current conditions, social exclusion is a subject of "business" like many other areas, preventing both directly and indirectly any changes and social inclusion.

Distorted and/or impaired ability of socially excluded Roma families and households to achieve long-term employment, wages and regular income and to apply adequate household management and economy generates dependence on social welfare. This in turn entails debt-based life culture, leading to actual bankruptcy of households represented by compulsory expulsion due to payment defaults followed by migration and sinking to lower-standard settings. The different manner of household management under the conditions of social exclusion represents a consistent part of the lifestyle established outside the labour market, employment and wage-generated income of households. Such culture, combined with poor and mostly uncompleted education, makes Roma families easy victims of speculations and frauds either from more "matured" families from their native environment or individuals or businesses from the majority environment.

Protection and support of poorly equipped (educationally and legally) inhabitants of socially excluded localities is, except in few rare cases, blocked by a rather unhelpful attitude of local and central governments who "must not" or "can not" distinguish Roma from non-Roma. The approach of officials towards problems escalating in the localities is quite accurately reflected in the attitude and approach of elected local governments and mayors. The majority of local authorities solely assist, directly and indirectly, with social exclusion and segregation.

Given the lack of adequate tools at the local level and existence of certain pressure excluding Roma from, and keeping Roma outside, the labour market, municipalities and local governments prefer a certain amount of spatial isolation and concentration of socially excluded Roma as a relatively effective and sustainable (in mid-term, i.e. electoral term) solution. Some municipalities prefer support and stabilisation of socially excluded localities over their destabilisation through non-systematic implementation of activities and tools. At the local government level, the primary concern and argument of municipalities that are at least partially committed to tackling the issue is the need to stop further deterioration of the situation and propagation of problems to so far intact parts of the municipality, and not integration of the locality. Entrenched to a certain extent by certain central government activities, social exclusion decreases the local authorities' chances of integrating Roma localities in a way that would avoid major political consequences for them, as well as for the entire Czech society.

The change concept as added value

By recommending a strategy for change, which is missing in current politics and practice, **we do not suggest abandoning existing activities**, projects and programmes. Successful projects and activities must be supported and improved (for example, see the above mentioned FSW need) to create a minimum but fundamental foundation. Objectives of the recommended concept include completion and development of **multi-level** system and **multi-speed** process corresponding to dynamics of individual localities. For example, there are several municipalities that are gradually implementing integration activities. It can be assumed that a systemic solution would lead to an convenient accumulation of experiences necessary to initiate gradual social inclusion, which is not currently taking place in any locality or municipality.

However, it would be wrong to imagine that this can be achieved via some kind of a "big bang". The solution will require a rather firm-footed **resource-demanding process lasting probably several decades**. Derived from ESF direction and funds, the strategy for change is intended as potential added-value to activities which are currently employed either within the field of social policy or in ad hoc programmes or projects.

7.2 Principles of the change policy

Social inclusion, i.e. inclusion of excluded individuals and families into mainstream society in the social and economic sense, into the social structure and labour structure, is antithesis of social exclusion. It is a movement towards a work-based and wage-based lifestyle and standard of living primarily influenced by related income. **Moving into the social structure of Czech society** is the essence of social inclusion. **Social mobility of individuals and families** is the essence of the change and social inclusion process.

Principle of social and spatial mobility

The functioning of the society and the concept of social mobility imply that **occupational-based movement** (i.e. achieving an occupational position (employment) generating income and a way of life that is distinct from long-term life in social exclusion) is a key strategic element of mobility. Occupational position as well as mobility accord importance to education, especially of children. This is called **intergeneration educational mobility** consisting in leaving a family of poorly or non-educated members in order to achieve higher education level. At the same time, this is mobility towards a better profession. Educational mobility is a precondition of occupational mobility. Occupational mobility is a vehicle of **social mobility** towards the social structure of Czech society. Social mobility is a target and strategic process of the combat against social exclusion.

There are two basic types of mobility that affect the change strategy approach:

- Social mobility
- Spatial mobility

A mobility-based strategy should also cover the spatial aspect of exclusion. Social mobility should also comprise **spatial mobility**. So far, the movement of Roma families between localities or to forming or expanding localities can be characterised as downstream mobility and ousting from Czech society's social structure or as a horizontal movement within the social exclusion structure.

Principle of two-directional movement

A basic and general mobility-based concept to overcome social exclusion consists in an outward movement from a locality to integrate into the labour market and life in the non-segregated environment of the majority society. **The strategy for change must generally include an opportunity and especially a chance to make such mobility-based movement**. In the case of the largest localities encompassing an entire housing quarter or housing estate inhabited mainly by Roma but still with a substantial proportion of non-Roma population, however, the change cannot consist in mere gradual emptying of the locality leading to its extinction. The change shall also entail **mobility of the majority socioeconomic system into the localities**. This means return of general microeconomics, businesses and services and related jobs into the locality.

The change must be characterised by the two-directional movement of both individuals and families out of the locality and (particularly socioeconomic) renewal and

regeneration of large localities from inside, followed by modernisation and improvement of local living conditions.

Principle of employment-based mobility

Occupational basis of mobility as a strategic labour market inclusion tool is probably the most burdensome and, from a certain perspective, doubtful aspect as socially excluded Roma employment and employability support programmes bring insignificant results in the long-term. Since the entire process of mobility and renewal cannot be reduced to pure improvement of living conditions, it is crucial to **overcome the economic foundations of social exclusion** consisting in concentration of long-term unemployed in socially and ethnically homogeneous localities.

In relation to this, it is important to note that we cannot expect the Czech labour market to adapt to the situation by creating "artificial jobs" for low-skilled workers. No matter how we can count upon experimental programmes increasing employability through temporary or partial employment, we cannot expect the Czech society and economy to leave its path to the knowledge-based and skill-based economy characterised by substantial decrease of unskilled and manual labour (that is mostly performed by immigrants).

Municipal activity-based principle

Roma socially excluded localities are impacted by operation of relevant local authorities. Albeit the change strategy must be based on systemic logic of social exclusion, **the municipality and their local authorities are the major drivers of the change**. This thesis however doesn't entail that the change process should be left exclusively to local authorities. Here, **local policies must be supported by central** (social and educational policies, ESF funding, coordinating authority)¹⁰⁶ **and regional policies** and must be able to utilize the experiences and capabilities of NGOs, implemented programmes and tools, secondary schools, universities, etc.

