



'FROM BENEFITS TO BROOMS'

CASE STUDIES REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES FOR ROMA AT LOCAL LEVEL

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Abstract

This paper summarises the findings of micro-level empirical research conducted in twelve settlements across five European countries - Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Spain - regarding access to employment for Roma with low levels of education and the active labour market policies (ALMP) supporting their inclusion in the labour market. The research has been conducted under work package 19 ('Policy puzzles with Roma employment') of the FP7 funded project, NEUJOBS. The aim of this paper is to gain an in-depth insight into how active ALMP aimed at Roma and other vulnerable groups are implemented locally. We also attempt to discern which practices and problems relate to creating centrally-designed policies aiming to improve Roma employment and, as a result, challenge the extremely high unemployment rate experienced by this population. The first part of the report includes a synthesis of the findings across five countries, while the second part incorporates more detailed country-specific research reports.

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Ethical disclaimer:

This report discusses the fieldwork data related to NEUJOBS Work Package 19, Task 3: Case studies about the implementation of active labour market policies targeting vulnerable groups at local level. Due to the specific topic there is a need to protect anonymity of data and depersonalise respondents. Therefore, the report uses fictitious names for the settlements where the research has been conducted.

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**PART I. Synthesis of findings
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1. Aim of the report

The report summarises findings of fieldwork research conducted in 12 settlements across five countries - Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, Spain and Romania - about access to employment for Roma with low levels of education and the active labour market policies (ALMP) supporting their inclusion in the labour market. The paper is the self-contained interim output from an eighteen month research project investigating (ALMP) and their implementation, targeting directly or reaching out to Roma populations. The research has been conducted under work package 19¹ of the FP7 funded project, NEUJOBS.² The first part of the research project (D19.1³) analysed the workings and the general regulatory environment of the labour markets for populations with low levels of education - and Roma within this population segment - in the five countries under discussion (Brozovicova, Fabo, Kahanec, Messing 2012). The second stage of the project resulted in a paper (Messing, 2013) that provided a more specific insight into the labour market policies and measures that target directly or reach this population to a significant extent. This third phase of the research incorporates an empirical investigation into how centrally designed labour market policies and specific measures are implemented in a selection of local labour markets and how they reach (or do not reach) their original target groups. These three levels of analyses are interesting when studied in isolation, but their synthesis - the amalgamation of findings about the regulatory environment, the design and the implementation of ALMP groups, and the combination of macro and micro level findings - will lead to a comprehensive analysis of

¹ Workpackage 19: “Policy puzzles with Roma employment”. For further details see: <http://www.neujobs.eu/research-fields/policy-puzzles-roma-employment>.

² NEUJOBS is a research project financed by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme. Its objective is to analyse future possible developments of the European labour market(s) under the main assumption that European societies are now facing or preparing to face four main transitions that will have a major impact on employment, particularly for some groups in the labour force or sectors of the economy. www.neujobs.eu.

³ <http://www.neujobs.eu/publications/state-art-reports/overview-labour-market-situation-low-educated-and-roma-population-and>

the policies in terms of what kind of circumstances support Roma and other vulnerable groups' inclusion in the labour market. This is the task for the next (and also last) stage of the project, which is due to be completed by January 2014.

The current phase of the research aims to understand how labour market policies and employment programmes targeting Roma are implemented in a given economic and social context and attempts to highlight positive and negative practices in implementation across twelve selected settlements in five countries. By empirically investigating the implementation of ALMP locally, it aims to articulate how the local level transforms centrally designed labour market programmes: in which circumstances do they either add to or detract from policies designed at state level? Accordingly, the fieldwork was developed in order to discern the opinions and experiences of a varied range of individuals through meetings and interviews with three types of actors: local stakeholders (labour office, mayors, NGOs), employers and unemployed people - both Roma and non-Roma - who were either participating in different programmes or were excluded from them.

However, one should also bear in mind the limitations of this investigation. Being a micro-level investigation, the project took a snapshot of certain localities at specific points in time. Therefore, the research tells about the here and now, so its findings cannot be generalised across time or space. Another limitation when interpreting the research results lies in the fact that countries in question operate very different systems of local and labour market governance, and represent different ends of the centralised versus decentralised governance horizon. Naturally, these systemic differences may have an important effect on how centrally designed policies are implemented and help us to understand how different motivations steer local actors. These elements may certainly have a very significant influence on policy implementation, especially in terms of those which target vulnerable groups.

The paper consists of two major sections: a synthesis of the findings in the five countries, including a section on the research methodology, principal comparative findings and the conclusion. The second part presents country specific case studies and the individual findings for each of the five countries.

2. Methods

The field research was an exploratory investigation conducted in five mid-sized towns and seven villages in the five countries. Two to three settlements were selected in each country within the same small region. This methodology was adopted in order to include information on both rural and urban settlements, and involve regionality (commuting) as a factor in the organisation of the local labour market and implementation of labour market policies. This approach increased the chances of gaining a more in-depth understanding of the mechanisms influencing the local labour market and the impact ALMP may play in this domain.

Obviously, this approach does not enable us to obtain knowledge about an entire country. Its importance lies in the way in which the experiences and opinions of all parties involved in local labour market programmes are brought together. The triangulation of the information gained from various actors may offer profound insights into the processes and mechanisms that enhance or limit the strength and impact of centrally designed ALMP. Thus, despite the fact that the research is not representative for the individual countries, it may lead to findings that are worthy of policy makers' consideration, as they might also stimulate further, more focused research with a wider geographical scope.

In order to select comparable fields, specific features shared by the fieldwork sites were agreed upon by the research team. The site should be a mid-sized town in which: (1) the proportion of Roma exceeded the country average; (2) governmental and/or NGO labour market policy programmes were underway; (3) the settlements' level of economic development was below the national average, but not in the lowest 10% in terms of per capita GDP. In addition, a rural settlement in the proximity of a town was selected, having a sizeable Roma population with meaningful labour market relations with the town, serving a field of research (its population commuted to it and used its labour market services).

This research design therefore aimed to find 'typical' settlements where Roma lived but did not constitute the majority, and where economic performance was below the national average but did not belong to the worst, most marginalised areas of each country. We presumed that active labour market measures could have the greatest potential to make a difference to the vulnerable population in such an environment because they encompass a critical number of employers and a local policy making field in which ALMP can operate meaningfully.

The research consisted of three interrelated and overlapping phases. The first phase included desk-research in the course of which country expert fieldwork researchers collected information characterising the population and the labour market of the given settlements. They did so by exploring available data sources on the one hand and conducting interviews with local stakeholders on the other. In the second phase, stakeholder interviews were conducted, typically with (1) officials, who had an overview of the system and the functioning of governmental ALMP focused on vulnerable groups (regional experts, local experts); (2) heads of the local or regional labour offices (LO) who oversee the implementation; (3) the most important NGOs active in the field of employment and Roma; and (4) with Roma community leaders on the labour market situation and history of the local community. This selection of stakeholders respected local realities as well as the aims of comparative research. In the third phase, researchers mapped how labour market (LM) interventions function and how they affect the local labour market in general and unemployed Roma in particular. This was achieved through interviews with (1) other stakeholders (local programme coordinators, representatives of NGOs, and officials of implementing institutions) and (2) employers (public and private companies participating in ALMP and/or employing vulnerable people). In addition, 2-6 focus group (FG) discussions by country were organised with ALMP beneficiaries and non-beneficiary, unemployed Roma. In order to ensure comparability, detailed interview and focus-group outlines were individually designed for stakeholders, employers and for the unemployed, to ensure comparability of the investigation and its results.

The country-specific description of the methodology provides an in-depth account of the interviewees and the actual composition of the focus group discussion as well as documenting the challenges researchers encountered during the fieldwork investigation. In sum, eighty-six interviews were conducted in five countries with stakeholders, NGO and community leaders, policy makers, implementing agencies and employers (HR heads of companies). In total, nineteen focus group discussions were conducted, with the active participation of one hundred and twenty-six Roma and non-Roma individuals in order to gain in-depth insight into how unemployed Roma - beneficiaries of ALMP - experience their situation and perceive their participation in these programmes. Only in Hungary did researchers have to depart from the original design of the fieldwork research due to the unemployed participants' extremely high levels of distrust. Following the failure of multiple rounds of attempts to organise focus group discussions, researchers decided to replace two FG discussions with interviews. These interviews were with the unemployed and

beneficiaries of ALMP, who proved to be less reluctant to participate in a face-to-face interview situation than in a group discussion.

The main objective of this aspect of the research methodology was to gain information from all parties involved in ALMP locally (officials responsible for design and implementation, employers, NGOs and Roma community leaders and the beneficiaries) and triangulate their perspectives, experiences and opinions about the feasibility of active labour market measures. This enabled us to discern how ALMP function in at the local level: what are their weaknesses and strengths and which factors might result in the meaningful inclusion or exclusion of Roma from both ALMP and the labour market at a later stage.

3. Findings

Some of the most important comparative findings of the fieldwork research will be discussed in this section. In the synthesis only those issues will be highlighted (barriers to employment, labour market programmes aiming at vulnerable groups and the challenges posed) which can be discussed comparatively; country specific issues remain within the scope of country reports and can be read in the country specific chapters.

3.1 Roma participation – lack of data

One of the most important findings of the research was the actual limitations of the investigation itself due to the lack of available data on the subject matter. There is neither a registry nor any estimates with regard to the ethnicity of the ALM programmes' beneficiaries in any of the studied countries. Therefore, in none of the countries could stakeholders discern the actual number/proportion of Roma beneficiaries in individual programmes, or in ALMP in general. Even the few targeted Roma employment programmes did not have data about the ethnic composition of their beneficiaries: they were considered to be Roma employment programmes because the priority target groups were unemployed Roma and/or the implementing agency was a Roma or pro-Roma organisation. As a consequence, we cannot make any assessments about the extent to which ALMP may affect Roma and even fewer about the impact they may have on labour market inclusion. Instead, the research provides an in-depth understanding about how ALMP function locally; how they might influence the life and opportunities of vulnerable groups; and the barriers preventing the efficient utilisation of funds dedicated to supporting LM inclusion of vulnerable groups.

Despite the fact that we failed to find data about the ethnicity of the beneficiaries, in one case of EU funded ALMP training in Hungary, ethnicity was recorded. As this programme had a 20% Roma participation target, implementing agencies did enquire about the ethnic identity of their beneficiaries. Participants could state their Roma ethnic identity, although employment office public servants complained about many Roma concealing ethnicity and consequently, there was significant underreporting of Roma participation. In Slovakia, by contrast, inquiring about ethnic identity was forbidden by law – or at least, this was the understanding of those involved in ALMP. However, in Bulgaria, beneficiaries' disclosure of their ethnic background is possible within the present legal framework. However, employment offices (LOD) are reluctant to divulge beneficiaries' ethnicity as they do not want to limit their flexibility in terms of recruiting participants and want as wide a circle of beneficiaries as possible. Interestingly, even in Spain, the country with the lowest level of exclusion and prejudice towards the Gitano population, and with ALMP funds directed to Roma NGOs, implementing agencies do not collect any information on the ethnic background of programme beneficiaries. Even Fundació Secretariado Gitano (FSG), a major

Roma ALMP implementing agency, does not provide any exact information on the ethnic origin of the participants of its particular programmes.

Therefore, the only source that we could use in assessing the participation of Roma people (or the lack thereof) in certain programme types were interviews with stakeholders, with employers and focus group discussions with unemployed Roma. Based on the juxtaposed information stemming from these sources, we can speculate on Roma participation in individual programmes. Although these information sources reflect primarily the actors' perceptions, listening to experiences from all actors might provide a fuller picture about the local reality.

3.2 Participation and budget – lack of local data

An even greater problem when evaluating the programmes was that, with the exception of Slovakia, in none of the countries could researchers obtain the most essential data on ALMP implementation, such as the number of local beneficiaries, or the budget that was spent in the settlement. This was partly due to the fact that although Labour Market institutions collect such data, most of the ALMP have a wider geographical scope, and even the most essential data are not disaggregated by settlements. The other problem researchers had to face was the reluctance of ALMP stakeholders to provide researchers with data. Despite being prepared to participate in an interview, individuals were often unwilling to provide detailed information about the actual implementation of the programmes. Thus, country specific fieldwork reports were only capable of mapping the data (number of beneficiaries, allocated budget) which were published by labour market institutions or the implementing agencies. These data are very general, usually covering a much larger geographical area (the region or the country) than the settlement(s) actually being researched.

These data also have important deficiencies in terms of their suitability for evaluation of the actual outcomes and deficiencies of the programme. For example: data on training include the number of participants and budget dedicated for most projects, but do not include information either on drop-outs, the number of successful graduates or the number of beneficiaries who found a job within a certain time period following the training. In terms of essential information for evaluation, the EU insisted upon an important way forward: programmes utilising EU funds (National Development Plans' Operational Programmes) are compelled to produce regular monitoring and reporting of how the funds were spent. In several countries (Bulgaria, Romania) data on ALMP are available only about such programmes; measures funded by national governments are not monitored in such a way that provides public accountability and open access to data necessary for programme evaluation. In Hungary and Slovakia, data collection about beneficiaries turning to employment offices is somewhat sophisticated but its use is strictly restricted to the office and the ministry, and is not available to academic researchers or to the public.

The research's aim was, rather, to assess the potential social outcomes and consequences of ALMP locally rather than to accomplish rigorous data-driven policy impact evaluations based on the analysis of available data. The latter would have been impossible, regardless, given the lack of accessibility of the most essential data about budgets, beneficiaries and participation of ethnic groups. Our analysis was confined to using information collected during the interviews and FG discussions from the various actors involved in LM programmes, so the report was subsequently a more in-depth description of mechanisms that demarcate the use of ALMP in localities.

3.3 Labour market services: labour offices, job centres

When describing the various types of labour market programmes, it is first necessary to look at the institutional environment in which they are embedded.⁴ There was an employment office or job centre within easy reach of all the studied settlements. The type and quality of service provision, however, varied greatly. In the Romanian and Bulgarian settlements, employment offices were seen as purely administrative government offices where unemployed people had to register regularly in order to maintain their unemployed status and entitlements to benefits. However, employment offices, at least theoretically, are required to provide a variety of services beyond administration related to the unemployed, such as job-match services and counselling services to provide support when people apply for vacancies. However, the focus group discussions revealed that job centres frequently function exclusively as authorities registering unemployed people and completing related paperwork. The worst 'service' was described in the Bulgarian and Romanian contexts. In Romania, processing the registration at the County Agency for Employment (CAE) was a purely administrative act involving minimal human interaction: "(...) we come, they give us the visa and we go. In two minutes we're done. But we don't talk, we only give them our identity card and that's it." But interviewees also gave accounts of staff at the centre humiliating their clients. According to the FG participants, office workers appeared uninspired by their work and did not respect the human dignity of their clients: "They're not interested, they ignore us and many times they would say that they are sick of us (...) 'I'm sick of you coming here'" or "(...) she told me: Sir, go further back because you will give me a disease", (from FG discussions with unemployed people in Romania). Similarly, in Bulgaria FG interviewees gave accounts of mistreatment by labour office (LO) staff. The LO staff not only failed to provide any job search support or related services (especially to rural residents) but often degraded their clients. We quote few of the examples given by the unemployed interviewees: "Instead of helping me - because I do not understand things properly and I need some explanation - he said, 'Why you are bothering me? Leave me alone!'" or "I went there and asked for a job and she (the employment officer) said, 'Get out! Get out because I am very pissed off.'"

The labour office puts vacancy announcements on the office billboard but makes no additional efforts to match demand and supply. In addition, several interviewees expressed their frustration about the fake vacancy notices or the obvious mismatch between some vacancies announced and the conditions of the job; for example an advertisement for a position of a shepherd required higher secondary school qualification. Although the LO in the Bulgarian town employed one Roma labour mediator, his appointment was politically motivated, and did not result in improvements to the quality of service provision to Roma clients. The interviewees did not even know about this supposedly important appointment.