It can be said that there is a general consensus on what the goal of the integration process is. Also, the package of tools available is relatively wide, although not complete (see the relevant analytic chapters). However, the research clearly showed that their **factual implementation lacked the character of system change**, in particular due to the following reasons:

- (i) In many localities, only partial integration tools and projects have been implemented and in most cases, such partial activities have not been integrated to establish a coordinated action initiating the social inclusion process;
- (ii) In general, centrally managed and nation-wide social inclusion tools are substantially less effective, in particular employment support projects;
- (iii) Inhabitants of localities lack potential and ability to help themselves or independently develop programmes aiming at integration into the majority society¹⁰⁷;

¹⁰⁶ The situation in the field of integration can be described as ambivalent to a certain extent. Many involved *nation-wide* organisations and bodies (e.g. Government Council for Roma Community Affairs, individuals in certain positions, ministry departments, experienced nation-wide NGOs, etc.) have relatively clear idea of the social integration process goal. However, many system measures adopted at the central level fail to reflect the experience and knowledge of such organisations and bodies, obstructing the social integration process. Drafts of such measures are often submitted by the bodies with which the above-mentioned informed individuals work. Local authorities, Labour Offices, schools and other potential key players at the *local level* integration policy field hence lack adequate support from the central level. This situation serves to justify poor activity of many of the local level entities. Take, for example, the Labour Offices, which are, on one hand, required to apply the state employment policy focused on Roma, while, on the other hand, they are "not allowed" to record who is "Roma", preventing them from evaluating effects of any integration measures.

¹⁰⁷ This aspect should not be generalized. In many localities, there are exceptional individuals to work with and to strengthen their participation in the solution e.g. to ensure their later consent and support.

- (iv) Inability to act on one's own is substantially strengthened by isolation of localities and by their segregating attraction force limiting mobility opportunities of individuals and families who meet the socioeconomic integration requirements but cannot break the barriers, especially in the field of housing.

The insufficient concept-based approach outlined above is further intensified by the fact that there is no operational experience and knowledge regarding **initiation and maintenance of the (mobility) change process**.

Here we have reached a point where the analysis and formulation of the change strategy shifts into formulation of **social inclusion policy and policy strategy for change**. In the following chapter, we provide answers to the questions about how to initiate the changes and how to ensure their sustainability and direction towards a desirable goal, i.e. integration of socially excluded citizens into Czech society.



7.3 Bottlenecks of the change policy

The change policy must be based on breaking or overcoming the barriers that amplify social slumping and social exclusion in the localities and prevent the mobility-based movement towards social inclusion into the majority environment as well as renewal and penetration of standard socioeconomic mechanisms and the mainstream way of life into the localities.

In the following chapter, we identify barriers that are essential in terms of the change policy initiation. Partial elements of such bottlenecks have been discussed in the individual topical chapters. In the following pages, we intentionally highlight and repeat some of them as they are reviewed in a different context.

Lack of political will to the change

Social exclusion of Roma is a practical approach by local governments, which have no system tools to apply any other solution. In addition, the local governments must cope with the consequences of system-evoked social exclusion of Roma from the majority socioeconomic system and social structure of Czech society.

There is a relatively strong **conflict of interest** between the local and central policies relating to Roma localities of social exclusion. While the central authorities declare their commitment to initiating and supporting the social inclusion process in order to gradually decrease the proportion of socially excluded Roma and the number of the localities, for the local governments, the existence of socially excluded localities represents a relatively acceptable method of coping with occurrence and reproduction of socially excluded groups of citizens. The current status has been, to the certain extent, caused by non-existent systemic, concept-based, capacitive and financially credible features of integration programmes that would earn them public and policy support leading to their potential implementation. The central authorities seek to introduce some

dynamism, while local governments intend to stabilise and conserve the situation and to optimise, mitigate and soften social exclusion rather than introduce specific fundamental changes.

Demotivating state social support system

The state social support system is highly demotivating. Living on social benefits is more convenient than unskilled or low-skilled (and hence low paid) work. It is a common practice that families incline children to register for social benefits instead of encouraging them to continue studies in a secondary school, and children are rarely able to resist. Hindering labour market access and decreasing motivation to education and work, the current social support system intensifies the intergenerational transfer of social exclusion. In this field, a system change consisting in reassessing the state social support system arrangement is necessary and in this connection, there is a very current and relevant question about the impact of pending amendments to the social assistance system¹⁰⁸.

Inability of the educational system to dampen and prevent social exclusion

The educational system and primary education in particular is not able to dampen or inhibit the intergenerational reproduction of the life strategies and values applied by inhabitants of localities to adapt to social exclusion. It fails to replace such reproduction with education, occupational development and interest in professions, employment and wages. Except in rare cases, primary schools operate as a vehicle transferring and legitimising a lack of skills and employability to children from socially excluded families and localities. Currently, primary education represents rather a system barrier than an active tool initiating intergenerational mobility and providing strong incentives to renew a locality through education and occupational motivation of children.

Poor efficiency of the Active Employment Policy

The currently applied Active Employment Policy including its various requalification tools has in fact failed to succeed under the conditions of combined disadvantages (social exclusion, poor skill levels and membership of the Roma minority). In relation to the above-mentioned combination of disadvantages, "standard" tools fail to achieve the required goals. Considering the strategic importance of enhancing employability of long-term excluded citizens, it is necessary to project the social welfare reform impacts in relation to enhanced pressure and motivation to work as well as to study international programmes and their achievements. Achievements of so far implemented projects in the field of the employment policy must be thoroughly analysed to enable learning from experience. As our information shows, no successful model has yet appeared.

Insufficient offer in the field of housing

Concerning local governments' ability to offer extra-locality low-cost housing to families who have decided to enter the labour market and enjoy mobility, the situation differs from municipality to municipality. Ability to offer housing to all people who want to work and live outside the locality contains large motivating potential. In addition, examples of successful transition into the social structure and majority society environment serve as successful mobility-based models. Although it is not a universal solution, housing represents a significant element of social inclusion. Support of the British "Boarding School model" and linking secondary education

¹⁰⁸ See the amendments effective as of January 2007, especially in the light of Act on Material Penury and Act on Minimum Subsistence Level and Minimum Life Level. It is rather surprising that especially local authorities were not systematically provided with any analysis of impact of such laws to socially excluded inhabitants of the localities.

with week-long boarding provided by schools may serve as a transitional element in spatial mobility.

Low readiness of regions to participate in the social inclusion process

Municipalities' abilities and possibilities will depend on the level of readiness of regional governments to be involved in, and coordinate with their efforts. Considering regional authorities' insufficient knowledge of the situation in the regions and municipalities and their poor level of readiness to achieve sustainable changes, there are just a few regional authorities ready for the change and ESF support. In the majority of regions, necessary analyses and documents are still waiting to be elaborated to allow active participation of regions in ESF-funded social inclusion support projects. Regions represent an important territorial link between the central and local levels. Except in rare cases, regional authorities currently have no necessary professional and managerial resources available to cooperate with local authorities. **Without such expert, conceptual and project support from the regional level, the local authorities cannot be expected to supply such support.** But it is this support representing a system parameter whose mastering by individual regions will have substantial differentiating effect on conditions and absorption capacity of local authorities in terms of ESF availability for their projects. The central level will be required to provide at least expert support in designing and developing the strategy for change and in ensuring resources necessary to implement the change.

Lack of public support

Local level politicians are exposed to local public opinion, which probably in most cases accepts or even supports existence of the localities. This represents a very strong stabilizing factor, conserving a passive and rather cautious approach by local politicians towards efforts to find more active destabilizing measures leading to social inclusion and integration of Roma. Local politicians in small and medium-size towns have no researches, analyses, findings or recommendations available to ensure public support for the change. Yet it is clear that such project cannot be implemented by the regions and even less by the municipalities. This is explicitly a system issue that must accordingly be addressed by the central level.

Without local public support, local governments will not be willing to initiate any massive and costly integration projects since such initiatives will not be deemed to be projects of real public interest. Representing a strategy barrier, the political impact of public opinion is significant at the local level. Elected officials are in direct and everyday contact with voters and their problems, priorities and attitudes. An ESF programme should include a central-level investment related to this issue, representing the direct support of local politics and political will.

Ethnic aspect of the issue

During the entire implementation of this project, researchers encountered uncertainty and constraints related to the ethnic aspect of the socially excluded localities and a certain helplessness on how to grasp and explain the fact that the localities are inhabited mostly by Roma. As mentioned above, primary schools operating near the localities and tackling the ethnic homogenisation of classes or schools encounter the fact that the educational sector is "unable" to differentiate Roma from non-Roma and therefore have certain difficulties regarding development of specific support programmes. The majority of Labour Offices experience a very similar situation. The analysis shows that although the localities are constituted mostly by socioeconomical exclusion from the labour market and social structure, their development also comprises a major ethnic aspect. Being the crucial aspect of educational or employment

programme focus and evaluation, identification of people in social need poses a problem¹⁰⁹ even if we focus on "pupils from socially disadvantaged environments" or "persons at risk of social exclusion" without regard to their ethnic origin. The relevant bodies and authorities are officially "unable" to distinguish such people (although it is indisputable that they perceive such people based on the assigned ethnic status).

Members of the Roma minority are evidently the preferred "target" of the social exclusion process. Although we cannot estimate the proportion of socially excluded Roma in the total Roma population in the Czech Republic or what share of socially excluded Roma has sunk to the excluded localities, it is very likely that the relation between proportion of Roma in Czech society and proportion of Roma in the localities is asymmetric, i.e. that the proportion of Roma in the localities is much higher than proportion in Czech society. The strategy must take into account that it is the Roma minority which is preferentially struck by social exclusion. The localities are ethnically identified by public administration, media, public and certain organisations working with Roma. It has already been mentioned above that the ethnicity has become a factor increasing the probability of social exclusion in education. Hence primary education can be labelled as a mechanism that converts ethnic origin into incomplete education and poor skill prospects, leading to socioeconomic exclusion.

Lack of coordination

Activities implemented at the local level are rather based on individual conceptions of organisations and people involved, without any profound strategy for change based on thorough knowledge of the situation in the localities¹¹⁰. In fact, the government has committed substantial efforts and resources (from social policy to grant programmes) to solving the current problems. However, it has not succeeded in their coordination and harmonization into effective and measurable processes.

Strategic targets and objectives are not identified and addressed due to various reasons while the **sense of insolubility** (by local authorities, in particular) seems to be the most important cause. The involved entities are generally not adequately prepared to draw the ESF funds.

7.4 Change policy development process

Formulation of goals and strategies must necessarily be **specific** for each locality and no universal model or patterns can be applied. The differences between the localities are significant (see the analytical chapter addressing the housing issue). The formulated policy must reflect the specific situation and dynamism of each locality, proposing a qualified process based on such aspects.

Despite that fact we would like to outline basic general principles that we consider crucial in terms of initiating the "change". It is worth to note that the change process outlined here should be perceived as an imaginary "second level" solution of the social exclusion issue. The solution shouldn't require local governments to thoroughly reassess and reject their current systems. If there are experienced and relevant NGOs around or if they have active schools or FSWs, specific activities should be further processed, developed, interlinked and completed with missing elements. However, selected municipalities meeting minimum requirements (analysed below) may,

¹⁰⁹ This problem is addressed by the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which stipulates that it is possible to process data on ethnic origin provided that it is used to equalize the minority with the majority. Such data processing shall not be considered discriminating. However, the Framework Convention is not binding upon the Czech legal system.

¹¹⁰ Initiated by Partners Czech in several Czech municipalities, pilot-tested "Councils of Conciliation" joined by representatives of the majority and minority and committed to designing a collective approach addressing social exclusion may serve as the coordination initiation tool.

in parallel, gradually implement a long-term strategic solution whose success also depends, to a certain extent, on the system changes proposed herein.

1. Political will

The local authorities, i.e. town councils are the major drivers of the change and mobility-based processes. A systematic, complex and long-term solution is not possible without their political commitment, will and true interest in reversing the exclusion into a process of gradual social inclusion and renewal of localities based on their specific features. Yet it is the commitment and will of local authorities that will provide a platform for a solution and the involvement of other players. It is the local authorities, supported by other partners, who shall develop policies, plans, objectives and targets, followed by ratification at the political level and implementation. Regardless of the available resources and experience, the commitment of the local authorities and municipality representatives and citizens must be the drivers of the mobility-based change.

2. Targeted distribution of information

Provision of timely and detailed information to local authorities (carriers of the change) and the general public (an element whose support is also important) is a necessary precondition for change policy initiation. The knowledge of local authorities that the central authorities are committed to providing the necessary coordinated support would be a very important element of decision-making and would earn policy support at the local level.

Providing information about existing integration tools and their operation and distributing the best practices, a targeted information campaign shall form an integral part of the process at the central level. Currently, there are major deficiencies concerning this element.

At the same time it is necessary to place emphasis on ongoing education of organisations and authorities involved in this field or working with socially excluded people, i.e. central and local government officers, police officers, teachers, etc.

3. Differentiated approach

Evident and legitimate commitment of local authorities to progress towards inclusion of a locality and its inhabitants forms a fundamental condition of the complex change process. This condition entails that the **general change process will be differentiated across the Czech Republic** and will relate exclusively to those who explicitly accept the programme; **those who show no interest and formalised political commitment shall not be included**. The set of approximately 170 municipalities will be gradually differentiated based on level, scope, complexity and type of deployed policies, programmes and specific projects.