In three of the towns under discussion in Bulgaria, Hungary and Spain, Roma employment mediators were active. The basic idea behind this role is that employment of Roma in the public services, such as a job centre, could encourage and support Roma clients to utilise the services on offer. Experience suggests that low-skilled Roma, especially those living in marginalised areas, are reluctant to turn to the job centres and register, given the difficulties caused by accessing the office, and lack of trust towards the staff. The testimony cited in this

⁴ It should be noted that the research was concerned with the daily operation of the labour offices and job centers, and the extent to which they are supportive to long-term unemployed vulnerable groups, and we did not analyse their mandates. However, in all of the countries under discussion, the mandate included registration of the unemployed, training and skill-building services and job-match activities.

report confirms the fact that the unemployed may have legitimate reservations towards job centres. Employment centre employees of Roma origin could help to overcome such resistance. It is reasonable to presume that, depending, on several other factors, Roma employment coordinators might be less prejudiced and discriminative towards Roma clients, and also have a better chance of communicating effectively with and knowledge about the community. The experiences of Roma mediators in employment offices diverged significantly across the three countries: in Hungary it proved to be genuinely supportive of unemployed Roma, and led to increasing levels of trust towards the office. In Bulgaria, the Roma mediator had no effect whatsoever, due to the fact that the appointment only served political ends, and the person was simply not skilled for the task and had no motivation to fulfil the role. In Spain, the experiences are somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, having someone of Roma origin in the position of employment mediator (both at FSG and the employment office) increased the willingness of members of the community to contact the office and use its services, but the fieldwork research found that it also led to discrimination against those who were most in need. Knowing the community well, the mediator selected those applicants who had a greater chance of remaining in the programme and those with whom the employer/trainer would more likely be satisfied. Thus, the Roma mediator actually made pre-selection decisions about beneficiaries, which was not appropriate to the role.

In the Slovakian, Hungarian and Spanish contexts, FG discussions did not reveal such outrageously negative attitudes from labour office staff. Nevertheless, they still clearly showed that these institutions were regarded primarily as the formal body to which the unemployed are obliged to come once a month to register, but do not provide job-search support. In Spain, labour offices provided some job-search assistance to their clients such as internet access or personal interviews, though these were considered to be unsatisfactory in most cases. The only service mentioned by unemployed interviewees in Slovakia was training. However, this training was largely regarded as having been tailored neither to the needs of the unemployed nor of their prospective employers, so was of minimal use to both. Instead, unemployed Roma pointed out that LM services such as supporting them in writing their CV, filling out applications and communicating with employers were instead provided by field social workers, who actually replaced labour office employees in fulfilling service duties. According to the Spanish fieldwork research, the labour office was also regarded as an office for formal registration, as well as a place organising training services. All of the employment offices coordinated training sessions for the registered unemployed. FG discussions and interviews revealed that parallel to employment offices, FSG is another institution to which Roma can turn for support, aside from the employment office. Furthermore, several stakeholders shared their experiences about job centres and other labour market service providers (municipalities) advising their Roma clients to go to the FSG. Generally speaking, this NGO is regarded as an office that delivers employment services to Roma and, as such, is contributing to the 'ghettoisation' of Roma LM services: namely, it perpetuates the exclusion of Roma clients from conventional labour market services and restricts this community from solely Roma organisations. The Spanish fieldwork also revealed that the Roma coordinators at the FSG do not necessarily improve all Roma's chances to quality services and access to jobs. Having a good knowledge of the local Roma society, Roma coordinators seemed to select 'better' applicants for jobs as opposed to those who were in the most vulnerable situations.

In Hungary, our interviewees were more positive about the labour office, although it was also seen primarily as an official institution that registers the unemployed and confirms entitlement to benefits. Still, with the labour office being a mediator of vacancies within

public work⁵ schemes, many of the unemployed found a job through the office. A Roma labour mediator was also employed in the office, whose work was seen as highly beneficial and supportive of unemployed Roma. The woman in this role had a university degree and several years of experience as a labour mediator, gained at a local Roma NGO prior to securing a position at the Employment Office. As a highly qualified professional with a thorough knowledge of the local Roma community with a good understanding of the difficulties faced by the community when looking for a job, and a broad overview of the local opportunities available to the low-skilled, her role in the employment office proved to be highly beneficial to Roma clients.

An important conclusion reached as a result of the fieldwork research was that access to labour market office and services were significantly more limited in rural settlements than in the cities in all of the contexts studied. This was not only because labour offices were typically situated in a town, meaning that the rural unemployed had to travel to reach it, but also because NGOs were far more active in urban areas. In some countries, access to the labour office was especially problematic, as travel expenses were not covered by the office, which caused serious difficulties to financially deprived rural Roma people (in Romania, Bulgaria). In other cases, travel expenses were covered but delayed (in Hungary, Slovakia). For many families living in extreme poverty, having to prepay travel expenses caused serious difficulties. The geographical accessibility of labour market offices and services might also constitute a major barrier to the most vulnerable population.

One example of an organisation aiming to overcome access problems was found by the Romanian researchers, where so-called 'employment caravans' or job fairs are organised regularly in rural areas. Within the scope of this initiative, LO's relocate their services to rural areas for one or several days. Another example of this kind of strategy was the use of 'mobile offices' in the south-west of Hungary. The head of a local employment office (Siklós) in small, marginalised region recognised that barriers to access were due to the lack of public transportation in the region. The manager adopted a proactive strategy and decided to take a car and a laptop with a direct connection to the LO informatics system and created a new role of 'mobile officer' within the team. The 'mobile office' travelled around the small region and had dedicated office hours every week in each settlement covered by the service area of the office. The idea of the office to go to the client, instead of the clients travelling to the office, proved to be very efficient: registration, as well as participation in various services and programmes, has increased significantly in this small region.

3.4 Training

In all of the research sites, LOs operated training programmes for the unemployed, but they varied significantly in terms of content, organisation and their profile within ALMP. In the

⁵ 'Public work programmes' refer to job creation in the framework of active labour market policies. Public work programmes offer different conditions in the countries under discussion. However, they generally offer jobs which are created, managed and financed by the state for the unemployed for a certain period of time (1 to 12 months depending on the country and the scheme). Jobs are offered by the state, by the municipalities or public institutions, but the costs are covered by the state budget. According to the World Bank: "The creation of employment through the financing of public works is one way in which social funds transfer cash to the poor... People in need receive a wage for their work, while at the same time contributing towards the creation of public assets from which everyone in the community can benefit... Some examples of such projects include roads, markets, drainage, health centers, schools, and water supply". <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALPROTECTION/EXTSF/0,,contentMDK:20741850~menuPK:1561917~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:396378,00.html>

Spanish context, training has become a primary tool within ALMP. It also had an important though not primary significance in our Bulgarian and Hungarian research sites. In the Slovakian and Romanian sites, LOs dedicated a smaller significance to training within their ALMP.

The actual aim of training may be threefold: (1) to provide basic education to those who dropped out of the educational system without any qualifications and thus have little chance of employment; or (2) to meet to labour market demands by supplying a suitable workforce, and retrain the unemployed according to the need of the local labour market; or (3) to enhance general labour market skills such as how to look for job, how to apply for vacancies, how to communicate, how to prepare for and behave in a job interview or to write a CV. Employment offices in the settlements under discussion offered primarily the second type, professional training programmes, and some also offered skill-development training. Only in the Spanish context did we find a training programme of the first type: the Initial Professional Qualification Programme (PCPI) offered second chance education coupled with traineeship for young people who had dropped out of the compulsory school system without obtaining qualifications. Training for unemployed early school leavers also existed in Hungary but it was organised within the framework of public work schemes (job creation): unemployed youth who did not complete primary school⁶ were offered the opportunity to continue their education within the framework of public work schemes.

An important shortcoming identified by the research with concern to the second type of training programmes (occupational) is that in most of the fields stakeholders were unaware of the actual manner in which the demand side of the labour market was assessed; the procedure by which the labour office collected information about companies' human resource needs. Only in Hungary did LO servants mention that they regularly (biannually) surveyed local companies about their projections for human resource needs. The survey included questions about expected changes in the number of employees, the type of contract involved and the expected qualification for various time spans. Such information supports the planning and organisation of training that might meaningfully contribute to the employability of unemployed. This is a relatively new system of data collection that, according to the first outcomes, seem to be useful for ALMP participants.

Another shortcoming is that the various types of training were rarely interconnected, although it would be reasonable to assume that the unemployed - especially the long-term unemployed - not only need to develop their professional qualification, but frequently lack skills that are essential to job search and application. An exception was the 'Personal Itinerary of Integration' (IPI) programme in Spain that involved both orientation and training in cooperation with local companies.

Training programmes in most of the cases did not have a specific target group - the registered unemployed were addressed in general. However, there were a few exceptions, as in Hungary, EU-funded training programmes prescribed the share of participants experiencing various categories of vulnerability - such as mothers with young children, youth (<25 years), elderly people (>50 years) and Roma. In Spain, an occupational training course developed by job centres targeted people experiencing different kinds of vulnerability, although our case study focuses on an occupation training programme targeting young people under 25.

Stakeholders rarely revealed the actual procedure by which participants were selected into programmes. Most of them gave an account of impartial selection procedures to which all

⁶ ISCED 2: in other settings this level is referred to as 'lower secondary.'

unemployed people had equal access. Still, discussions with unemployed Roma revealed that, in several instances, this was not the case. Many of the training programmes presume a certain level of education, and thus, exclude those with a minimal or incomplete education. Secondly, although the selection procedure is theoretically unbiased, Roma still tend to participate rarely, and if they do, they get into worse and less useful types of training programmes such as those providing traditional Roma crafts, or those that award qualifications for which there is no demand in the local labour market. Another problem is that many Roma, especially those living in rural areas, have no access to training as they cannot cover the cost of travelling, and the programme does not reimburse transportation costs. The Hungarian case clearly revealed how theoretically unbiased selection procedures can lead to ethnic bias. The interviews with employment office staff did not suggest any hint of ethnic discrimination during the selection process. Still, an interview with the head of a Roma NGO revealed that more subtle forms of pre-selection and ethnic discrimination exist during the evaluation stage - based on identifying ethnicity through typically Roma names. To prevent this kind of discrimination, the LO accepted the NGO's proposal to delegate a person of Roma ethnicity onto the board in order to evaluate the tests. As a result, the number of Roma on training courses has increased significantly, according to both Roma beneficiaries and LO officials.

The incentive to apply for the training programmes differed significantly by country. In Spain, training programmes were a compulsory element of the 'Personal Itinerary of Integration' - an individual integration plan - so beneficiaries were obliged to participate in designated training courses. The compulsory nature of training services was viewed critically by the interviewees during focus group discussions, as they often tended to be unsuccessful: drop-out rates were very high. In contrast, non-compulsory training courses offered by the labour office were valued highly by clients. At the other end of the scale, the research found that training programmes were valued if they were free and also provided a minor income for participants (for example, in Hungary and Spain). The field research found that such financial incentives are a very important motivation for regular attendance and completion of training courses, especially for those who live in destitute poverty and are registered as unemployed but in fact work in the informal segment of the economy.

The fieldwork research demonstrated that trainings may be beneficial, providing that:

- they are planned and organised in strong cooperation with local companies and respect local labour market demands;
- they offer qualification that are sought by employers in the region;
- the selection of participants is genuine and free from discrimination;
- the selection of trainers (training companies) is merit-based;
- they are not too lengthy - long, multi-year training programmes have extremely high drop-out rates;
- costs related to the training (travel, clothing etc.) are reimbursed to the participants;
- there is some positive incentive attached to participation (payment or the promise of tangible employment after the successful completion of the course); and that
- complex programmes in which training is linked with work (internship, traineeships) have the greatest potential in terms of labour market integration.

As such, the prevailing type of training courses in CEE countries that are supposed to teach so-called 'traditional Roma crafts' such as flower design or basket making are useless, because there is no market demand for such skills and products, so these courses do not improve employment opportunities. Similarly, compulsory training courses have a very low

success rates and high drop-out rates. On the other end of the scale, trainings that require clients to pay their own expenses are not beneficial because unemployed people in need have limited access to them. Several instances were also found where the selection of the training companies reflected political or individual ambitions. Naturally, those programmes whose trainers who do not have professional qualifications are not successful.

It is, however, impossible to evaluate the outcomes of training programmes as there were no data available to researchers (with the exception of one Spanish programme) regarding the number of participants, the budget allocated or the drop-out rates and other indicators of success/failure. If such research is to be undertaken, it would be essential to create indicators measuring the effectiveness of trainings and apply them in the course of regular monitoring.

3.5 Job creation programmes - public work

Job creation programmes proved to be the most widely applied measure to enhance the employment of low-skilled Roma in the settlements in Hungary⁷, Slovakia⁸, Bulgaria⁹ and in Spain¹⁰. In the Romanian settlement under consideration, job creation programmes existed until 2009, but even then they were of a small scale.

The FG discussion with unemployed Roma revealed that among all active labour market programmes, low-skilled Roma participated most frequently in job creation programmes in Hungary and Slovakia. This programme type is not predominant but still significant in Bulgaria and Spain.

An important distinction has to be made with concern to job creation. One type are public work schemes that involve a regular employment contract with a fixed wage and allowances. Entitlement to welfare allowances may be tied to participation in public work programmes, as is the case in Hungary, Spain, Bulgaria, and the anti-flood measures in Slovakia. The second type of job creation involves roles in which public work is undertaken without an employment contract, either voluntarily, or more typically, with some incentive built into the welfare system. This is the case in Slovakia.

Participation in public work programmes is tied to the receipt of welfare allowances, in a very different way. In Spain those unemployed people who participate in the Employment Plan Scheme may be offered some kind of public work for a fixed period of six months for 'temporary work in the public or social interest'. The employment office covers the costs of employment and the contract cannot be renewed even if all parties wish to do so. In Hungary, by contrast, there is a negative incentive involved: those unemployed people who did not work for at least 30 days annually - either because they refused participation in public work programmes or they were not offered the opportunity - lose entitlement to any welfare allowance. Employees on public work programmes in Hungary also receive a lower wage: their monthly salary equals 70% of the minimum wage.

The Slovakia Activation Work (AW) programme embodies a workfare system even though it incorporates a positive incentive: unemployed people undertaking AW receive a top-up benefit in addition to their regular social welfare benefit. However, recipients of AW are not registered as employed and do not receive any wage and related benefits.

⁷ Public Employment Schemes

⁸ Activation Work

⁹ 'From social benefit to employment'

¹⁰ Employment Plan

Job creation might include various subtypes within a single country, providing greatly diverging conditions and incentives both for the employers and the unemployed. In Hungary, two types of public work schemes exist: municipal and country wide (or large scale) schemes. There are significant differences between them: municipal public work programmes offers typically short-term (1-3 months) and part-time (0.5-0.75 FTE) employment, usually incorporating mundane activities without much added value (mainly street cleaning and maintenance, upkeep of green areas and lawnmowing). The country-wide programmes address work of benefit to the general public, such as flood-prevention, road building and offers longer term (6-12 months) and full-time employment. This dichotomy produces an internal hierarchy within public work schemes with the municipal one being unequivocally less advantageous and favourable to employees. All interviewees expressed their overt preference towards participating in large-scale schemes because they provide higher and more calculable income, meaningful work, less stigmatisation and a slight opportunity of labour market inclusion. Moreover, in Hungary, the municipal public work scheme is also less favourable for the employing agency. According to a recent regulation, organisations which implement municipal programmes (municipalities or their companies) need to provide 30% own contribution to the cost of labour, while the HR costs of the large scale programmes are fully covered by the state. According to the mayor of the village, this new system causes serious obstacles for small and poor municipalities in implementing public work programmes, as this is often the sole chance for their inhabitants to enter the labour market.

In Slovakia, the vast majority of Activation Work is operated under the 'small municipal works' scheme. These are large-scale programmes, implemented by municipalities, and it is the mayor who defines the type of activity to be undertaken by workers participating in this scheme. Similarly to Hungary, large scale public work programmes also exist in Slovakia within the framework of anti-flood measures. These are organised by municipalities and unlike activation work they provide a 6 month full-time employment contract with several benefits (a meal voucher, social security contributions etc.).

Demand for large-scale public work programmes by the unemployed is huge - especially from the low-skilled unemployed in small rural settlements. People are forced to compete in order to secure a place on such programmes due to the lack of other local possibilities. In Bulgaria and Hungary, the unemployed gave an account of biased selection: they stated that those who have personal contacts in the employment office have a greater chance of accessing subsidised employment. Research in three CEE countries (Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovakia) found that despite its attractiveness, public work typically traps unemployed people: instead of supporting the unemployed in their (re)entry to the primary labour market, it traps the long-term unemployed in a vicious circle of public work and social welfare provision (Planas-Benus 2006, Köllő-Scharle 2011, Kluve 2010, Hudomiet-Kézdi 2011, Csoba et.al. 2010). The circulation between public work and social benefit has become a prevalent - most of the times the only available - subsistence strategy for the low-skilled, long-term unemployed, especially in rural villages.