The municipalities that commit themselves to the change strategy should be provided with **support at all levels** (central, regional, expert). Intended for active and agile municipalities, the programme and strategy will generate **added value for the existing programmes and projects**. The differentiation will grow around the basic principle: "True interest". Since it can be expected that true interest will be declared by a relatively small number of municipalities, it will be possible to **concentrate resources**, capacities and attention on smaller number of localities, creating more favourable conditions for process development and launch. Gradually, a knowledge and information pool will be generated, providing a source of experience and support for potential followers and their political will and commitment.

4. Analysis and qualified knowledge of the environment

Political initiation of the change process must be followed by local plan development based on a thorough survey of each locality, including a specific analysis, qualified design of tools and programmes and calculation of resources and capacities. A time schedule covering all these elements must be elaborated and milestones and performance indicators must be determined. The change policy must ensure the resources to cover such survey and plan because local authorities will be required to use external capabilities to create a realistic and viable local project/plan.

5. Political mandate for the local plan

The drafted local plan must again earn a political mandate based on discussion in town councils, including resource planning, personnel support and time schedule (it is very likely that such plan will exceed the electoral term). It is not until such mandate is earned that we can talk about binding political strategy with a prospect for sustainable implementation.

6. Public support and interest in the plan

The political strategy must seek general public support and general awareness within the entire municipality. This support is crucial at least due to the mere fact that the entire implementation will draw substantial funds from European as well as domestic sources. The local plan will not be trustworthy and politically reliable unless the public believes that the target level of inclusion can be achieved. Only when this trust has been earned, will the local plan be perceived as beneficial to the public and not a privileged favour to Roma. The crucial aspect of the strategy is mobility into the majority environment and in turn, the success of mobility depends on the **openness of the majority environment towards arriving and integrating Roma**. Local authorities will have to proceed pursuant to a specific analysis of local conditions and enhance direct and indirect communication, involve local opinion makers and schools, and organise political discussions, etc.

7. Preparation of capabilities and stakeholders

The project will require finances not only because it covers a wide scope of necessary tools and stakeholders, but also to prepare their capabilities. The quality of the analysis and human resource preparation and development is crucial for the project implementation and sustainability.

In this regard, it is appropriate to highlight the fundamental role of NGOs in the entire process. Considering their mostly positive impact on development in the localities, we recommend supporting NGO capability development, education of NGO personnel, prevention of the burnout syndrome, enhanced sustainability of the non-profit sector through information sharing, establishment of an advice body, cooperation with NGOs and best practice sharing, etc.¹¹¹

8. Feedback and evaluation

Definition of milestones ensures that the project is constantly monitored, consulted upon and checked against the milestones. We indeed should expect huge challenges, problems and partial failures. However, if there is a long-term time schedule and aim, such problems will have no major impact on the project but will rather become a valuable source of accumulated experience and information. The project must be continuously monitored both for any potential corrections and observing the results as well as for further utilization of experiences and findings relating to processes, methods and policies by newcomers.

¹¹¹ I.e. fields of activities that proved to be of crucial importance in relation to potential ESF support. These fields should not be omitted in the subsequent programme period.

9. The power of best practices and information

Considering the minimum will of the local governments to initiate real thorough changes and prevailing concerns about destabilisation of relatively fragile relationships, we cannot expect the strategy of change to be initiated on a nation-wide scale and in the majority of the localities. Therefore, the change policy must accept as a rule that it is **more convenient to start with a lesser number of municipalities**, making the resources available to those municipalities which, through their councils, independently or after being informed declare their strong commitment to initiating the project.

10. Money is not enough

Although the prospect of ESF financing may serve as an incentive attracting the interest, it must be explicitly declared that non-financial prerequisites are even more important than financial resources for the change policy. Not until there is a plan in place stipulating how and where the change is to be directed is it worth of thinking about necessary resources. Indeed, the availability of ESF funds may increase the interest of local authorities to get engaged in the change project.

11. Synergies of various government levels

Although the will of local authorities is a necessary condition, by itself it is not sufficient. It is clear that regional and central level support will both improve effectiveness of the programmes and enhance their impact on hesitating entities waiting for outcomes. To ensure the political will at the local level, it is necessary to mitigate or overcome system barriers at the central level.

12. Solution, not experiments

The achievements and effectiveness of the project are conditioned by its true commitment, fortitude, purposefulness and solution-focus (as opposite to the mere "money-spending" approach). The experimental period is probably already behind us, with questionable outcomes. Now the time has come to bring a phased differentiated solution. Central policy and expert capabilities and resources must take a closer look at the local situation and conditions, showing full respect to the local circumstances. The last few years were marked by loud rhetoric against discrimination although in real life we have seen no integration, and the dilatory approach has resulted in the existence of several hundreds of Roma localities. Such development needs to be reversed.

13. Communicating vessels of inclusion and exclusion

Any success in initiating the two-directional mobility-based process of change (i.e. outward migration and inward renewal) in several localities will lead to improvement in living conditions that will likely generate further migration. Therefore it is important to gradually enrol more and more municipalities to increase the number of localities that provide new life prospects and conditions and attract migration from localities persisting in the current conditions. The method of informing Roma localities about the strategy will require specific attention both in covered and non-covered localities.

14. Long-term impact and sustainability

Considering the expected higher costs and resources required, the project would be considered successful if 3 to 5 new municipalities are enrolled per year, with expected 1 or 2-year

preliminary periods. Indeed this calculation shows that we have a long way to go. Increased Roma interest in mobility and success as well as consistency and sustainability of the program over longer periods can make the way shorter.

15. Necessity of system changes

The issue of social exclusion is a topic that spans across individual sectors. Even the most active municipality cannot achieve a factual change if the involved sectors fail to closely cooperate and struggle for collective goals. Implementation of the identified system changes (of which the most important are discussed below) is a primary precondition of future success.

8. CONCLUSION – RECOMMENDED SYSTEM MEASURES CONDITIONING THE CHANGE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

In the final part of the document, we discuss system measures that more-or-less indirectly affect the lives of inhabitants of localities, mainly because they determine conditions defining basic rules of conduct of individual stakeholders. It is necessary to initiate a nation-wide discussion with stakeholders to collectively search for available solutions to prevent the process of social exclusion.

8.1 Recommended system measures in the field of housing

The change policy in the field of housing of socially excluded Roma¹¹² must pursue the following two targets:

- 1) Ensuring **dignified conditions**, i.e. mainly **healthy housing conditions** (especially to families with young children);
- 2) Interlinking individual measures with the **social mobility support strategy**, i.e. preferring families that actively participate in the inclusion process (e.g. searching for a job, cooperating with a FSW, their children attend a preparatory grade, etc.). First, such families should be enabled to improve their housing situation.

Besides required **careful differentiation of locality types** and then applying appropriate integration tools, it is also necessary to **differentiate individual inhabitants or families** living in the localities, taking into account their preparedness (i.e. readiness and ability) for social inclusion¹¹³. The initiation of the integration process is conditioned upon completion of the following three system changes:

More precise definition of the local authorities' role in the field of housing

The Act on local authorities stipulates that local authorities are required to take care of, *inter alia*, housing needs of their citizens. However, the law provides no further specification of this obligation, allowing for various interpretations. Therefore, the Act on local authorities shall be amended to stipulate more precisely the mission of the public housing stock and rules governing the disposition thereof¹¹⁴.

Precise definition of "social housing" and initiation of social housing construction

This change is closely related to the previous requirement (role of local authorities in the field of housing). The law stipulates no obligation on local authorities to provide social housing, nor does it stipulate who, and under what conditions, should be provided with such housing. Moreover, the definition of the term 'social housing' as ratified by the Czech government early in 2006, is totally unhelpful as regards integration of inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities¹¹⁵. Therefore it is necessary that:

- 1) The government introduces more precise and suitable definition of the term;
- 2) Local authorities are obligated by the government to ensure social housing (via an amendment to the Act on local authorities), or the government proposes and applies an

¹¹² It is necessary to note that the policy definition cannot be based on ethnic origin of recipients but on their social need. Such policy must be a part of the general framework of central and local level housing policies.

¹¹³ This indeed shall not imply that the families (and individuals) whose integration ability is poor should be left to their own devices. These people require increased attention although it is clear that they are not likely to be among those successfully integrated into the majority society.

¹¹⁴ The 2005 Government Housing Policy Strategy considers such amendment. The Strategy, among other things, requires that "as priority, council rented flats should be used to meet the public interest, i.e. for citizens who are unable to obtain housing at the open market".

¹¹⁵ For reasons see chapter 6.2, *Impeded access to quality housing*.

alternative solution (e.g. social housing provided by charities / *obecne prospesná spolecnost* in Czech/).

In addition, the government should allocate sufficient financial reserves to provide subsidies to local authorities (and/or NGOs) for construction or refurbishment of non-profit social housing. The currently available options are not sufficient.

Consistent application of the ban on discrimination in the field of housing

It is necessary that the government pursues consistent enforcement of the ban on discrimination on grounds of ethnic background¹¹⁶. Such discrimination in the field of housing is primarily contained in the council flat allocation criteria, which often prohibit socially excluded Roma from acquiring a flat¹¹⁷. Modification of the criteria is therefore a key precondition for social integration in the field of housing. Considering the fact that this is mostly indirect discrimination, it is not easy to prove it. Therefore it is necessary to carefully evaluate whether the criteria whose application affects to the larger extent persons of a certain ethnic background comparing with other persons in similar situation, are justified by a reasonable purpose and whether means used to achieve such purpose are reasonable and inevitable.



8.2 Recommended system measures in the field of employment

Differentiated employment programmes

Considering the actual poor effectiveness of employment programmes, we recommend differentiating such programmes in line with various target groups (specified at a deeper level of detail than today). It is necessary to pay closer attention to young unemployed (young people leaving primary schools) and long-term unemployed women. Definition of such specific programmes should be based on analysis of effects of the currently deployed tools upon such targets groups.

Change of the proportion between the minimum wage and social benefits, modelling of impacts

Provision of social benefits should be partially conditioned upon active job seeking efforts or skill development. Acts scheduled to enter into force as of January 2007 are expected to enact a corresponding change. However, their impact on the level of unemployment of inhabitants of socially excluded localities is not clear. In this relation, we recommend carefully modelling the

¹¹⁶ Act on equal treatment and on legal remedies to protect against discrimination (Anti-discriminatory Act).

¹¹⁷ For details see the relevant analytical chapter on housing (6.2).

impact of various state social support system changes on behaviour of different groups of inhabitants experiencing or at risk of social exclusion.

8.3 Recommended system measures in the field of education

Adjusting school catchment area limits

School education areas of catchment schools are generally defined by exhaustive lists of streets specified by an establisher (i.e. mostly local authorities in the case of primary schools). If there is more than one primary school in a municipality and streets embracing a socially excluded locality belong to the school catchment area of only one of them, headmasters of the other schools are not required by law to enrol pupils from such streets. Many headmasters decline to enrol Roma pupils on concerns about potential outflow of non-Roma pupils¹¹⁸. Due to such "defensive attitude" of certain schools, Roma pupils concentrate at one primary school.

Allocating streets of a socially excluded locality into catchment areas of several nearby (accessible) schools within a municipality would prevent headmasters from rejecting pupils living in socially excluded Roma localities. Since a school is obliged first to enrol pupils residing in the pertinent school catchment area¹¹⁹, headmasters would hence not be allowed to reject pupils from a socially excluded locality¹²⁰.

Definition of school areas of catchment schools is just one of many factors causing ethnic homogenisation of schools. Other factors to be addressed in case of adjusting the primary school catchment area limits include:

- 1) **Parents of children from socially excluded localities** are used to enrolling children at ethnically homogenised schools. Such schools enjoy increased trust of Roma parents. Therefore, in case of adjusting the catchment area limits, it is necessary to focus on field social work with Roma families. Such work should, among other things, motivate Roma parents to enrol their children at mainstream primary schools. Parents should be allowed to visit the school repeatedly.
- 2) **Participation of individual schools in integration of pupils from socially excluded Roma localities.** In order to ensure desirable outcomes of the catchment area limit adjustments, it is necessary to ensure that individual schools take proactive approaches towards education of Roma pupils at their school (readiness to adjust the teaching methods or school organisation, establishing preparatory grades or teacher's assistant positions, etc.).

Depending on the specific situation in a municipality, it may prove necessary to complement this tool with school busses because schools may be deemed inaccessible by inhabitants of some localities.

Special primary school enrolments, preparatory grades at special primary schools

Many respondents criticise the current educational system arrangements allowing special primary school headmasters to establish preparatory grades and invite for enrolment on dates prior enrolments at mainstream primary schools. In some socially excluded localities, Roma parents prefer special primary schools, and such arrangement simplifying enrolment of their children at a

¹¹⁸ Lowering the total number of pupils decreases financial budget of a school, see chapter 6.4, *Low education levels – basic cause of failure in the labour market.*

¹¹⁹ See Section 36 (7) of Act no. 561/2004 Coll. (hereinafter, "School Act").

¹²⁰ Serving as a good example, municipal authorities in Vsetín strictly enforce compliance with defined school catchment areas in order to avoid ethnic homogenisation of certain schools.

special primary school **increases number of Roma children attending special primary schools**¹²¹.