In Slovakia and Hungary, the fieldwork research found that job creation schemes distort the local labour market equilibrium. Many of the implementers fill their regular positions with unemployed people participating in public work schemes or activation workers (in Slovakia and Hungaria this usually means municipal services, but also professional positions such as HR coordinator and technical expert!). During our fieldwork in Hungary we found evidence for public service companies firing the regular workforce and filling up their positions with those employed in the framework of public work programmes. However, in Slovakia the pattern appeared to be that retired public sector workers were not replaced by a new

appointee, but their work was distributed among the activation workers. This often depended on the available skill set of activation works participants. As a consequence of the present, inadequate regulation, the programme has a replacement effect in several countries: institutions may replace their regular workforce with unemployed participating in public work programmes, even though the latter might be less efficient, it generates no, or only minor HR costs to the employer. Evidently, this has become a business strategy for some of the companies. In fact, through its replacement effect, job creation may have the contrary effect than was originally intended: instead of reintegrating the long-term unemployed into the labour market, it excludes the employed from the primary labour market, when organisations replace regular positions with those employed in public work schemes.

In Spain, job creation is a part of a complex intervention and it is also more firmly regulated. Those unemployed people who undertake to participate in the employment plan scheme are offered various services aside from public work such as a variety of trainings, and their job search activities were also supported by tailored services. These services ensured that unemployed people actively look for a solution in the primary labour market. The fact that participation in public work programmes may be offered only once and only for a restricted period (6 months at most) ensures that it does not become both a subsistence strategy for the unemployed and a business strategy for public employers. Still, within the framework of employment plan, the frequently unemployed are offered seasonal work for which the municipality has no other resources. Thus, it may impact the local labour market equilibrium, to a limited extent.

3.6 Wage subsidy and support

Wage motivates companies to employ individuals belonging to vulnerable groups by reducing their wage costs. Employers try to behave in an economically rational way and reduce risk. Due to the lack of individualised information about each job seeker, they rely on stereotypes attributed to whichever group the applicant is assumed to belong to. They do not need to be necessarily racist when they avoid employing individuals belonging to one or another vulnerable group: they pragmatically try to avoid higher risks attributed to the group. The key issue here is trust, or the lack of it. Wage and internship subsidies could bridge the gap in trust by offering free or cheap on- site trials for individuals belonging to such groups and give a chance for employers to abandon stereotypes attributed to the group without taking a risk.

Our research confirmed that a lack of trust and widespread stereotypes constitute a major obstacle to Roma employment in all of the countries studied. Interviews with employers revealed that they are reluctant to employ Roma either because of negative experiences but, more frequently, because of the stereotype of Roma having a poor work ethic (arriving late, leaving early, coming to work drunk, stealing etc.). Even though many employers acknowledge that they have come across diligent, well-performing Roma during their career, stereotypes still override such positive experiences. Labour market support could break the vicious circle of lack of trust – rejection during recruitment – lack of job-experience – lack of trust and free employers from the costs that burden companies. This kind of support could also provide the opportunity for employers to gain a genuine, personal experience of the employee for a certain period of time.

Wage support schemes range from full coverage of wage-related expenses to an exemption from social insurance contributions. Most support is provided with the condition that the employer continues to employ the same individual for a certain period of time (6 to 24 months) after the support has expired. It is a frequently used ALMP measure but our Roma

interviewees rarely knew about this type of support. Although it could serve as an important bridging measure, it apparently does not reach out to Roma in as significant numbers as does public work programmes, for example.

Wage support is provided in a variety of forms to those companies that employ unemployed individuals belonging to vulnerable groups. In the Romanian and Bulgarian contexts, wage support was offered to employers that hired groups vulnerable because of their age: either young graduates or unemployed people who were over 45 or 50. In Romania, support included exemption from paying social insurance contributions and lasted for a year, with the condition that employment continued for further two years beyond the time span of the subsidy. Employers in Romania expressed their discontent about the available wage support measures: they agreed that it was not worth using these subsidies. They argued that this measure put great administrative and bureaucratic burden on the company, while the risk of employing someone without personal references and signing a long-term employment contract was not worth the subsidy.

In the Bulgarian case studies, two different schemes were operated but both of them were complex in the sense that they included a training element as well as supporting the unemployed into work. One programme targeted young graduates, while the other aimed at reaching out to the low-educated unemployed and unemployed people from ethnic minority groups. Both schemes covered the officially set minimum wage and all contributions for 6-12 months. The latter scheme proved to be an important ALMP tool in both of the settlements, especially for low-educated unemployed Roma.

In the Slovakian cases, wage subsidies were offered to unemployed individuals who decided to start up their own business (self-employment). Contributions to this ALMP type were significant in the total ALMP budget, but the profile of recipients suggested that beneficiaries were typically better educated (World Bank, 2012) and not many Roma benefitted from it. Although some of the Roma interviewees in the fieldwork were aware of this possibility, they did not apply for it as they were afraid of being unable to pay social security contributions for two years. In the Spanish context, wage support was not mentioned by the interviewees, instead, most of the ALMP measures targeting vulnerable groups were designed in a complex way, integrating elements of training, job-orientation services, internships and job creation. The most frequently targeted groups were the young and unemployed and recent graduates.

Wage support was most widely utilised by employers in the Hungarian cases. ALMP schemes offered a wide range of wage subsidies, some with minor conditions: employment of certain vulnerable groups, such as youth, unemployed people over the age of 50, and the less educated were provided with full exemption from social security contributions for 12 months without any further conditions. Moreover, employers could apply for full or partial coverage of the wages of the long-term low-skilled unemployed, mothers with young children, unemployed people prior to retirement, on the condition that the employment continues for 12 more months beyond the time span of the subsidy. The fieldwork research identified two types of strategies on the side of the employer: multinational companies rarely took advantage of the wage subsidy, either because their circle of potential employees did not fall into any category of vulnerability, or because the market required extremely high flexibility, and they could not guarantee the employment of anyone for a long period of time. They were also reluctant to participate in ALMP because of the bureaucratic burden. The other employer strategy was high-level accommodation to ALMP. Some smaller companies build up their HR strategy in order to use the various subsidy schemes to the best of their advantage. These companies minimised their wage costs and cared little about the quality of

the workforce. In such companies workforce fluctuation was extremely high, working conditions were poor and wages were miserable. Still, low-skilled people had a chance to find a job almost exclusively in the primary labour market with such companies.

In sum, experiences from the fieldwork research suggest that wage support is viewed very differently across the various countries under scrutiny. In some of contexts it did not exist in its pure form, but only as a part of more complex interventions (in Spain and Bulgaria). In others, it was minimal, and conditions were not really favourable, so companies did not employ vulnerable groups based on such subsidies (in Romania and Slovakia). The Hungarian example indicates that wage subsidy may be a tool for employing less-educated people, including those from the Roma community if it is easily accessible to the company or industry in question. Some companies chose to make very extensive use of the subsidy system, but they often provided very poor working conditions and were ultimately less competitive as businesses.

3.7 Anti-discrimination programmes, affirmative action

Roma respondents gave accounts of widespread discrimination when seeking job opportunities in all CEE countries (and to a lesser extent in Spain). The phenomenon of racial /ethnic discrimination on the labour market was also pointed out by a number of former cross-country comparative and country-specific researchers (EU MIDIS 2008, ERRC 2007, Neményi et.al. 2011). Unequal access to jobs due to the presumed ethnic belonging of the applicant is a fact that many of the governments and labour market officials tend to neglect, but one which poses a very serious obstacle for Roma.

Our interviews and focus group discussions in all of the CEE countries reinforced the existence and significance of discrimination against Roma by employers. Roma interviewees gave accounts of relatively modest levels of ethnic discrimination in Hungary. Most of them attributed low employment rates to their educational disadvantage, although a large proportion of Roma had gained work experience at a multinational company, or within public work schemes. However, we have to emphasise that the settlement under scrutiny is not typical for the country, in this respect: peaceful and mutually respecting interethnic realtions have a long tradtion, and several multinational companies operated in the town that do not discriminate against the Roma community. In the Slovakian context, Roma gave accounts of widespread ethnic discrimination. According to the interviews, some employers would tell applicants openly, face to face, that they did not hire Roma. Although discriminatory decisions are taken frequently, no Roma encountered during the fieldwork ever tried to formally deal with instances of discrimination. Roma interviewees mentioned that applicants for a position were openly asked about their ethnicity and told that Roma would not be accepted. In all three municipalities, elements of institutional discrimination were explicit even within the framework of activation work: non-Roma were typically selected into 'cleaner' or more interesting activities (work in schools) and Roma into more mundane activities (snow showelling, street cleaning). Labour office staff, however, did not admit that racial discrimination exists.

Discrimination by employers proved to be most widespread and least concealed in the Romanian and Bulgarian cases. During the Romanian fieldwork, for example, a factory was found that put up a sign at its gates: "We do not hire Roma ethnics". Such judgements made at the gates, or identification of ethnic belonging by family names were the usual ways of excluding Roma from entry to job interviews. Discrimination was so widespread that even some of the Gypsies regarded it as "normal", "just the way it is". In Bulgaria, focus group discussions also revealed that it was taken for granted that Roma employees were paid less

and could be employed informally. There was also significantly less consciousness about discrimination among stakeholders in both countries: labour market stakeholders, such as the employment centre's staff, regarded discrimination as normal and explained its existence in terms of the logical behaviour of the employers who take stereotypes about Gypsies literally (i.e. they tend to steal, they tend to have poor working ethics, cause problems for the employer and many have health problems etc.).

The widespread presence of ethno-racial discrimination would necessitate anti-discrimination or even affirmative action programmes. In reality, there were hardly any implemented in the cases we analysed. In the Romanian and Slovakian cases there were no mainstream labour market programmes addressing the consequences of ethno-racial discrimination in the settlements under scrutiny. The Bulgarian research identified one ALM Programme called 'Support for Employment' that explicitly targeted unemployed Roma. In the Hungarian field, training programmes could be regarded as taking affirmative action as they set a baseline of 20% Roma participation (see chapter on training). The only programme that began as a truly anti-discrimination programme (but developed beyond this goal) was ACCEDER in Spain. Its original name was 'Fight Against Discrimination the project and was developed under the framework of the Multi-Regional Operational Programme co-financed by the European Social Fund. We will describe ACCEDER in more detail as a Roma programme, as it has developed beyond its initial aim to become an anti-discrimination programme and is now a truly complex community development programme, including elements of education, labour market integration and community building.

In two of the CEE countries, Slovakia and Hungary, a major source of labour market integration of disadvantaged Roma are the regionally targeted complex development programmes. These are not exclusively labour market measures but complex regional development programmes targeting economically and socially disadvantaged micro-regions with an important emphasis on the Roma population. The Slovakian development programme is more explicitly targeted to Roma, as it is indicated by its name, 'Marginalised Roma Communities'. The Hungarian development programme for the most disadvantaged micro-regions does not explicitly name Roma, but the socio-economic indicators serving as criteria for selection of beneficiary micro-regions are defined in such a way that the vast majority of the affected settlements have a significant Roma population. The 33 disadvantaged micro-regions are home to over 30% of Hungarian Roma. The Slovakian 'Local Comprehensive Approach Strategies' programme was approved in 152 localities across the country (Kurekova and Konteskova 2013). The fieldwork research in Slovakia selected settlements benefitting from the Strategy. Although the programme was planned at the micro-region level, the municipalities had to apply individually, thus the application procedure created unhelpful competition among municipalities within the same disadvantaged area. Interviews with stakeholders revealed that funds allocated to marginalised Roma communities were often viewed rather opportunistically as a tool to gain access to additional resources: the strategies' content was designed to maximise benefits to the settlement without a clear connection to what appeared to be the most urgent needs of Roma community. Although in Hungary the researched settlement did not benefit from funds allocated to the most disadvantaged micro-regions,¹¹ former research on the programme (OSI, 2011; Teller, 2012) revealed a very similar situation: funds did not reach the

¹¹ This decision was mainly due to the fact that two large scale in-depth researcher projects were recently conducted about the '33 most disadvantaged micro-regions' program, covering most of the micro regions in question. We wanted to avoid accumulation of similar research in the same settlements.

most disadvantaged Roma communities to a significant degree in either countries because local middle classes and social groups higher in the local economic and political hierarchy benefitted most, while only a small share of the support reached the most marginalised population, the Roma community among them. The inclusion of Roma NGOs was also viewed as merely tokenistic and Roma interests were disregarded in most of the cases. In none of the researched Slovakian settlements did the programme have an influence on Roma employment, either because it had no or a minor employment element, or because the implementation of the programme itself was delayed beyond the time when finances were available. We can conclude that the initial idea of designing complex development programmes with a focus on the regions where marginalised Roma live could be suitable tool to address disadvantaged Roma but the actual implementation highlights significant deficiencies.

3.8 Roma labour market integration programmes

Ethnically targeted labour market programmes were rare in the case studies. The only large scale Roma programme with stable and calculable financing was ACCEDER in Spain. There were minor Roma employment programmes with project-based financing in some CEE countries, but neither their budget nor their stability can be compared with that of ACCEDER. In Romania, Roma job fairs can be regarded as ethnically-targeted programmes. In the course of a job fair, the employment office relocates to Roma-dense, marginalised, rural neighbourhoods or settlements and offers services (job orientations, job searches, job matches) onsite. However, ethnically targeted job-fairs were suspended recently. Despite the fact the labour office's representative regarded this measure to be the most important Roma programme on offer, the majority of Roma interviewees did not even know that it existed.

In Hungary, Roma and/or pro-Roma NGOs ran labour market programmes that specifically target unemployed Roma. In the field research, a programme employing Roma labour market mediators was regarded as a Roma programme. Run by a Roma NGO, addressing the long-term unemployed Roma, its aim was to reach those who were excluded not only from the labour market but also from LM services. Still, as this example demonstrates, the success of such programmes depends primarily on the dedication of the NGO, the willingness of the participants and the knowledge of the local community. A major problem was the project-based nature of such programmes: even those that functioned well and produced results had to stop operating after the funding period ended. From this perspective, the experience of ACCEDER, a partly state-funded programme, is especially important.

When analysing ACCEDER's design and description, we see a truly complex, well- designed program that incorporates elements of anti-discrimination actions, job-orientation, LM services, training, internships and placements. When taking a closer look at its implementation, however, several problems surface that question the transformative work of the programme itself. Here, we will only highlight the most important lessons learnt during the Spanish fieldwork, while a detailed description of fieldwork experiences about ACCEDER is presented in the Spanish country report:

- Roma participation is not recorded so one can rely only on stakeholders' estimations. The data are contradictory and confusing even with regard to the most essential information, such as the number of beneficiaries. Published data suggest high participation and placement rates, but a closer look reveals that the large majority of the job contracts are very short term: contracts for less than a month and even one-day substitution contracts are incorporated into the gross placement statistics.

- The research revealed that the programme tends to cream off the most suitable applicants and leaves the most needy unaffected. FSG, like many NGOs, is forced to produce high success rates. As a result, they are driven to select participants who offer the greatest chance to leave successfully. This process, however, leads to the exclusion of those who are in most need of support.
- With respect to its training component, the research found that there are no statistics on drop-out and absenteeism, thus data reflect only the number of participants who started the course. According to the interviews, we can assume that there is a large drop-out rate from training programmes.
- ACCEDER organises placements for its participants. It signed a significant number of contracts with large employers but interviews with employers participating in ACCEDER revealed that many of them use the programme to cover occasional labour shortages and to exploit free (or very cheap) labour instead of using the programme for its original intention: to provide a scheme through which employers can pre-select personnel for eventual recruitment into their company. Naturally, it is possible that ACCEDER beneficiaries are offered a placement after completing the programme, but there is no data available suggesting what proportion of participants actually go on to do so. There are also no ethnically disaggregated statistics for such cases, compared with the overall Roma vs. non-Roma participation rate in the programme.

4. Conclusion

Our fieldwork research shows that despite widespread discrimination and significant disadvantages experienced by Roma trying to enter the labour market, ethnicity is not a factor taken into account during policy or programme design. With the exception of Spain, Roma are not considered to be a specific target group for labour market measures by centrally designed and managed ALMP (although in Hungary and Bulgaria the fieldwork identified programmes in which Roma were named as a vulnerable group). Many of labour market programmes identify aspects of vulnerability according to which most of Roma qualify in order to become beneficiaries (unemployed youth; those with health problems; head of households with three or more children; young mothers; those who live in economically disadvantaged areas). However, our fieldwork research revealed that a large share of Roma are either left unaffected by this support (Romania, Bulgaria) or participate in the least beneficial programme type.

The greatest obstacle to assessing labour market programmes and their potential impact on employment opportunities for the Roma population was the lack of available data. In most cases, no data existed with regard to essential factors required in order to make an evaluation at settlement level, such as number of beneficiaries in the settlement; the dedicated budget; the number of people leaving programmes before completion; and the proportion of those who secured a position following the programme. Even if such data existed, they were not available for academic or public use and/or they are controversial, as in the case of ACCEDER. A full assessment of the impact of programmes on Roma is impossible to reach given the lack of ethnic data for employment statistics.

In the previous phase of the research (Messing, 2013) we identified the range of labour market policies that aim to enhance employment rates of the unemployed, with a focus on various vulnerable groups. Taking into account Roma employment, we categorised ALMP in terms of their targeting strategies: (1) untargeted, mainstreaming policies; (2) programmes

targeting certain vulnerable groups; (3) ethnically targeted programmes; and (4) complex programmes targeting disadvantaged regions.

In this report we attempted to identify how the various centrally designed ALMP function locally and how they reach the Roma population. We found that causes of high unemployment rates for Roma are largely left unaffected by ALMP. Low employment rates in the Roma population stem from the following sources: low levels of education; employers' discriminatory attitudes and lack of trust towards Roma; Roma participation in the informal labour market; lack of jobs locally and geographical distance from jobs; and lack of access to information and LM services. Most of these problems are not tackled effectively by the programmes organised in the settlements studied. In what follows, we note the main causes for high unemployment of Roma and assess how current policies do or do not address the issues at stake:

- Low levels of education cannot be handled by labour market programmes alone. The decreasing educational disadvantage faced by the Roma population constitutes a major challenge for public education systems. However, trainings organised within the framework of labour market programmes may significantly increase the employability of people within the Roma community who obtained qualifications for which there is no demand locally. The fieldwork research found that some Roma may gain access to training programmes, but often – especially in East European countries – these provide skills that have no market value and thus do not improve labour market opportunities of the beneficiaries. The most extreme of these are trainings of so-called traditional Roma crafts, such as flower design or basket making etc. Efficient training design would necessitate regular piloting of local employers' needs, but we found that such practices only existed in Hungary. In several countries, the fieldwork pointed out that access to trainings for rural Roma was restricted due to the costs of transportation, the length and frequency of the training sessions. A further important conclusion of the fieldwork research with regard to training was that success rates - the proportion of those participants who leave with a qualification - are rarely measured.
- Employers' lack of trust towards Roma workers could be challenged, to some extent, by any programme type that covers employment costs for a certain period of time and thus, reduces employers' perceived risks. Wage subsidies, internship programmes or try-out subsidies may all serve such ends. According to our fieldwork research, Roma are rarely beneficiaries of such programmes, as they typically support better situated and less vulnerable groups. In some countries wage subsidies are provided to very specific enterprises only (i.e. start-up business) and in others, conditions attached to wage subsidy make them too risky for the employers (further employment obligations for 1-2 years). Only in Hungary were wage subsidies relatively generous, with some of them even being condition free. Here, fieldwork research also found that Roma benefitted from this measure; several interviewees gained employment in the private sector due to this support. However, most participants lost their jobs as soon as the period of the subsidy ended, so it did not contribute profoundly to long-term employment in most cases.
- The consequences of discriminatory attitudes of employers could be reduced by anti-discrimination policies and affirmative action. Such measures were rare or even non-existent in our field work cases. In the majority of the settlements, discrimination was denied by labour market officials while Roma respondents gave accounts of everyday and widespread discrimination. The only country that ran a comprehensive anti-discrimination programme was Spain, despite the fact that Roma experienced less

discrimination here. One minor mainstream labour market programme addressing Roma was identified both in Hungary and in Bulgaria – these may be understood as attempts towards affirmative action. Large-scale development programmes addressing micro-regions with large numbers of marginalised Roma was implemented in Slovakia ('Local Comprehensive Approach Strategies' also known as 'Marginalised Roma Communities Program') and in Hungary ('33 Most Disadvantaged Micro-regions' Program). Despite its complex and thorough design, the fieldwork research demonstrated that the actual implementation included damaging deficiencies: due to the lack of meaningful inclusion of Roma in the design on the local level, the programme tended to disregard the actual needs of the marginalised Roma communities; funds were typically allocated according to the needs of the local leaders and the middle-class; the high level of bureaucracy hampered the actual implementation; and the employment element was rarely regarded as principal, rather educational, infrastructural issues were given priority.

- Research in all of the CEE countries found that Roma participate in informal employment to a significant extent. This phenomenon was most decisive in Bulgaria and Romania, but also significant in Slovakia and Hungary. None of the labour market programmes addressed this issue.
- The lack of jobs and accessible positions for low-skilled Roma in the local arena may call for two types of programmes: (1) more support to enable commuting; (2) job creation. We found no sign of policies or measures that would support the workforce to commute to areas near to work positions. Job creation, however, is a widely used policy measure: with the exception of Romania, where job creation ended two years earlier; some kind of job creation existed in all areas under analysis. In Hungary and Slovakia it was the most important ALMP and the most widely applied measure for Roma. In Spain and Bulgaria the presence of job creation schemes was not overwhelming but still significant. The fieldwork identified a number of important problems with job creation schemes which limited efficiency and produced counter-effective outcomes, such as trapping Roma in the vicious circle of welfare subsidies and public work; distorting the local labour market equilibrium; generating dual and hierarchical labour markets locally; excluding the labour force from the primary labour market by replacing the regular workforce with those employed by public work programmes; developing an internal hierarchy; and creating local structures of exposure and powerlessness in the unemployed Roma community.
- Contesting the lack of access to labour market information and services should be a fundamental task of the employment offices. The fieldwork research demonstrated that there are huge deficiencies in this respect in CEE countries. Most of the Roma respondents regarded EO as an institution where formal registration of unemployment status is undertaken. In the Bulgarian and Romanian fields, Roma respondents gave accounts of extensive maltreatment and a total lack of service provision. In the Slovakian, Hungarian and Spanish fields' employment offices were seen as an organisation for handling registration and organising training. The improvement of service provision by employment offices would be a crucial prerequisite to effectively support the labour market inclusion of vulnerable groups.

In addition to the problems of policy design and failure of implementation identified by the case study research there were several interesting and innovative practices pinpointed that might be easily applied in other countries and are worthy of consideration by policy makers:

- With concern to increasing Roma participation as well as gaining information about Roma participation for LM, the practice of recruitment for training programmes in Hungary seems to be a good tool. As a condition to spending EU Funds on LM training programmes, the EU recommended that the self-declared ethnicity of recipients is registered, and that a target of 20% is set for Roma participation. This recommendation made LOs look more actively for potential Roma participants.
- In terms of collecting essential information necessary for programme evaluation, a good practice comes from the EU, which gave momentum to an important progress: programmes utilising EU funds are compelled to produce regular monitoring and reporting of how these funds were used. On the other hand, however, such monitoring does not go beyond mere financial reporting and lacks an evaluation of a programme's efficiency and impact.
- The research found that in most of the countries the threefold mission – registering unemployed, supporting jobmatch and providing services – is unbalanced. In most cases studied, the research employment offices had a strong emphasis on their function as an authority registering the unemployed and settling entitlements to benefit, but they were less conscious about their service duties for various reasons such as lack of time and human resources within the LO, and prejudiced attitudes. The research identified at least two practices that bridge this gap: in Slovakia, field social workers took on the task of the LO to provide tailored assistance to unemployed Roma in writing a CV, filling out applications to vacancies and communicating with potential employers. In Hungary, the employment of a Roma coordinator bridged the gap between Roma clients and the employment office's staff.
- The employment of Roma mediators could be regarded as good practice under certain conditions. Our experiences of the three countries, however, demonstrate that the usefulness and success of such programmes may be questionable and are determined by the actual recruitment of the mediator and factors leading to their selection. The employment of Roma in public offices may indeed enhance the efficiency of the office within marginalised Roma communities, if the selection of the mediator is based on merit and his/her activity is carefully reviewed, as it was the case in Hungary. It may have no positive effect, however, if the selection process follows political aims, as in the case of Bulgaria, or if the Roma coordinator is free to use his/her position to strengthen internal hierarchies within the Roma community (as was the case in one Spanish context).
- The research identified that geographical distance and difficulties of access to employment offices is a widespread problem in many countries for Roma unemployed living in marginalised rural settlements. Two innovative practices were identified by the research that aimed to overcome this problem: the Job Fair programme in Romania, in the course of which the employment office relocate their services to rural areas for one or several days and make their services available to those, who otherwise would not become their clients. The other practice was found in Hungary, where an employment office initiated 'mobile office' services, in the course of which an officer was provided with a car, a laptop and internet connection to the LO web-system and provided dedicated office hours regularly in each settlement belonging to the service area of the office.
- Discrimination in the course of selection to ALMP was a frequent experience of Roma interviewees. In order to prevent discrimination, one of the offices in Hungary

delegated a Roma person into the board evaluating applications and test results of unemployed applying to training and job-support programmes.

To sum up our investigation, despite some positive examples and a few good programmes, ALMP, generally, were not able to systematically improve the labour market situation for Roma and decrease their vulnerability.

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PART II. Country reports

BULGARIA by Alexey Pamporov

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List of abbreviations

ALMP	Active labour market policy
CEO	Chief executive officer
EU	European union
HRDOP	Human resources development operative programme
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
LAU1	Local administrative unit level 1 (ex NUTS 4)
LOD	Labour office directorate
RESD	Regional employment service directorate

CURRENCY AND EQUIVALENT UNITS

USD1 = BGN 1.50

EUR1 = BGN 1.96

(Bulgarian National Bank quotation on May 1, 2013)

ETHICAL DISCLAIMER:

The current report discusses the fieldwork data related to NEUJOBS work package 19, Task 3: case study of Labour market policies implementation concerning labour market integration of vulnerable groups at local level. Due to the specific topic of the field, some measures are taken in order to protect anonymity of data and depersonalization of the respondents. The fieldwork was performed in a city – municipal centre, called further down Foros¹² and in a village in the same municipality labelled as Gav¹³.

¹² It is a Romani word for “town” commonly used by Romani people in Bulgaria

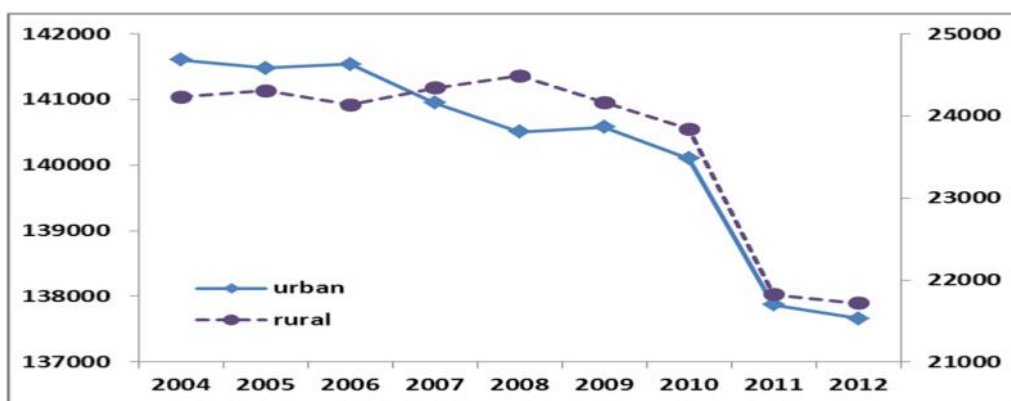
¹³ It is a Romani word for “village” commonly used by Romani people in Bulgaria

1. Introduction, description of the field

1.1 Population trends

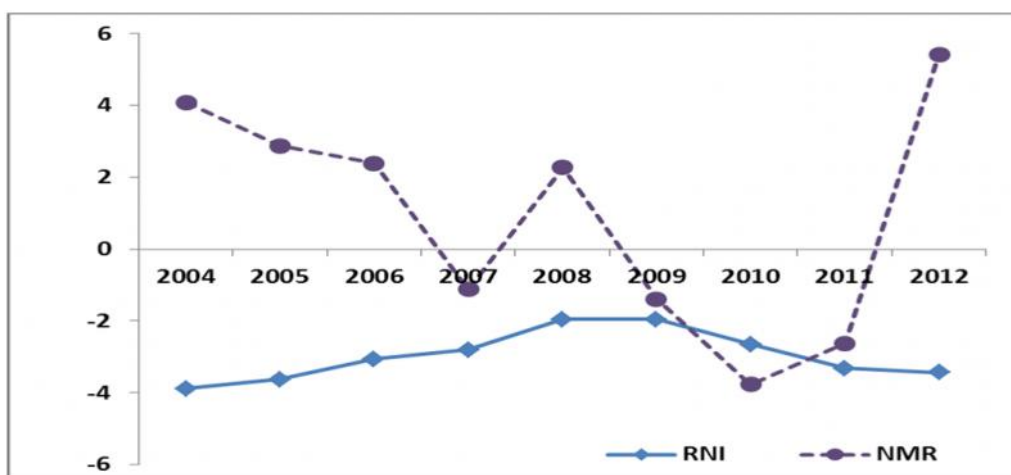
In comparison with the administrative units at that level in Bulgaria, the Foros municipality is rather large as a population size. However it is about ten times smaller than the capital municipality of Sofia and eventually fits in definitions about medium size LAU1 within the EU. By 2012 the urban population of municipality was 86.4% and the rural was 13.6%. For comparison, the average proportion of urban population in Bulgaria for the same year was about 72.8%. However, after 2010 an extreme decrease of both the urban and the rural population was observed (fig. 1). The reason for this sharp drop was due to both a long term negative rate of natural increase and an extreme decrease of the municipality's net migration rate in the period 2009-2011 (fig. 2).

Fig 1. Average annual urban (left scale) and rural (right scale) population in Foros municipality in 2004-2012



Source: National Statistical Institute

Fig 2. Rate of natural increase (RNI) and net migration rate (NMR) of Foros municipality in 2004-2012



Source: Author's calculations based on National Statistical Institute data

1.2 Labour market

According to the official statistics provided by the Foros Labour office directorate, about January 2013 there were around 16000¹⁴ unemployed in Foros province of which about 5600 registered unemployed in Foros municipality. The unemployment rate of the province was around 11% and of 7% in municipality. For comparison, the national unemployment rate about the last quarter of 2012 was around 12%. About 55.5% of all unemployed were females but 38% unemployed were females with completed tertiary education, which is a sign of explicit gender inequality in that respect. The data from the last census (2011) showed that Foros municipality performs better than country average – the employment rate is significantly higher and the unemployment rate is significantly lower (tabl. 1). The place of residence seems to be more important factor about the employment and unemployment than gender. For example, there is no statistically significant difference between male and female urban unemployment but the difference between urban and rural male unemployment rates is significant. The census data showed that in Foros municipality there was higher disproportion in rural activity rate by gender i.e. the rural Foros male population is more active in comparison with the rest male population in Bulgaria, but the rural Foros female population is less active.