Some special primary schools organise Open Door Days, perceived by many respondents as a measure to increase the number of enrolled pupils. The same reputation accompanies preparatory grades established by special primary schools because there are just few children that later enrol at a mainstream primary school (the majority of children adapt to the environment and stay at the special school). This is again the result of the normative-based financing of schools, creating competitive environment and making schools fight for pupils.

Decreasing the minimum number of pupils required to establish a preparatory grade in small municipalities (microclasses, etc.)

Headmasters in small municipalities often justify the non-existence of a preparatory grade for socially disadvantaged children by claiming an insufficient number of pupils¹²².

Section 3 (23) of the School Act stipulates the conditions under which an establisher may approve an exclusion regarding increase or decrease of number of children, pupils and students in classes, departments or study groups, provided that a school covers the costs of decreased numbers or that increased number of children, pupils or student is not detrimental to the educational activity. **The School Act, however, fails to address the issue of lowering the minimum number of socially disadvantaged children required to establish a preparatory grade**¹²³.

School financing system

Schools are financed through normative-based¹²⁴ and off-normative resources. It is the normative-based system which causes the already aforementioned **competition among schools** and makes schools compete for pupils. This has both positive effects (schools attempt to attract pupils through above-standard offers) and negative effects represented by rivalry among schools, suppressing cooperation in problems of socially excluded Roma education as well as ignoring the financial demands of such education.

Specific tools required to provide quality tuition to pupils with specific educational needs are more expensive and schools are not able to cover related costs from money received under the current normative-based system. Therefore, schools are not motivated to enrol pupils with specific social exclusion-based educational needs.

The solution is not to abolish normatives, but to enable schools attended by pupils from a socially excluded environment (whether a family or locality) to apply for additional funds (e.g. linked to a specific use). Such change entails ability to determine who is a pupil from a socially excluded environment¹²⁵. To avoid unauthorized use of the funds, the schools may be required to embody the specific teaching methods focused on socially excluded pupils, for example, in their school educational programme.

The planning of this system change must take into account similar risks as in the case of teacher's assistant, i.e. uncertainty related to the employment contract for definite period of time since the state subsidy covers only one year of assistant's work. It is important to note that the

¹²¹ This happens despite the fact that enrolment of a child at a special primary school must be approved in writing by a parent/guardian and must be supported by a specialist physician's opinion and the recommendation of an education advice facility (see the School Act).

¹²² Section 47 of the School Act stipulates that a preparatory grade shall not be established unless there are at least 7 pupils.

¹²³ Schools lack funds to support such preparatory grades and local authorities reject any support because they finance kindergartens.

¹²⁴ Based on number of pupils attending a school.

¹²⁵ The above-mentioned definition as stipulated by Section 16 of the School Act is rather general.

same situation may arise in relation to services of speech therapists, psychologists and other professionals.

There is another potential drawback of such additional financial support for primary schools working with socially excluded Roma pupils: a school with an already high proportion of Roma pupils can intentionally increase their share in order to obtain additional finances, further enhancing homogenisation (or ghettoisation) of the school because, in fact, it has "nothing to lose".

In our opinion, such additional financing of schools should be closely related to monitoring of both performance and quality of the school and ability of Roma pupils to succeed in the labour market. On the one hand, there are pupils who are able to handle primary studies thanks to lower requirements of the school, but leave a mainstream secondary school within first few months because they haven't developed the necessary learning capabilities. On the other hand, being a desirable situation, a secondary student keeps pace thanks to the strong foundations developed in a primary school combined with various support programmes implemented by the secondary school.

Opportunity to register primary school leavers with the Labour Office

The opportunity to register with the Labour Office, start a requalification course and become qualified to receive the unemployment benefit or jobseeker allowance is a very frequent cause for many primary school leavers from Roma localities to discontinue studying. The field research proved that this is very often an approach taken by many families.

This system arrangement is indeed logical. However we consider necessary for the appropriate resort (most probably the MoLSA) to reassess it because it is in fact demotivating, especially in relation to efforts aimed at increasing the number of Roma secondary students. This arrangement is one of major reasons why there is an entire generation of young people with merely primary education in the Czech Republic, divesting them of any prospects of success in the labour market (requalification, if completed, very often fails to significantly improve their employability)

The way to solve this is not to fully abolish the arrangements, but rather to modify them to remove such markedly negative side effect.

Coordination of integration activities, cooperation of Social and Educational Departments and Labour Offices, clear definition of competencies

The research identified major problem caused by unclear competencies of Social and Educational Departments of local authorities. The majority of employees of Educational Departments were unable to provide information about education levels in the socially excluded Roma localities.

Employees of Educational Departments at the local level lacked a view of services (including educational) offered by NGOs and they were unable to provide information about which schools are attended by children from individual localities¹²⁶. They frequently referred the researchers to their colleagues from Social Departments or to school headmasters. The Educational Departments with such personnel lack the necessary competence and knowledge as well as a concept of Roma integration in education and are not able manage coordination of educational activities focusing on Roma from socially excluded localities.

In the majority of municipalities, the issue of recreational activities or out-of-school education is covered both by the Educational Department (within educational competence) and

¹²⁶ In most cases, their knowledge of the issue was limited to definition of school areas of catchment schools.

the Social Department (within prevention of social pathological phenomena). Frequently, there is hardly any coordination of Roma integration within municipalities¹²⁷.

Development of an experience exchange platform for primary and/or secondary schools attended by pupils from socially excluded localities

The field research clearly shows that many entities have implemented several interesting activities supporting, at least to a certain extent, social inclusion of pupils from socially excluded localities. However, NGOs and schools often suffer from lack of funds, preventing them from promoting best practices. On the other hand, there are indeed entities in the Czech Republic that have unclear ideas on how to tackle a problem and what to do.

We therefore propose the establishment of an experience exchange platform, providing for regular meetings of headmasters or their deputies to exchange information, set up partnerships, etc. Similar unofficial and informal events have been organised for selected primary schools attended by a high percentage of Roma pupils, for example in connection with implementation of the 'All-day school programme' project, etc. In our opinion, there is a solid foundation for such activity.

Above all, this system change should provide schools attended by lower number of pupils from socially excluded localities with information resources, allowing them implement, in timely manner, suitable tools supporting integration of pupils into their school environment. These need not necessarily be time demanding quarterly conferences (note that headmasters have always been under time pressure). There is a certain opportunity for a suitable web site, occasional memorandums distributed to schools, occasional seminars, etc.

To support a systematic solution, we consider it appropriate to emphasize more intense cooperation of pedagogical faculties and primary schools attended by a higher percentage of Roma pupils from socially excluded settings.