Table 1. Employment rate, unemployment rate, and activity rate in Bulgaria and in Foros municipality in February 2011 by gender and place of residence, in %

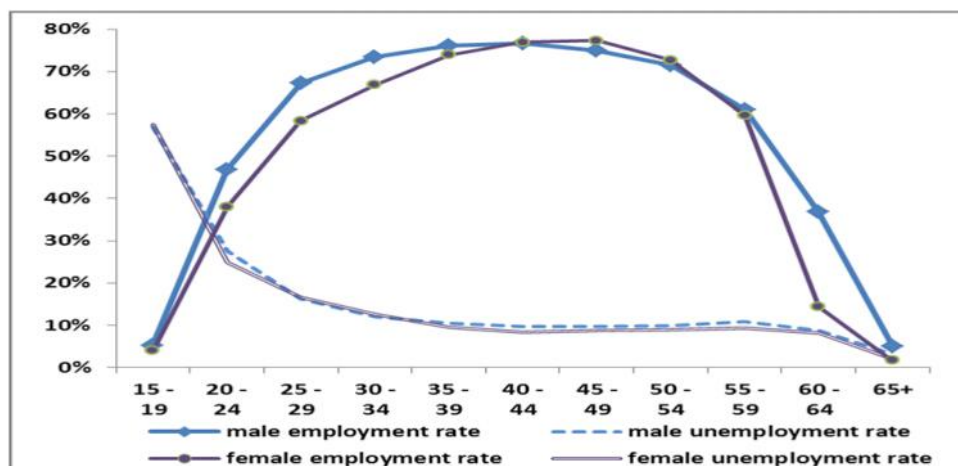
	Total	Urban		Rural	
		male	female	male	female
Bulgaria					
employment rate	55.5	61.3	58.6	44.4	39.1
unemployment rate	15.0	14.2	11.8	24.0	21.2
activity rate	65.3	71.5	66.5	58.3	49.6
Foros municipality					
employment rate	63.0	67.8	63.0	48.2	36.6
unemployment rate	9.9	9.5	8.8	19.8	17.7
activity rate	69.9	74.9	69.1	60.1	44.5

Source: Author's calculations based on Census 2011 data

On the other hand, it is important to stress the fact that in Foros municipality there is no major difference in employment and unemployment patterns by gender. In fact, the age specific unemployment rates almost overlap (fig.3). There is a small difference in the age groups 20-34 and in the age group 60-64, where the female employment rates are lower. In the first case it is a due to reproduction reasons and maternity pattern in Bulgaria. In the second case, it is a due to the lower female retirement age in Bulgaria.

¹⁴ Here and further down the population numbers and proportions are rounded in order to protect anonymity of the settlements

Fig.3. Average employment and unemployment rates in Foros municipality by age group and gender about 2011



Source: Authors' own calculations based on National census data, 2011

By the end of January 2013, the Foros LOD observed an increase of new registered unemployed by 52% in comparison with Dec 2012. According to ISIC, about 31.4% of the new unemployed came from administrative and support service activities; about 19.7% came from manufacturing; and about 14.2% came from wholesale and retail trade. About 38.5% of the new unemployed used to work in the private sector and 61.5% came from the public sector. It must be emphasized that there is a direct correlation between the increase of unemployment and local ALMP. By the end of December ended up a term of subsidized employment programme. Most of the people included in this programme worked as layer-outs and this explains the extremely higher proportion of new registered unemployed coming from administrative and support service activities industry. At the same time, the census data showed that administrative and support service activities industry do not used to have such an important role about local employment as trade and manufacturing. In fact, the distribution of employed persons by industry showed up that industrial structure of employment in Foros municipality eventually repeated the national pattern with rather small and not statistically significant difference (tabl. 2). In comparison with proportions of employed by industry in Bulgaria, the employment in Foros municipality was just a bit higher in Wholesale and retail trade; Construction works; Electricity, gas and water supply; and Mining and quarrying. At the same time it was a bit lower then national level in Manufacturing; and in Agriculture, forestry and water works.

Table 2. Proportion of employed in Bulgaria and in Foros municipality by industry in February 2011, in %

Industry	Bulgaria	Foros municipality
Wholesale and retail trade, car repair	18.6	20.3
Manufacturing	19.7	18.6
Construction	6.9	8.9
Public administration and social insurance	7.7	7.2
Education	5.6	5.5
Health and social work	4.6	5.3
Transport, storage and communications	5.8	4.9
Electricity, gas and water supply	2.5	4.1
Hotels and restaurants	4.9	4.1
Mining and quarrying	0.9	3.5
Professional, scientific and technical activities	3.8	3.4
Agriculture, forestry and water works	5.2	3.1
Administrative and support service activities	3.7	3.0
Other communal, social and personal service activities	2.3	2.1
Financial intermediation	2.2	1.9
Real estate, renting activities	0.9	0.7

Source: Authors' own calculations based on National census data, 2011

By the end of January 2013, Foros LOD reported a bit more than 300 new job positions in Foros municipality, which was with 83% more in comparison with December 2012. Of those positions about 35.7% are in the private sector and about 64.3% in the public sector. About 38.3% of the new job positions were due to the new subsidized employment schemes (both by state budget and HRDOP). Concerning the specific population target groups, 59.2% of the new employed were females; 32.1% were youths up the age 29; 31.8% were persons with tertiary education. The long term unemployed who find a job were 15.6% of the new employed. Although it sounds very positive at first glance, one should keep in mind that, on one hand those categories overlap and some persons belong to more than one of them (for example woman, up to age 29, with university degree). On the other hand, the subsidized public employment schemes offers temporary employment contracts i.e. about 38.3% of the new employed by January 2013 are eventually going to join the new unemployed in July 2013 (unless some of them would find a new seasonal job during the summer).

1.3 Roma population

According to the population census in 2011, proportion of Roma in Foros municipality was 5.8%, and the proportion of Roma in Foros city was 4.3% of those who declared ethnic

identity¹⁵. The proportion of Roma in Gav village was 53%. Due to the existing doubts in census accuracy, for the sake of the current report an expert assessment was made based on personal estimations of all stakeholders included in the study plus informal information from the local police office and local geodesy expert. The question was posed about all segregated ("Gypsy") neighbourhoods in Foros city, and about Gav village. The generalized data from the expert assessments (see tabl. 3) show that the number of Roma in Foros city is eventually four to six times higher in comparison with the census. Thus the proportion of Roma in the total urban population is eventually two to three times higher. The expert assessments and census data about Gav is more coherent but the stakeholders suggest a bit higher population size and eventually proportion of Roma more than two thirds of village population.

Table 3. Expert assessment about the Roma population, living in the segregated neighbourhoods of Foros city and in Gav village (About April 2013)

Settlement	Total dwellings	(of which) Illegal dwellings	Total settlement population	total neighbourhood population	"Gypsies"	Roma	Turks
Foros, A	3400	1150	135000	21000	21000	14500	6500
Foros, B	1100	50	135000	6000	6000	4500	1500
Foros, C	1320	0	135000	3300	1200	1200	0
Foros, D	140	0	135000	250	100	90	10
Gav	570	60	750	590	590	590	0

Source: Rounded average author’s calculations based on informal estimations of Roma leaders, local authorities and local experts

Roma population in Bulgaria differs by the other population in the country because of its young age structure. It is due to extremely high adolescent fertility rates; to relatively higher fertility rates in the age group 20-29; and to extremely high mortality rates in the age groups above 40. In that respect Foros municipality is not an exception. During the last census in 2011, the cumulative proportion of Roma under age 20 was around 36.3%, while the cumulative proportion of total Foros population under age 20 was around 18%. At the same time Roma population at age 60 and over was 8.4%, while the proportion of this age group in the total population of Foros municipality measured up to 24.3% (fig. 4).

Because of the specific age structure Roma population seems less educated, i.e. due to the higher proportion of children at school age Roma are overrepresented in the lower educational levels. However, this does not abolish the fact that Roma population in Bulgaria and in Foros municipality in particular, suffers lower qualification and lack of education. For example in Foros municipality almost 10% of Roma never attended school (tabl. 4). It is not due to a lack of an institutional access as far as there are 2 schools serving Roma children within the segregated neighbourhood, and there is a local Roma NGO, which run desegregation programme and offer for free access and transportation to a regular municipal

¹⁵ The population census in 2011 differ from the previous censuses by an extremely high proportion of individuals, which refused to show their ethnic belonging – about 9.3% of the population refused to give an answer and yet another 0.7% declared “no identity”.

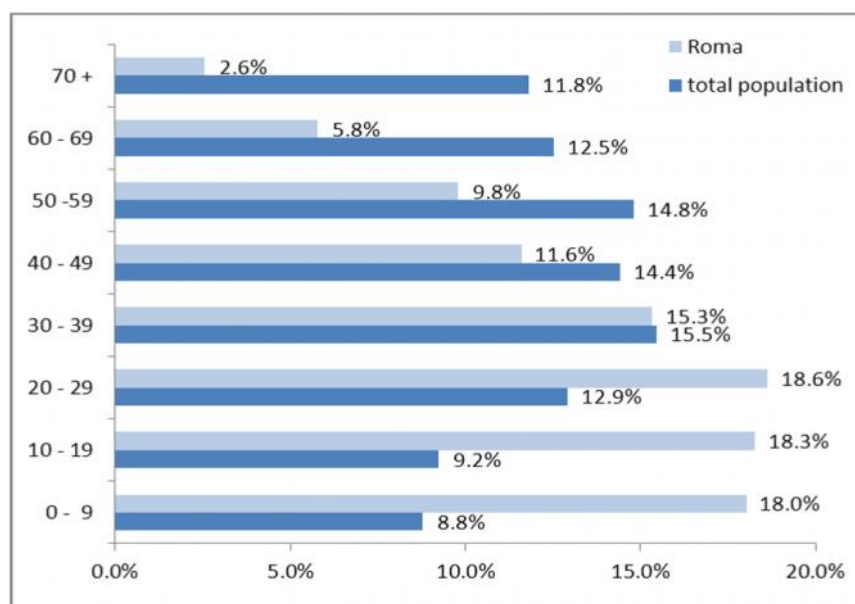
schools in the city. Children in Gav are attending school in a neighbouring village remote at 2.2 km, which they reach by a free municipal school bus.

Table 4. Roma population and total Foros population at age 7 and over by level of education (ISCED 2011)¹⁶ about 2011, in %

	Tertiary	Upper secondary	Lower Secondary	Primary	Incomplete primary	Never attended	Child
Total	22.7	46.9	18.7	5.9	4.6	1.0	0.2
Roma	0.3	7.0	36.8	27.9	17.6	9.6	0.8

Source: Authors' own calculations based on National census data, 2011

Fig.4. Roma population in Foros municipality and total Foros population by age groups about 2011



Source: Authors' own calculations based on National census data, 2011

The lower educational level and a lack of qualification put Roma population in an extremely vulnerable position. They have access mainly to “dirty” jobs, in general unwanted by other population: cleaning ladies in schools and hospitals, street-orderlies, garbage collectors, unskilled workers in manufacturing, construction works and agriculture (Pamporov 2010).

¹⁶ Primary = 4 years in education, Lower secondary = 8 years, Upper secondary = 12-13 years (except for some vocational schools were = 10-11 years)

2. Methodology

2.1 Field selection, methodology

The Foros municipality was chosen at first hand because the author have done there a case-study based fieldwork in 2007 focus on social integration of vulnerable groups and thus know personally the context and some of the key stakeholders. At second hand, the municipality fits the selection criteria discussed at the kick off meeting of the NEUJOBS project. Foros was not a major administrative centre but an important industrial town before 1989. It suffers the transition to market economy because of the closure of many industrial factories. The census of 2011 shows the proportion of Roma close to the national average. Moreover, most of Roma live in 4 segregated neighbourhoods within the city. At last but not at least, the Foros province, where Foros municipality is located, have unemployment rate a bit lower then country average. For the sake of the research, the biggest segregated urban neighbourhood was chosen.

2.2 Selection of interviewees: stakeholders

The list of stakeholders was composed preliminary, based on my contextual knowledge due to my earlier fieldwork research in this municipality. It comprised a list of 10 persons as follows: a regional minority integration officer, and a municipal minority integration officer; municipal labour officer, working with Roma; Village mayor, Segregated district administrator (municipal mayor representative); one rural and four urban community leaders (each of them CEO of a Roma NGO operating in the municipality). The first surprise was to find that positions of the municipal and regional integration officers do not exists since the coming in power of the last government (2009-2013). While the regional duties were taken by one of the deputy regional governors (which is a sign of increased significance of the topic), at the municipal level duties were transmitted to the “Public cleaning” officer (which is a pure sign of a negative ethnic stereotyping and has a significant impact on further ALMP implementation). Unfortunately, the current fieldwork coincided by the elections campaign and during a month I got only polite and not so polite refusals and excuses from all level municipal officers to talk about. During my last attempt by April 30th I got the most honest answer – just come back after the elections and we are going to find some time to talk to you. The same thing I faced when I tried to contact the community Roma leaders. I made an interview only with the CEO of the Roma NGO, which assisted me in my fieldwork (by using their conference room for focus group discussions and by using their contacts for appointing interviews and recruiting respondents). One leader was under taxation investigation and its NGO was suspended. The two other leaders agreed to have a “working dinner” but no official interview or voice recording. In fact I got refusals by all local officials and the successful interviews were done in the presence of the Roma community leader, which assisted my work. The only exception was the CEO of LOD who invited me for face-to-face talk (but appointment was done also by an expert of the same Roma NGO). The final stakeholders’ sample has the following composition:

Label	Type	Respondent	Data
S1	Roma NGO	CEO	Interview
S2	Roma NGO	Community leaders	Working dinner
S3	Labour office directorate	CEO	Interview
S4	Community centre	Coordinator	Interview
S5	Regional administration	Deputy regional governor	Interview
S6	Municipal administration	District administrator	Informal conversation

2.3 Selection of interviewees: employers

According to the theoretical sampling, the list of employers had to include several types of employers: the biggest enterprises with highest significance for the local economy and labour market; companies, which employs low skilled workers, companies; which employs Roma people, and Roma employers. The practical sampling was made in the course of fieldwork, following understanding about judgmental sampling procedure. Each interviewed stakeholder and all the participants in the focus group discussions were asked to point several employers in each category. Judgmental sampling soon arrived at saturation with repeating information. There are three large size companies in manufacturing industry, which are both biggest factors about the local labour market and employers of significant number of low qualified workers including Roma people. A spontaneous consensus exists that the local waste management company is the fourth employer, which have number of Roma employed. Since I had risen the topic about significant proportion of Roma woman in healthcare and education, where they work mainly as low skilled workers, a Roma exert suggested me to visit a particular municipal healthcare center. The participants in the focus groups did not recognize any Roma entrepreneur in Foros city. However, the Roma NGO, which assisted my fieldwork made a contact with two Roma employers – one in construction works (a typical employment for Roma males) and one in recycling of scrap (a typical non-official employment for a many of the ghetto residents). The final employers' sample has the following composition:

Label	Type	Industry	Size	Respondent
E1	Roma entrepreneur	Construction works Trade and retail	Micro to small	Owner and CEO
E2	National company	Manufacturing, food products	Medium to large	HR manager
E3	International corporation	Manufacturing, Textiles	Medium to large	HR manager
E4	National company	Waste management	Medium	CEO
E5	Municipal institution	Healthcare	Medium	CEO
E6	International corporation	Manufacturing, rubber and plastics	Large	HR manager
E7	Roma entrepreneur	Restaurants & Tourism Trade and retail Recycling of scrap	Small to medium	Owner

2.4 Selection of interviewees: employees and unemployed

Within current study 5 focus groups with Roma people were conducted. The recruitment of participants were based on the theoretical requirement about gender-age balance, about urban-rural distribution and about representation of different type unemployed, with regard of their ALMP experience. The urban focus groups were organized by a Roma NGO (S1), operating in the biggest segregated neighbourhood of Foros. The sessions were set up in the conference room of the NGO in the hearth of the neighbourhood. The sessions were agreed with the local district administrator (S6) as far as he is responsible for the supervision of the

subsidised employment programmes run by the municipality hall and keeps the register with personal data (name, age, gender, address) of the people enrolled in such programmes, living in the neighbourhood. The rural focus groups were organized by a local Roma community leader, working as a municipal coordinator of the local community centre. The contact with him was mediated through the urban NGO, which assisted my work. For the first session one female respondent did not appear. The others interpret it that she has something to hide from the local authorities about illegal employment in her family. There were no other organizational difficulties. The final sample of employees and unemployed has the following composition:

Label	Location	Type	Gander proportion (M:F)	Age composition
FG1	Urban	Unemployed, without ALMP experience	3:2	19-40
FG2	Urban	Unemployed, ALMP experience	3:3	35-61
FG3	Urban	Current subsidised employment	3:3	33-62
FG4	Rural	Unemployed, without ALMP experience	3:3	28-38
FG5	Rural	Unemployed, ALMP experience	3:3	26-39

3. Findings

3.1 Labour Market Policies - the side of stakeholders

The local authorities in Bulgaria officially use to act as there is no ethnic discrimination and use to pretend that they do not make distinction by race, religion and ethnicity. Therefore the CEO of LOD claimed that *“in Bulgaria the ethnic based discrimination is not acceptable, so therefore all services offered to the Bulgarian citizens are offered to this group as well”* (S3). It is very indicative that during the entire interview this respondent put a serious effort to control its speech by avoiding ethnic labels and using demonstrative pronouns: *“these people”, “this group”, “those persons”*. This respondent stated that there is no need of Roma targeted ALMP, because *“They fit in a number of other vulnerable groups on the labour market: long term unemployed, illiterates, low qualified, low educated”* (S3), for which there are plenty of programmes and schemes funded by the stated budget of HRDOP. In fact, the stakeholder do not comment on the four programs currently targeting Roma (Pamporov 2013) but claimed that *Support for employment* scheme of OP HDP and state funded program *From social benefits to employment provision* are the typical ALMP, which affect Roma population in Foros municipality. As a matter of fact, all stakeholders interviewed for the purpose of this study, mentioned at first place this programme, as *“the Roma targeted policy”*. The rural stakeholder (S4) said that it is a huge problem for the Roma people, living in Gav, because there are no local residents included in this programme, although there are registered Roma at Foros LOD. He perceived this as an administrative driven residential discrimination as far as all selected participants were living in Foros city. A community leader, living in the segregated neighbourhood, suggested an expansion of *From social benefits to employment provision* programme with seasonal employment in agriculture. It is in line with the opinion

of the local authorities, which independently of one another stated “*without subsidized employment, those people [i.e. Roma] have no any chance to find a job*” (S3,S6). However, another Roma leader was rather sceptical: *It is good that such a programmes exists but they are not applicable in a long term concerning the sustainability...the program now could be labelled as From social benefits to besoms* (S1). In that respect it is important to underline the actual discrepancy between the position of the local officials and local Roma leaders. The experts, representing local authorities have an institutionalized stereotyped frame of understanding:

1. Roma are uneducated → 2. Roma are suitable only for unskilled jobs → 3. Cleaning of public spaces is good for the local community and is the only way of creating public jobs for uneducated people → 4. Roma should be happy and grateful that they get any job because they are uneducated.

The local Roma leaders appealed for breaking the current subsidised employment frame by establishment of flexible training programmes for jobs that suffer from a shortage of people locally and in the country (locksmiths, turners, welders, heavy truck drivers). One Roma leader gave an example from his experience:

We established our NGO in 2002 by signing a contract with a local holding company that we were going to recruit people form the neighbourhood with completed education without qualification. The holding organized qualification training for them and employed them as fitters, turners and welders. Our mission was to guarantee that those trained workers are going to work for the Holding and to prevent headhunting by its local industry rivals. Unfortunately, due to the financial crisis this holding company had to release most of its workers. However, the trained workers easily found new jobs. For example currently a welder who operates with argon is earning up to 5000 BGN monthly. In fact there is a currently running advertise on the local cable channel about a corporation in Varna city, which employs experienced welder even without proper official qualification because the school system currently provides qualified but not skilled workers (S1).

In the official LOD press release about January 2013 (distributed as far as by end of February 2013) as well as during the interview, the Foros LOD press centre provided a detailed account only for execution of the HRDOP schemes and do not provide information about the measures funded by the state budget – for example the mentioned above “*From social benefits to employment provision*” programme. Some of those HRDOP schemes, listed below, were based on subsidized employment policy but it is not clear what the ethnic identity of the grantees was. The main reason for this is the reluctance of the LOD officers, and its CEO in particular, to identify the ethnicity:

They have to fill an application blank, a form, in order to apply for a job or for social benefits. The desk clerk usually gives to those people a list of ethnic affiliations. They have to point their ethnicity by themselves. Even when my officer sees that this person is from this group, even when he knows that the residence address of this person is in the ghetto, we do not have right to offer a job targeted for these people if this ethnicity is not indicated into the application. Anyway, any measure is available to everybody. (S3).

The official information about ALMP run through HRDOP lists several programmes and gives an account for their execution on a local level as follows:

- **Back to work scheme.** It is a two-sided programme aiming firstly, to increase the proportion of mothers, who back to work after maternity leave. Secondly, to provides job as babysitter to unemployed persons. In Foros municipality it secured subsidized employment of 49 babysitters. Of which 39 were trained, and 10 instructed.
- **New choice – development and realisation.** It is a programme aiming to reduce the negative impact of the financial crisis and thus its major target group are currently

unemployed persons, which lost their job after November 2008 due to restructuring or closure of businesses. Specific target groups are unemployed youth up to age 29, unemployed over age 50, and long term unemployed persons. Before being recruited unemployed receive training for the acquisition or improvement of their professional qualification. In Foros municipality 330 persons were trained and 286 of them were employed after the training by a supported employment scheme.

- **New start.** It is a programme aiming to increase youth employment rate by offering an internship positions for youths up to age 29. In Foros municipality about 321 employers applied by offering internship job positions. There were 415 applications of unemployed, of which 235 got an internship jobs.
- **Support for employment.** It is a programme targeting vulnerable groups – long term unemployed (with over 12 months registration at LOD); unemployed with a low professional of qualification and a lack of skills; low educated unemployed; unemployed from the ethnic minority groups. The job positions under this programme are subsidized for a period between 6 and 12 months. The employer has to assign a personal supervisor to each unemployed. Following standard training syllabus, the supervisor has to train unemployed learning skill at the workstation. In Foros municipality about 98 employers applied by offering 633 job positions. 52 unemployed find a job under this programme.
- **First job scheme.** This programme is aiming to prevent youth unemployment by offering both training in key competencies (according to EU frame) and subsidized employment – minimal wage and all social security payments for a period between 6 to 12 months. In Foros municipality about 15 employers applied by offering 97 job positions. About 136 unemployed applied of which 29 were enrolled in training but 21 successfully completed (there are 8 drop outs).

However, for the sake of verification those data was cross-checked by the official data about January 2013 distributed by the RESD¹⁷. At first glance there is discrepancy, but it is due to the fact that LOD data concerns only Foros municipality, while the RESD data concerns entire Foros province. As may be expected, the data about the Foros province differentiate only about three programmes listed below i.e. the Foros municipality is the definite local beneficiary of most of the programmes.

- **New start.** In Foros province about 570 employers applied offering 826 internship job positions. There were 672 applications of unemployed, of which 441 got an internship jobs.
- **Support for employment.** In Foros province about 212 employers applied by offering 1153 job positions. 77 unemployed find a job under this programme.
- **First job scheme.** In Foros province about 32 employers applied by offering 122 job positions. About 150 unemployed applied of which 53 were enrolled in training but 43 successfully completed (there are 10 drop outs).
- The regional level data is very useful for yet another reason – it provides comparison with the programmes funded through the state budget, as far as RESD offers such information:

¹⁷ Foros LOD is subordinated to RESD located in another administrative province

- **From social benefits to employment** – 374 unemployed were temporarily employed in emergency operations (Prevent and / or overcome the consequences of accidents or natural disasters: floods, fires, landslides, severe winter weather, earthquakes)
- **Employment promotion measures** – 82 unemployed, of which:
 - Unemployed youths up to age 29 – 32 persons
 - Young people with disabilities – 4 persons
 - People with disabilities – 22 persons
 - Single parents or mothers with child up to age 3 – 1 person
 - Mothers/Adoptive mothers with children age 3 to 5 – 1 person
 - Unemployed elders over age 50 – 7 persons
- **Assistants of people with disabilities** – 107 unemployed

Despite the denial of the Foros LOD to provide official information on Roma employment, the district administrator unofficially complained that for the period October 2012 – March 2013 there were 17 persons from the neighbourhood employed as landscapers and natural disasters squad but since March 2013 there are only 5 landscapers, which does not meet the needs of the neighbourhood.

Although the official figures do show a certain level of efficiency, some stakeholders claim that there are some administrative tricks in policy implementation, which ruins the philosophy of the intervention:

The last programmes were targeted only about persons up to age 29. They enrolled in those programmes only illiterates. If you have a secondary education, you will be not eligible. Only illiterates. At the same time I saw an elder person, at age over 60, who was enrolled in a computer literacy course. He was not able to see. He was not able to read. Is not it a mockery of the Bulgarian people? Here, the Foros region did it. An those persons were from a neighbouring municipality (S4).

The training are not properly targeted nor performed. They need to be done by the business and not just by some accredited training companies. If some company need human resources – it should get the money and organize training itself... The current measures just serve the political parties fights about unemployment levels. The claim is that unemployment in Foros is low, but it is not true. A person enrolled in temporary subsidized employment should be regarded as unemployed. There are some people circulating from one municipal temporary programme to another. There is no sustainability (S1)

3.2 Labour Market Policies – the side of employers

3.2.1 Typical Roma jobs

The sample achieved maximal variety structure and therefore the type jobs, which Roma do differs by different employers. Roma people work in construction industry as masons, plasterers, and knockabouts (E1). In manufacturing of food products Roma work as butchers, flay-flints, meat cutters, meat washers, cleaning staff, and packers. About 80% of the staff are Roma (E2). In manufacturing of textile Roma work as throwsters, weavers, dyers, and knockabouts. Roma people are over 50% (E3). In waste management 70 Roma male work as garbage collectors and 80 Roma females are employed as street sweepers. In fact, except for the 60 garbage truck drivers, all other workers are Roma (E4). Most of the Roma women employed in the healthcare centre are sanitarians, scullery maids, or cook assistants. There were a couple of nurses, but currently there is no Roma nurse. There are also several Roma males employed as brazier, carpenter, plumber, gardener, and a driver (E5). In the rubber

and plastics enterprise there are about 30% Roma employed out of over 1000 employees. They operate on conveyor belt. The environment in some production units is harmful to health and in that case the company prefers to employ elder Roma (E6). The last of the employers started its business as recycling company but expanded its activities towards a restaurant business and trade, and this is the main activity currently. Roma people are employed as waiters, cleaners, scullery maids, and cook assistants (E7).

All employers claimed that they employ workers only by legally signed permanent contracts, with 3 to 6 months probation period, and that they pay all social security duties:

"We are a large company and we are transparent in any case. The employees receive permanent contracts after 6 months probation period" (E6)

„We employ everybody with 6 months trial period. After this period, the contract becomes permanent. We do not offer temporary contracts. If these six months show no results, has happened to free someone but most of them stay after" (E2)

"There are guys who come in and say, "Well I do not want insurance, I am responsible for myself." However, in this heat - as last year - if someone get dizzy and fall down - the responsibility is mine. One human life is priceless. My partner has been working that way, but once at an object has a deceased person. So now we work without compromise - either you take it (the contract), or you can not make it on" (E1)

"We work 365 days. But everyone works 5 days and 2 days rests. All employees are socially secured according to the money they receive. We pay them category incentives. We pay them for food. They receive work wear. If you go through the town you can see them - shine! (E4)

However, after some probe questions few employers confessed that anyway they have illegally hired workers ad hoc:

"... There are guys without contract hired for the day. If, for example, today my boys unload 10,000 bricks, they are human beings – I cannot workload them more than they can afford. Those with whom I work, I know them and they have a contracts. But those who are employed just for the day - I proceeded in this way (without a contract), but it's for the day. Usually people over age 55 do not want a contract. Just want to haggle, go to the site and to work for the day" (E1)

"To the one that we get, we tell him that, within 1 week we are going to see if he is able to accomplish what we want. After a week we take him and sign a contract or pay him his weekly salary earned and I'm sorry (E7)

3.2.2 Problems with Roma employees

Trying to avoid blames in racism or discrimination, all respondents representing the employers' side deny any problem with Roma workers, when the question about this were posed in a direct manner. Further in-depth elaboration with probes reviled several problems. It seems that at first place should be pointed out the lack of education and, in some cases, functional illiteracy.

There are Roma, which hinder to work process. Most of them are illiterate. In the process each operator simply fills their control plan. They cannot read engineering drawings. (E6)

Those born after 1980 cannot write. When you need to fill out an application for employment, or leave, or to write an explanation for disciplinary sanction, they can not write the letter O. I write it to them and they cannot even copy it! (E2)

The second problem seems to be the lack of labour discipline and labour ethics, which indirectly correlates with the lower educational levels:

Concerning Roma instability is observed. If someone offered them temporarily more money they will leave you suddenly. Then latter they are returning back to you, start crawling on the floor and beg you to get them back (E4).

Roma are a group at risk. Mainly in terms of labour discipline. Absences. Unauthorized leaves. They are harder for cultivation. They do not like to work. People with primary needs - eating, drinking and jamboree (E3)

John was a driver. Suddenly he decided to go to Cyprus to earn a lot of money. He went there and he became so rich, that I took him back as a brazier... It's very typical about the Gypsies. Someone who work good, there are no problems with him, and suddenly something start whistling in the head – grab his luggage and leave without thinking (E5).

They are undisciplined. They can be working today, but tomorrow, without any notice or resignation may not appear at all. Somebody called him last night and immediately he departs to Greece (E2).

In Bulgaria there is a resistant stereotype that Roma people are thieves and people, which participate in illegal activities (Pamporov 2009). One interview spontaneously pretended to confirm this stereotype, another spontaneously tried to reject it, but partially suggest it as well. In fact those cases are included in this paper not because confirm or reject the stereotype about Roma as criminals but because are eventually illustration of employers' attitudes towards Roma (which is an important factor to overcome during the recruitment of new workers).

Moreover, there were some thefts and it was proven that two of the cases were done by Roma staff. Furthermore, they illegally sell of cigarettes without excise labels in the factory (E6)

There was a case of stealing few years ago. And we found out it was a nurse, a Bulgarian employed by those measures for temporary subsidized employment... Eh, well, two days ago I caught one of the laundry women with a handful of plums. And I said: "Eeeeh, Marry, you cannot give up your habits!". "Well, boss – she said – we can't. That's why one should not allow goat and Gypsy to let in his garden – the trees will be harvested quickly and inconspicuously even with the leaves". Do you get what I mean – the gathering is in their blood (E5).

3.2.3 Recruitment

The general model of recruitment is based on the social capital of the employees. The employers in Foros municipality rely mainly on the social networks to which their employees belong and do recruitment within those networks using word of mouth as informational channel.

The recruitment is carried out by the HR department. It is not necessary to have an external company, because they work with professionals who have specific analytical task to focus on, and specific field of knowledge. The work here requires people who are physically strong, who are responsible, and who are willing to work this job. The work is not complicated, but you have to be a bit dextrous...In the course of our work, the people who actually fit the profile "good worker" – i.e. with a good work discipline, with good productivity, we ask them to recommend somebody. Our experience shows, that about 80% of the recommended persons fit the criteria and are future good workers (E3).

"I find my workers mouth to mouth. Somebody comes to me and say: "This boy is good, let's take it, let's see it" – this is the way. I prefer to work with young males, which have no chance to find a job anywhere" (E1)

It is a huge advantage to work with Roma, because there are a lot applicants and within 6 months you can see it this the proper man or not. The workers bring into my office new candidates and thus we do not need any mediation by the LOD. There is no staff turnover. Entire extended families work for me

since years. There are few exceptions but in general we are satisfied of our staff...Usually new people comes after retirement of somebody (E4).

The Foros is known as a town with many Gypsies. That is why we always easily find manpower...We use to post an announcement in Jobs.bg¹⁸. It's a must. At the same time we request in the state LOD. Thirdly – mouth to mouth, because all they live in same neighbourhood. We have an established procedure: they have to leave an application blank and a CV at the gateway (E2).

The cook is the same every year. A Bulgarian. A seasonal worker. He is Bulgarian, because among Roma there is no such a cook with such education. A certificate is needed. We employ a cook with many years of experience...Roma weddings are gatherings of about 200 to 300 people. If only once we fail to provide good service, I am going to lose my reputation. They will never come back again in my restaurant. One waitress is also Bulgarian. To avoid conflicts with the Bulgarian youth who celebrate their birthdays, we use to spare a part of the restaurant for them and their waitress, exclusively serving them, is a Bulgarian. Who have been working diligently – remains also next year. Such a person usually calls me already in March to know that he/she wanted to hire him/her again...Otherwise, every day there are people coming and asking for a job – both Bulgarians and Roma... If I need more people – in the [Roma] neighbourhood very quickly understand about (E7)

They know we employ people on a regular basis and submit applications right here, on the gateway. We have our own application template. Then we have selection based on submitted documents. A special tests made by psychologists: on motivation, on analytical skills, eye-test (to avoid hidden astigmatism and daltonism) - about hour and half is needed for someone to fill all tests. And after comes the job interview (E6).

3.2.4 ALMP implementation

In general case the employers do not rely on the LOD to find new employees, especially when it concerns the low qualified stratum of the local society. They do not trust the human resource at disposal of LOD, and rely on really motivated (i.e. “active”) unemployed – waiting at the gateways.