In this context, it is also possible to develop an evaluation credit system to recognise students who work in localities or in their vicinity as part of their practice or voluntary activity. As many activities are based on voluntary work, the credits awarded may serve as a suitable incentive.

In addition, we recommend increased support for international trainee-ships both for students (future teachers) and their professors. In some European countries, the problem of social exclusion has dramatically escalated and international trainee-ships may help future Czech experts avoid mistakes.

Supply of quantitative and qualitative data describing a school success of Roma pupils

Considering the currently very poor knowledge of education levels among the Roma population in socially excluded localities, we recommend performing research and conducting surveys to audit the school success of Roma pupils. The following shall be audited:

- At what grade are the Roma pupils most often transferred to special primary schools;
- Description of problematic areas in Roma pupil tuition, evaluation of their skills, abilities and knowledge per age groups (pre-school, lower level, upper level, secondary school), etc.
- Methods and opportunities for overcoming Roma children's deficient motivation regarding education and qualification;
- Analysis of mobility and mobility paths and backgrounds of Roma secondary students;

¹²⁷ As an example of bad practice, Social Departments are very often establishers of pre-school clubs (*skolicky* in Czech) and Educational Departments approve establishment of preparatory grades (lack of coordination, competition, overlapping of funds).

- Success of children of Roma emigrants in foreign educational systems (United Kingdom, Canada, etc.);
- sociolinguistic research of language skills of Roma children born in socially excluded localities.

8.4 Recommended system measures in the field of social competence stimulation

FSW availability to all individuals experiencing or at risk of social exclusion

As agreed by the majority of front-line organisations and bodies, the importance of FSW in relation to the issue of social exclusion is indisputable. In spite of this, FSW is not provided in many localities, mainly due to a lack of financial and appropriate human resources. The new Act on social services is, at least partially, going to address nation-wide availability of FSW. However, local authorities must be provided with adequate support to ensure their compliance. Support of FSW education is crucial. Currently, there is an insufficient number of trained FSWs to cover needs of existing localities.

Appendix 1: Glossary of terms and abbreviations	
Absorption capacity	A level in which a certain entity is able to utilize EU Structural Fund resources. Consists in administrative capacity, co-financing capacity and ability to compile a quality project reasonably in advance.
Active Employment Policy (AEP)	A basic employment support tool. The AEP is implemented by Labour Offices and MoLSA. Focusing on "exposed" groups (parents after maternity leave, seniors, long-term unemployed, unskilled individuals, graduates and school leavers, members of ethnic and national minorities), all AEP activities aim at ensuring jobseekers' success on the labour market. Activities include, without limitation, advice, requalifications, investment incentives, employee transport and entry training contributions, publicly beneficial work, socially useful jobs, etc.
Assimilation	A process whereby a weaker group (e.g. ethnic or cultural minority) gradually adopts the values and culture of the prevailing group (the majority). The ultimate consequence of the process is "melting" of the assimilating group (i.e. minority) in the majority.
Teacher's assistant for socially disadvantaged pupils (formerly Roma teaching assistant)	Helps teaching staff in a school (or other institution) attended by large numbers of socially disadvantaged pupils. He or she helps children overcome communication barriers and get acclimatized to the school environment, serves as a communication intermediary between teachers, parents and the local Roma community, and organises recreational activities. The TA position is established based on the school headmaster's application. Related costs (wages) are covered through the Development Grant Programme of the MoEYS.
Czech State Police's assistant	An assistant whose tasks include, without limitation, establishing and maintaining a feeling of reliance in the Czech State Police within Roma communities, ensuring protection of victims and witnesses, providing the Roma community with information about usury-related risks, and systematic supporting of field work in ethnically and socially excluded localities. The position is pilot-tested in several towns within the "National Strategy on Policing Ethnic and National Minorities".
Discrimination on grounds of race and ethnicity	There are two types of discrimination: (i) Direct discrimination shall mean the situation where a person is treated in a less favourable manner compared to other persons in a similar situation, due to his or her racial or ethnic background; and (ii) indirect discrimination shall mean the situation where a person of certain racial or ethnic background is affected by allegedly neutral provisions, criteria or practice to a larger degree than other persons in a similar situation, except when such provisions, criteria or practice are justified by a reasonable purpose and the means of their execution are reasonable and necessary.
A designated beneficiary	A tool allowing transfer of social benefits or any part thereof to an account of a person or entity other than the authorized beneficiary. The tool can be used in cases when payment of a certain benefit to an authorized beneficiary fails to meet the intended purpose. For example, a designated beneficiary (i.e. the landlord) may be appointed if the authorized beneficiary fails to use the benefit (housing allowance) towards rent payment. Appointment of the designated beneficiary requires consent of the designated beneficiary NOT the authorized beneficiary.
Integration	A process whereby a weaker group is included into the majority environment without losing its identity and specificity.

Community centre (CC)	A centre of community social life, fulfilling a mission of local community development. The mission of the community centres is to support development of the local community (school, parish, library, child and youth club, etc.) and provide educational and social services. Activities differ from community centre to community centre and include, without limitation, meetings, joint planning of activities focusing on personal development of attendants, courses, aid and support to job seekers and flat seekers, debt advice, addiction advice, etc. Currently, the individual community centres represent a diverse range of solutions and concepts within one single framework, for example by diverse emphasis on level of participation of individual target groups.
Community planning of social services (CPSS)	Ideally, an open and cyclic process of social service planning at the local and regional levels, embracing need and resource assessment and finding the most appropriate solution customized to the local conditions and needs and emphasizing partnership, dialog and consensus. The owners of the process include local or regional authorities as principals, service providers and service users or clients as well as the general public.
Low-Threshold Youth Club (LTYC)	A facility providing free social services to disorganised children and teenagers at risk of social exclusion. It organises educational and activation activities, mediates contact with the social environment and provides aid in enforcing the rights and interests of the clients.
Community service	An alternative punishment inflicted by a court for an offence penalized by up to 5-years imprisonment pursuant to law. Community service work may last 50 to 400 hours in case of adults, and 50 to 200 in case of juvenile offenders. The offender must perform the ordered work personally, for free and in offender's free time no later than within one year after receiving the resolution about a specific venue of execution. The venue of execution may include local council, town council, state agency or any other charity or NGO.
Supported employment	A set of social services originally intended to support employment of persons with mental disabilities; currently, the service aims at individuals with various disabilities who seek to find and keep a paid job on the open labour market. It consists in systematic long-term cooperation with a client, including incentives, interviews, work skills development, courses, attendance at interviews with employers, and service provider's worker visits to the employer. The service also aims at strengthening the independence of clients and supporting their employers. The supported employment services focusing on Roma community members have been pilot-tested in a pilot project in Olomouc in 2004/2005.
Preparatory grade	A pre-school educational facility established at primary, special and practical schools and kindergartens with consent of a relevant department of regional authorities. The preparatory grade is intended for children with delayed school attendance and children from the socially disadvantaged environment. The preparatory grade cannot be established unless more than 6 children are enrolled.
(Roma) Mentor	The mentor works with Roma clients of the Probation and Mediation Service who are at risk of social exclusion. The mentor encourages Roma clients to duly execute alternative punishments, motivates them and helps them with related problems, such as seeking a job or housing. The mentors are members of the Roma minority. Currently, the service is deployed within the "Mentoring System in Criminal Justice" project carried out by the Association for Probation and Mediation in Justice.
Segregation	A process whereby individual social groups (characterized by ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc.) become and remain isolated. Isolation is characterized by minimization of contacts with the majority society. Segregation is the result of (a) external pressure from the majority society, or (b) strategies aimed at preserving the identity of the segregated group.