If you go there [LOD], they are going to send you people, which are not useful. Because, I have not time to wait a month in order to test this person. I have limited time. We work 4 to 5 months. If I spend a month in training just to find out that this person is not suitable for that job, I am not going to have time and place to find a substitute for him (E7).

People who are taken from the LOD create problems. They are not familiar with the work of the company and can not adapt to the team. The work is not hard, but it's specific - sweep the streets, collecting containers. Work is dirty, smells and unpleasant - especially in summer. And not every unemployed person wants such a job (E4).

The refuse of the employers to work with the LOD correlates with their refuse to participate in ALMP and with dissatisfaction of the already participated. There are three major factors of reasoning not to collaborate with LOD and not to get involved in ALMP. The first one is the underfunding of the ALMP programs, which is potential jeopardy for the quality of work done by the persons in the subsidized schemes. In fact, in manufacturing enterprises even the cleaning staff is earning two times more then offered state support. Similar situation is reported by the other employers towards the same positions. The second factor for non-participation in ALMP schemes is the schedule of implementation in two dimensions. On one hand is the very slow bureaucratic procedure of selection and approval, which is not in line with the business plans and working schedule of the companies. On the second hand, it is the fact that subsidized employment run for a very short period and in fact it supports

¹⁸ Jobs.bg is a popular Bulgarian web-page for demand and supply of jobs

only the period needed for training and adaptation (especially in the case of long term unemployed). Latter, one should dismiss the already trained person and employ a new one for the sake of social rotation. The last but not the least factor is the quality of the Labour force provided by LOD. Very often those are cases of long term unemployed, without proper labour skills and discipline. Moreover, some of them are actually passive unemployed, who rely only on LOD to find them a job, while receiving poverty benefits. Having the three factors in mind, even a simple risk assessment analysis shows that the ALMP have very low efficiency with regard of the private employers – regardless of the company size.

Many times they [LOD] approach me and we have spoken that they are able to send me staff, working at lower salary, working part time. But we are not satisfied by this. We prefer this person, who works for us, to earn enough money in order to do his job properly, to do it as I expect from him. It does not make sense to employ somebody for a salary of 100 or 200 BGN but not useful. The lowest wage in my company is 350 BGN but the cooks are earning more than 500 BGN. I can take by the LOD a cook, with 250 BGN wage. But this cook is not useful for me. He has experience with cooking for 10 or 20 persons. And I need a cook who has at least 15 years of experience working for the armed forces. I do not need a cook, who has been working in a fancy club and who is able to cook a fancy food. He is not able to serve 200 people. The one with the fancy food is going to cook today about 50 plates. Really, he puts diligence, decorates. But for the wedding are not needed one titbit and 10 decorations. I need dexterous person because a wedding with about 300 guests requires 300 meat sticks, 300 meat balls, 300 chops, and 300 sausages. Or 600 meat balls and 600 skewers. At the same time this person should be able to make a French fries. A garnish here and there. Salads. But those are 300 salads. Could you imagine how many tomatoes and cucumbers are needed (E7).

LOD officers visited us to explain for what programs and policy measures we are eligible and could apply. But the truth is that we did not apply. However, they explained us the frame: the minimum wage and mentors to these people. They are generally very slow with the selection procedure and thus we are not interested. I guess the small businesses who do not have enough working capital to pay wages do apply (E2)

We do not need to participate in subsidized employment programs. We are so large [enterprise] and have such a turnover that we do not care about these support programs. Moreover, at the gates there are so many people waiting that we will instantly find people. On the other hand, more labour force means more production. More production requires more markets. The crisis hit not only Bulgaria but entire Europe and our markets shrank very much, which required dismissing some workers promptly (E3)

We tried to work with “New Beginning” and “Carrier start” schemes but we found out those programs are not suitable for us. The problem is that the procedure is extremely slow. I have to submit ask to the Foros LOD. They have to send those papers to RESD. They have to send the papers form RESD to Sofia [Ministry of Labour]. By this time I should already need people employed and involved in training. The procedure is unwieldy and does not work for us. If I am waiting the National Employment Agency, I am going to miss the term in which I should train my staff. On the second hand, still there is no money transfer for the wages of these people (E6).

About 4-5 years ago, I employed some people by the Temporary employment programme¹⁹. The programme ended and the people are gone... just stop asking me for LOD and other bull shits. I do not recruit my staff because of tits and crimps (E5)

¹⁹ A predecessor of the currently running *From social benefits to employment programme*

3.2.5 Recommendations

The recommendations given are in line with the problems around ALMP implementation and refusal to collaborate with LOD. At first place comes the need for much shorter and simplified procedures, which will allow employers to be flexible and to employ workers promptly if there is a need of new labour force.

If the procedure lasts no more than 20 days or up to a month – OK. Yes. But for one of those programmes I was waiting since August 2012 until recently – March 2013. Come on! For other 3 young engineers I was waiting about 3 months. They – the kids – got nervous and non-stop were calling me: “Are you going to employ us? Are you going to employ us?”(E6).

The current mode of the schemes pushes some employer away from ALMP, because they consider it as a privilege intended for the municipal hall. In fact, through “Form social benefits to employment” the municipal hall establishes job positions in waste management and is competing local waste-management companies instead of outsourcing those activities to them.

The programmes and measures offered by LOD are suitable only about the Foros municipality hall. We barely have an access to those things. If the municipality decide to delegate us additional work, we are able to employ more people. We have machines; we have the power (E4).

Moreover, the training programmes and courses, are also criticised by the employers do to the fact that they are centrally organized in certain periods and not suitable for the work schedule of the companies.

I know that LOD offers such a programme – they qualify them and send them to me, while they pay them for the work done for me. It could be very useful by the time when we are doing the foundation level. When we are doing the foundation level, when the concrete is poured for the foundation, I work with subcontractor and my boys sit idle. During these 3-4 months he could obtain a qualification, even the lowest level is something. If the state pays for a training course or qualification, this person will be able to move upward, he could expect higher wage. These boys should not stay blind (E1).

3.3 Labour Market Policies – the side of employees, participants and unemployed

3.3.1 Job search

There are two major channels of job search among the Roma living in Foros municipality. The one is above mentioned and tolerated by the largest employers approach “at the gates”. As far as the respondents in the five focus group discussions were currently unemployed or temporary employed by subsidized employment, it is a normal fact to find a stories of non-success. However, the personal stories discover different trajectories to unemployment. Some female respondents, after long term living as housewives, decided to join the labour market. The issue here is that they are already middle aged, without any labour experience, with very low education and without specific qualification. It is interesting to see how the question about education is treated as discrimination question because of the self-stereotype that the non-Roma know that Roma are uneducated. On the other hand are mid-aged males, which have found a job but quitted due to the fact that are not satisfied of the wages compared to the workload. There is an intuitive understanding about the need of the social capital in some cases expressed by the opposition “ours-your” or by the idea about “an insider”.

On March 8th 20 I have visited 5 factories. No job available. On the gateways they say: No job and you go back home... Earlier, I have been filing applications in other companies, in other factories – no reply. (FG1: f,30) 21

If there is a person, who works in this textile company [E3] and if he gives you a recommendation, it is much easier to find a job there (FG1: m,20)

I went there. I filled up an application form in the rubber factory [E6]. I have only 4th grade completed but what the females are doing there – cleaning. As soon as they see you're a Gypsy – they ask you about you education (FG2: f,56)

I was in the waste-management company [E4] fro 5-6 years. But I was fired because I used to pick up iron [i.e. to gather scrap] and to sell it to a scrap recycling company [E7]. Then I found a job at the food producing company [E2]. I worked a month there. I have a bank [i.e. nonperforming loans] and the bailiff distraint my wages. Well I had to work there for 15-16 hours. So, I quit. I worked also for the textile company [E3]. I spend 7-8 days there. They offered European food. I am a big man. I need more food and I asked my wife – “is it a kindergarten”, but unfortunately the big boss, the owner was on the next table. Well, they dismiss people every day and every day employ new ones. We – the Gypsies - somehow make a living. Whether in construction, or at the cornfield – anyway we survive. We cannot complain. Here [subsidized employment] I earned 130 BGN for 4 hours from December till March. (FG2: m,36)

There some Pomaks in our village. They offer job but it is too much work... You are working one day but producing like for 5 days ahead. And they pay just a 12 BGN. It's not worthy. You walk out in 5 A.M. and come back crushed around 8-9 P.M. One row of tobacco is about 2 to 3 km. You have to hoeing 2-3 rows per day. I went there but gave up (FG4: m,30)

The second channel is the LOD. In fact, some Roma understand their disadvantage situation due to lack of education, because of age, due or the existing racial discrimination and crucially rely on the subsidized employment or any employment provided by LOD. However, there are some Roma people, which are discouraged²² and maintain their registration, already without hope for employment but because some social means tested benefits are bounded to such registration.

I heard there is also a private employment bureau. I went there once but the door was locked. I did not go there second time simply because I am desperate (FG1: f,30).

I search for a job only through LOD. Since 2009 I am very satisfied by the social assistance. I was employed by the Beautiful Bulgaria project for an year. On the next month since its end I was employed already here - the landscaping. At my age you cannot find another job. Now in July the programme ends and they are going to pay me unemployment benefits until the next available job (FG3: m,56)

I was visiting the LOD every month, signing [i.e. confirming unemployment registration] and asking for a job. The offered to me this one and I agreed. It is going to last an year and after I am going to go back at the LOD. I know the law. I am going to sign again and to ask for a similar [subsidized job] (FG3: f,62)

²⁰ International Women's Day is not an official fest in Bulgaria since 1989 but it's broadly celebrated as a bricolage between Mother's day, St. Valentine's day, and a few feminist political events

²¹ For the sake of anonymity, but in order to help further analysis, the focus group participants are going to be indicated by number of the focus group discussion, gender of the responded (m/f) and age of the respondent)

²² There are no technically discouraged in this survey, which give up also their registration, as far as the sampling strategy relied on officially registered unemployed (which is part of the definition in Bulgaria).

I am searching for a job since an year. I go around different locations – fast foods in Foros, the food producing company [E2], but I did not succeed. When I go to the LOD to sign up [i.e. confirm unemployment registration] – there is no any job for people with primary education. There is a job only for people with secondary education or with university degree. Any you are losing your desire to go and sign up (FG4: f,27).

I did not look for a job because I am receiving social benefits. I have to work 14 days for those benefits. My man is going to be a landscaper – the first in the village. That is why they are going to stop our benefits next month (GF5: f,28)

As a matter of fact most of the Roma interviewed during the focus group discussions seem unconfident in their ability to find a job and therefore most of them are ready to work any job available through the LOD. Moreover, they fill in applications in many companies but do not really believe that they are going to find a job.

We do not have preference, because we do not have an education. I am with basic [education]. I applied in a textile factory [E3], in a rubber factory [E6], and in a candle workshop (FG1: f,30)

I am visiting some construction companies at the building sites and ask "Good afternoon, good afternoon, are there some job vacancies?" I do not dare to go and ask in the largest companies – the rubber factory [E6], the food producers [E2] - because I do not have education²³ and I know 100% they will send me back (FG4: m, 30)

3.3.2 Labour office directorate

The unemployed need to go to the LOD once per month in order to sign papers and maintain their registration as unemployed. If somebody misses the date, he/she has a week to go and give an explanation. If not – he/she loses his/her rights for 6 months as a punishment measure. The LOD has a Roma labour mediator employed through “Activation of inactive people” programme. However, the participants in the focus groups do not know about him as far as he was a pure political appointment after the local elections, without experience and expertise. There is no NGO offering job assistance or employment mediation. There were Roma in each discussion group, which complained because of mistreatment by the LOD officers. The maltreatment complains were subject of common spontaneous consensus during the rural discussions, but there were only single “personalized” cases mentioned in the urban sessions.

There are qualification courses organized by the LOD. At the same time there is one Mr. Smith there, who has very bad attitude, he demonstrates pure neglect towards us. Instead of helping me – because I do not understand things properly and I need some explanation – he says: “Why you are bothering me? Live me alone!” (FG5: m,29)

They have very rude attitude toward the people. Well, I understand, they spend all day long there. Well, go outside, have a cigarette and calm down! Why they have to manifest their anger towards the people? (FG4: m,30)

I went there and asked for a job and she [the employment officer] said: Get out! Get out because I am very pissed! (FG4: f,28)

I went to the LOD to sign my papers. They did not offer me a job but a poor treatment. My number was on turn, I approached him but he said: “Wait for the next shift. Next!” (GF5: f,33)

²³ This respondent completed only 3rd grade, i.e. has not completed ISCED level 1

After asking the employment officers about job, they use to send us to the board with announces with all jobs available. But all announces requires higher education, college degree or even two higher educations (FG1: f,30).

The negative feelings towards LOD are boosted up by the discrepancy between the education required for the job vacancies and the levels of education completed by Roma people. Complemented by mistreatment described above, the educational discrepancy creates a sense of frustration and increases the discriminatory perception. Moreover, there is an obvious mismatch between some vacancies announced by the Foros LOD and the national classification of professions and occupations (based on ISCO 08).

After asking the employment officers about job, they use to send us to the board with announces with all jobs available. But all announces requires higher education, college degree or even two higher educations (FG1: f,30).

And later they say – “Over there, on the board!”. But on the board there are vacancies only about those with university degree or with higher secondary education. However, I found a job - sanitary officer – and I wrote down the number and went back. And they said: “But it is a job for a secondary education”. So, is it needed a secondary education in order to grab a broom? Please, tell me where the vocational secondary school is located! (FG4: m,38)

And on the board I saw they were looking for a shepherd with higher secondary education completed! (FG4:m,33).

When it comes to recommendations about the LOD Roma discussants forgot all complains about the quality of the personal service and several very tangible suggestions were listed as necessary changes:

- The LOD have to offer outsourcing services or monthly on the spot mediation in the Roma neighbourhoods. It is going to involve some young and relatively well educated Roma and to push some discouraged to become more active (if they see that municipality hall cares about them). Some participants in FG3 claimed that they already presented such a proposal to the municipal hall but got refusal with the argument that in the current municipal budget there is not enough money about outsourcing or on spot services. The municipality is able to cover only the rent but not the salaries of new mediators.
- The subsidized employment schemes needs to involve a large scale employers in municipality in order to diversify job offers and to give a chance for internships and practical experience in different industries (i.e. not only in waste management as it is currently). This is going to increase the chance for future employment.
- The subsidized employment programmes should not be annual but be permanent in order to achieve sustainability and to prevent programme nomadism.
- The wage in subsidized employment needs to increase two to three times in order to cover all employment related costs such as: travelling expenses and daily nourishment at work. It is crucial especially about the rural residents, which need to commute to Foros city in order to

3.3.3 *Active labour market policies*

Due to the purposeful sampling procedure, the participants of one focus group were currently involved in ALMP programmer, two of the focus group discussions were conducted with respondent with past experience with subsidized employment, and two group of discussant had no experience with. The respondents were not aware that their

programme scheme is labelled “From social benefits to employment”, they labelled it as “the temporary employment”, “the landscaping” and “the emergencies”. The currently employed by this programme [FG3] are very optimistic. They give a very positive feedback about training programme and see it as a chance.

We were paid by The European union. We attended 40 day course and we got 8 BGN per day. And we enter the Schengen [area] I will be able to go to work in Brussels, to go to Belgium. Because I hold a certificate for being landscaper, which is valid through the EU. I am satisfied of this thing. They taught us about landscaping. About mowing. About flowers. (FG3: m,56)

In the other corner are staying urban Roma who just left the programme because the term of their subsidized employment expired [FG2] as well as those rural Roma, who had some experience with various ALMP programmes [FG5]. Of course, all respondents were happy to have any employment and to receive legal wages and social security but most of them complain about the programme implementation in situ.

We [the landscapers] gather in 8 am at the mayor's office [district administrator, S6]. We sign in a presence list. Then we start touring the dumpsters. We collect and load garbage. This is the job. During the training we were taught how to plant trees, fencing-mencing. We were taught how to plant a flower, how to trim the boxwood. But since the end of the course you are here – you must clean the garbage. If you do not like it – go home! (FG2: f, 61)

I can work with mortar, I can lay bricks, I have some skill with electricity. I am able to set bathroom tiles. I am skilled in construction works – but this is not the job. And we know that this is the only work available for us – to clean the garbage, wherever we are around the world (FG2: m,36)

Well, I have been enrolled in different trainings by the European programmes. I have certificates for a beekeeper, for a tiller, for computer literacy but I am not able to find a job anyway (FG5: m,39)

Some respondents, who have no experience with ALMP programmes, complain that they wanted to enrol and applied but there was not timely information about this and there are not clear criteria of selection. In fact, this attitude is shared also by respondent already employed in the programme.