	In the Czech Republic, the former type prevails.
Social cohesion	A term describing e.g. shared identities, social control and solidarity, loyalty and mutual expectations established and maintained based on daily interactions in interpersonal relationships. It allows people to leave their individual anonymity and participate in the public and collective life. In relation to strengthening or weakening of social cohesion, major factors include ethnic, social and cultural specifics of groups or individuals while strengthening the importance of the differences may lead to isolation of groups. On the other hand, weakening of the social cohesion within society may lead to an anomic, disorganised state. To restore social cohesion, which is currently substantially weakened within Czech society, it is necessary to eliminate unreasonable inequalities between groups.
Social mobility	A sociologic term describing a transition of an individual, social object or value from one position to another. There is <i>horizontal mobility</i> (e.g. moving to another place, changing a job) and <i>vertical mobility</i> (transition of an individual from one social stratum to another). Vertical mobility can be downstream mobility (for example due to loss of job or flat) or upstream mobility (skill development). Both types of mobility are linked and mutually supportive (for example, moving to a "better address" entails increased prestige of newcomers).
Socioculturally disadvantaged environment / social disadvantage	A pair of closely related terms used in pedagogy in particular. The former describes an environment in which a child is raised (mostly a family) and which negatively affects child's psychological (cognitive, in particular) development. The term mostly covers low-income families with low-educated or low-skilled members exposed to risk of unemployment and sociopathological phenomena and with lower social status and lower quality of life. Another factor may include membership in a cultural or sub-cultural group. In addition, the term covers compulsory institutional or protective care or asylee status as well as asylum seeker status. According to the School Act, exposure to any such defined environment represents a <i>social disadvantage</i> .
Co-funding	Sharing costs of individual projects by multiple entities or organisations. As far as projects and activities are concerned, the costs are generally covered from Structural Funds and public funds of the Czech Republic (state, regional and local budgets, budgets of municipality associations) or non-public private resources.
Field social work (FSW)	Social work performed in the native environment of clients. FSW requires good knowledge of the environment, confidence between the worker and clients, and an individual approach to clients. In the Czech Republic, FSW is implemented mainly in socially excluded localities; it is carried out by the central government within the government programme "Field Social Work in Excluded Roma Communities" as well as by numerous NGOs. Currently, FSW standards are being developed and the service is becoming more professional.

Publicly beneficial work	An employment-support tool used to provide job seekers with temporary jobs (for less than 12 months). The jobs in the publicly beneficial work scheme are established mainly by local and regional authorities based on written agreement with a Labour Office. Labour Offices often recommend publicly beneficial work to local citizens who suffer from poor employability. Publicly beneficial work consists in seasonal work, such as cleaning, maintenance of lawns and plants, roads, pavements and sport facilities, construction works, improving living conditions, etc.
Health assistant	A worker providing health care aid, advice and information to individuals or groups of citizens who, in his or her opinion and/or according to experience of the regional Roma advisor coordinator, lack such information. The health assistant's work must be founded on trust, interest and cooperation of targeted individuals. The health assistant attempts to motivate citizens and cooperates with FSWs, special social supervisory workers (<i>kurátor</i>), anti-drug coordinators, social workers of local authorities, and health care facilities. Currently, the position is implemented as part of the "Sastipen CR Health Assistants in Socially Excluded Localities" project.

ERDF	European Regional Development Fund	A basic tool of EU regional policy to finance structural aid through regional development programmes; it has been operating since 1974. It is focused on affected areas and aims to mitigate interregional inequalities. Currently, it belongs among the major Structural Funds.
EQUAL	Community Equal Opportunities Initiative	One of four Community initiatives co-funded through the Structural Funds. Its aim is to support equal access to employment and to enforce tools to prevent discrimination and inequality at the labour market. The support is provided through the ESF.
ESF	European Social Fund	One of the EU Structural Funds. A financial tool supporting unemployment prevention and anti-unemployment measures, human resource development measures and labour market inclusion measures. The ESF supports activities within the European employment strategy.
SPD 3 (JPD 3)	Objective 3 Single Programme Document	A programme document designed for the NUTS II, The City of Prague, providing a basis for ESF support provision. It contains descriptions and analysis of human resources situations and defines programme goals, priorities and measures focusing on development of a flexible labour market with special attention paid to groups at risk on the labour market, social inclusion of disadvantaged groups, lifelong learning development, and increasing adaptability of Prague organisations through improvement of skill levels of their workers.
NGO	Non-government non-profit organisations	A legal entity established for non-commercial purposes.
NUTS	Nomenclature Unit of Territorial Statistic	In the Czech Republic, there are three levels of the statistical territorial units: Regions represent NUTS III level (14 units including Prague), the Czech Republic as a whole represents NUTS I level. At the NUTS II level, which is important in relation to the Structural Funds, it was necessary to redefine the existing territorial division – 8 "cohesion regions" were defined within the Czech Republic.
OP HRD (OP RLZ)	Operational Programme for Human Resource Development	A nation-wide programme defining priorities and measures within human resource development, e.g. active employment policy, social integration and equal opportunities, lifelong learning development, skilled workforce development, adaptability and flexible labour market development, decreasing the number of people at risk of social exclusion and strengthening the environmentally-based approach.
PHARE		As one of the pre-accession tools, PHARE is a support programme for transition candidate countries. Some of the funds were allocated to support development of institutions; in the Czech Republic, the majority of the funds have recently been allocated to support investments improving the regulation structure necessary to implement EU legislation and to social and economic cohesion policy.
JROP (SROP)	Joint Regional Operational Programme	A programme covering priorities of 7 cohesion regions (except the City of Prague), such as competitiveness of industry and commercial services, and development of the transport infrastructure, human resources and tourism. The support is provided through the ESF and ERDF.