I heard my acquaintance found a job by the LOD as landscaper, a temporary employment. I went into LOD and said that I would like to be a landscaper as well. They told me: Currently all vacancies were taken. We employed already 5 persons. They do not offer it to everybody. My acquaintance is registered since 3 months and they offered to him a subsidized job. I am registered since 7 months but they did not offer to me such jobs (FG1: f, 30)

If you have an acquaintance in LOD you are going to find job immediately, it is not only about the programme (FG3: m, 48)

I was told by a Bulgarian. A friend. He wanted to enrol in the landscaping programme but they told him that this is a programme only for Gypsies. And he called me and said: Go and enrol! An European programme only for Roma people (FG2: m,61)

The methodology of the current case study includes a vignette question about the hypothetical choice between longer but less paid municipal employment and shorter but much paid illegal employment. After piloting the vignette questions with some piloting haphazard sampled Roma and non-Roma persons, the original vignette question was adjusted in Bulgaria with actual wage figures. The proportions were not clear to the most of the respondents. Also the protagonist was nick-named “Johnny” after a popular anecdote character in Bulgaria.

3.3.4 Story about preferences

Johnny was unemployed but is offered a place in subsidized employment scheme for 6 months for 300 BGN²⁴ in the spring and the summer. However, he is usually regularly offered an informal job (without social security etc.) as a day-worker picking strawberries where he earns 450 BGN, but this type of work lasts only for the first three months. If he refuses participation in the subsidized employment scheme, he would not be offered a job later during the year, when seasonal work is not available any more. If he refuses the strawberry picking job, he might not be invited next year. What have to do Johnny in that case? Which one to choose and why so?

The focus group discussions revealed a clear gender difference between Roma male and female participants. All female respondents supported longer, stable subsidized job, although for less monthly wage (but finally higher cumulative wage). There is no age or educational difference to make a clear difference in the male attitudes. The prevailing number of respondents supported legal employment. In fact the risky employment was chosen only by those respondents, which demonstrated more opportunistic labour behaviour with frequent switch between different jobs. The arguments pro subsidized employment are:

- It offers current financial security for a longer period, with additional future effect after the retirement
- It could lead to permanent employment offered by the municipality (at the same employer or as step to a future employer)
- The cumulative amount is higher by the end of the period
- In the course of a longer period the legal wage could increase, smoothing the monthly income gap

I would go for the LOD, although both jobs are temporary – this one is longer. Moreover, if they are satisfied by our work there is a chance to get a permanent contracts (FG1: f,30)

I would vote for LOD. If they made a mistake to find a job for us, they may call us for another job next time as well (FG1: m,21)

I would opt for municipality. 6x3 is more than 3x450. Moreover, you are going to get all the social security needed (FG2:m,58)

Less money monthly but with security contributions – because he will need this for the retirement. He is going to get old and he has to choose the pension (FG5:m,29)

Johnny must choose the state job. I suffered this with lack of social security on my own back. I had no cent and an entire month I was looking for money in order to pay for my surgery. A man after feeling battered - will opt for the safe (FG4: m,38)

The pro illegal employment arguments are:

- The difference in the cumulative amount is not very high and there is not need to work two times longer
- After the 3 months of illegal employment some other job could appear for the next 3 months

In my opinion I will take the shorter – I will work 3 months for almost the same money. Otherwise for 400 BGN difference I have to work 3 months more. In the rest 3 months I will be able to work something else. I will find something (FG2: m,36)

²⁴ The minimal monthly wage in Bulgaria since January 1st, 2013 is 310 BGN

I will choose the 3 months period. Lees work, almost same money (FG3: m,48)

If I was on his place, I would choose the strawberries and I am going to pay the security contributions by myself. The job is seasonal and coincides with the strawberries season. He could take this 150 BGN more and could pay his contributions and still is going to have more than 300 left.

3.3.5 Discrimination

There was one more vignette in the guide for the focus group discussions. It was about the hypothetical choice of an employer between two types of vulnerable unemployed with regard with discrimination: an older person just few years before retirement and a Roma man. This vignette was adjusted for Bulgarian case study by personalization of the characters, with popular neutral names (following the English pattern with use of John Smith).

3.3.6 Story about discrimination

Mr. Petroff wants to employ an unskilled worker for picking apples and sorting them into boxes. The job is physically somewhat demanding, but not extremely hard. The LOD offers 2 persons: George - an elder male person, with minor health problems, who has been unemployed since 5 years, but worked earlier in a similar position with no children at home anymore; Peter - a 35 year old Roma man, who is fit and strong, has 3 children and has some job experience, though mainly informal employment. How will Mr. Petroff decide in your opinion and why?

There was no spontaneous neither forced consensus achieved during the sessions. Some respondents put an accent on discrimination towards Roma, other demonstrated attitude to discriminate older people in favour of younger. It is interesting to mention that as an argument “pro” was used “lower wage” both for the Roma person and for the elder. Due to the fact that it is a hypothetical question open for interpretation, different respondents had a different understanding about a probable workload. Those, who put stress on the physical demand argued pro Roma, the others, who underlined the skill of “sorting” argued pro elder. The complete set of advantages of the Roma person and of the elder was listed as follows:

Advantages of the younger Rom	Advantages of the elder Bulgarian
Lower wage	• Lower wage
No need of social security	• No need of social security
Physically stronger	• Better working skills
Possible long term commitment	• Better working ethics
More diligence	• Better working discipline
	• Lees need of social gains

He is going to employ the Roma boy. Because he is going to pay him lower wage and to skip the social security duties. Moreover, the other person is just before retirement. He is not so strong as it is the younger boy (FG1: m,19)

There is a catch in this story – he is going to sort apples. The younger does not know how to do it. The elder is skilled, he knows how. The elderly are more witted than the young man. If we walk around the region we will find working retired people everywhere. They are welders, turners. They tremble but have many advantages: first, they are experienced. Secondly – they do not need social contributions, thirdly – if there is additional workload the elder will stay to finish it. The youth is in hurry to go back to his wife, or to visit a disco club. He has a personal life. The retired person try to earn more, to

increase his income. The retired person will go to work with onion and slice of bread. The youth cannot go like this. (FG5: m,39)

The Roma boy is going to work harder for less money. If it depends on me, I will never employ person, who is several of years before retirement. I am going to give chance to the younger. But what happens now in Bulgaria: they employ retired people because they pay less social contributions and lower wages. (FG4: m,33)

He is going to employ the Bulgarian. The Gypsy has kids and is not going to go to work regularly (FG2: m,61)

The question about personally experienced discrimination highlighted the extremely vulnerable situation of the Roma elders, which are subject of discrimination even in the LOD office, or at least perceive the services there as such.

At the LOD always ask about the age. When I say 53 they use to say: "Oh, granny, go home. There is not job for you. So, if we are elders we should not eat. We have to go back home like that. We do not have to live. I have 8 grade completed but they always ask about vocational training (FG2: f,53)

If I am granny, they should give me a retirement benefit. I saw by the satellite channel that in Turkey the women get retired at age 55. Why it is not like this in Bulgaria. Why they always offer to me the most dirty job – to clean the public toilets (FG2: f,56)

There is a good job available in LOD. But they never say to us. When they see we have a coloured skin – they say: there is no job for you (FG2: m,58).

The younger Roma do not report a discrimination treatment at LOD but rather experienced discrimination during the job interviews with private employers in Foros city. They reported cases of "face control" already at the gateways or just in the stage of filling its residence in the form.

I went to a nylon factory once. The guard on the gates told me: "Judging by your appearance there is no job for you" (FG1: f,30)

My residence registration is in the Roma neighbourhood. It is enough to get refusal. When they see my residence registration on my identity card, they say "we are going to call you back in 2-3 days" and nothing, They never call back (FG1: m,19)

- I have asked my mother in law to make an appointment for a job interview, because she is with much lighter skin complexion. We confirm the appointment by phone. When they see me face –to – face they said "Oh, I am sorry, another woman came just a bit earlier and she took the job already (FG1: f, 40)

4. Summary

4.1 Conclusions

The global financial crisis in 2008 has a very strong impact on the local labour market with a lag of two-three years. On first hand several factories, working mainly for foreign corporations and using toll processing, were closed. The building and constructions industry shrank. The collapsed economies of Greece, Cyprus and Spain pushed back a wave of migrants and thus the unemployment rates increased drastically. The employers became "spoiled" by the availability of working hand. Because of this, the educated labour force is underestimated on the local labour market. The industrial factories started to employ persons with university degree as plant and machine operators and assemblers, although for some occupations even a secondary higher education is not required. In fact, the secondary higher education became a must even about most of the elementary occupations. Due to

their very low educational status Roma people are pushed out of the employment. Therefore the ALMP measures are needed as one of the limited sources of employment.

On the other hand there is no a particularly successful ALMP programme running at the local level. In fact, even the CEO of LOD reported "insufficient efficiency". There is no local Roma or pro-Roma NGO devoted to and involved in pro employment activities. Moreover, there is a Roma labour mediator, but there is no awareness about his role in the segregated neighbourhoods. It seems that it is an "arm-chair expert", i.e. a political appointment, which imitates political will and concern about vulnerable groups. We may conclude that there is ALMP mimicry concerning the labour market integration of vulnerable groups at local level. In that respect, it is very indicative that municipality officer, responsible for the Roma labour integration is in fact a "Public cleaning" officer. Thus, all subsidised employment programmes, which enrolled Roma, turn to be "public cleaning" jobs, although a different training is offered at the beginning. Pushing all unemployed Roma in public cleaning services created reasonable filling about an institutional discrimination. At last but not at least, the most of the programmes run through the municipality and their funds darn the municipal budget. At the same the private employers are facing slow and complicated bureaucratic schemes and underfinanced activities, and thus give up applying. In fact the success rate of the employers offering jobs is about 8% in *Support for employment* programme and measured up to 22% in the *First job* programme.

The ALMP implementation in Foros municipality is a vicious circle. In it the sustainable social and environmental development were replaced by political power games and maintenance of the dependency.

1. Roma are uneducated and low qualified → 2. Need training in order to find a job → 3. Different training programmes do not lead to different employment opportunities but to cleaning services → 4. They do not develop their new skills and need permanent reintegration by new subsidised employment schemes → 5. Moving from training to training together with predefined subsidized cleaning services discredits the need of training and education → 6. Roma keep being uneducated and low qualified.

4.2 Recommendations

The efficient and sustainable ALMP needs a broader support of all local players: public stakeholders, employers and local Roma communities. There are some recommendations, related to the practical implementation of labour market integration of vulnerable groups at local level in Bulgaria. At first place a broader support by the local business circles is needed. It could be achieved by several improvements as follows:

- Simplified rules for applying and shortened terms for institutional reply; The business initiatives and production/services extensions should not wait more than a month in order to be competitive;
- Qualification trainings organized in situ according to the needs of the employers. Nobody needs thousands of landscapers, hairstylists, etc. and there are some rare occupations, which requires specific skills, which could not be secured by mass training done by a teacher in a classroom;
- Subsidised wages should equal the wages paid by the employer for the given position. Currently the value of an engineer is equated to the value of the cleaning lady (by the minimal wage);
- Tax relief for the employers, who are going to join subsidised employment schemes about people suffering by multiple vulnerability (i.e. elder rural Roma women)

At second place the support of local Roma community is needed. There are some adjustments needed both in the community attitudes and in the educational system as follows:

- Prevention of school drop outs. There is not effective mechanism and infrastructure to bring back drop outs to schools. In Foros city there is one “evening” school, where the adults could increase their education
- Some vocational levels of education do not exist recently in Bulgaria (ISCED 2011 – 2B, 3B, 4A, and 4B) i.e. an urgent education reform is needed. Those levels existed before 1989 end were very helpful on the labour market
- An awareness campaign among Roma is needed. Recently they perceive the normal employer’s query about the level of education as an ethnically targeted discrimination

At last but not a least there are few recommendations concerning the public authorities and the local Roma and pro-Roma NGOs. Currently the local municipal hall tries to control all stages of budgeting and implementation with regard of the local ALMP. It costs too much time and money and, in fact, the local authorities failed in implementation as far as they are blamed in discrimination, corruption, and political power games. At the same time the services are not decentralized in sufficient degree, which increases the unemployment figures in the surrounding villages.

- Outreach activities. The current behaviour of the public authorities rely on the personal social networking among Roma population but this leads to service delay and under coverage. Some outreach activities are needed – for example an employment caravans, visiting the rural areas at least once monthly.
- Outsource activities. Currently the municipality and the LOD suffers by lack of staff, working with vulnerable population (that’s why they do not offer outreach activities so far). Outsourcing some activities to Roma or Pro-Roma organizations could fix some problems with the coverage of the ALMP

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HUNGARY by Vera Messing

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1. Description of the field

Two settlements were included in the field research in Hungary: Bulltown²⁵ and Chavel. Bulltown is a mid-sized town, with a population of 16thousandsituated in the north of Hungary on the border to Slovakia. Both settlements are located in one of the smallest counties, with only 210thousand inhabitants, and which may be characterized by long-lasting economic depression. Bulltown is atypical though in this sense: although it is situated in an area hit especially hard by economic crisis, it is still doing relatively well in relation to other towns in the North East of Hungary due to its large (oversized) public service sector and a few multinational factories established on its outskirts and the neighbouring village. N county is divided in terms of socio-economic development: its western parts belong to the central economic zone of the capital, which both in terms of infrastructure and human resources are rather well developed. Its eastern parts, in contrast, lie closer to the most underdeveloped north-east region of Hungary, which lacks economic investors and thus labour market demand. In terms of the number of employers (firms), the volume of export, or the per capita GDP Bulltown is the centre of the county (even if officially it is still not) – in all of these terms it outperforms its rival, which became the county centre during the times of the state socialist system.

„As a consequence of changing the county capital, a large share of the public service sector institutions together with companies and economic actors were displaced from Bulltown. In the next one and a half decades the new capital became an one-sidedly preferred and subsidized centre. Between 1950 and 1954 Bulltown, the town with the largest population in the county, received only 0.1% of investments.”²⁶

Historically, the town used to be a classical merchant settlement, with a significant Jewish population before World War II. New borders of the country set after World War I. separated the town from its earlier economic partners and settlements, which became part of Slovakia. A next historical tragedy was World War II, in the course of which the entire Jewish population was extinguished. *“Besides the economic and military losses, the Jewish population, playing a significant role in the economic and cultural prosperity of Bulltown, and which constituted one of the oldest Diasporas in Hungary, was extinguished in extermination camps”²⁷.* After World War II, in the late 1940s, early 1950s Bulltown was declared a “reactionist nest”, meaning that it became underprivileged in terms of development funds and public and labour market investments. Such a tag was fatal under conditions of a state-socialist system, which was characterized by a lack of private ownership in the economy, central planning and a full redistribution of funds. The town lost its leading role and its title of the capital of the county in 1949, while the designation of the county centre was transferred to a newly established town 50 km to the east. The new capital town distracted all funds: socialist heavy industry was established here, and consequently, it absorbed most of the development funds and other finances dedicated to the county between the 1950s and 1970s. Numbers make this bias obvious: Bulltown received only 0.1% of investments, while the new capital received the vast majority (over 50%) of such funds in the county.

²⁵We are using pseudo-names of the towns due to the reluctance of interviewees to participate. Their hesitation was explained by reservations to uncover their identity. As the town is a medium sized settlement, by revealing the name of the town and the position of the individuals, their anonymity may be harmed.

²⁶ Quote from the official web page of Bulltown.

²⁷ Quotation from the official homepage of the town

In spite of the politically under-privileged status of Bulltown, it managed to remain a centre of public service and preserved a number of institutions employing highly skilled, well educated workers, such as the hospital, the court, an extensive net of educational institutions, the prison, and further social welfare institutions. Besides, a great advantage in contrast to its rival town lies in the fact that it did not attract a huge number of low-skilled workforce during the 1950s and 1960s, which caused unmanageable unemployment problems after the collapse of the heavy industry there. By contrast, Bulltown was able to attract multinational companies after the transition due to the higher level of education of its population and larger supply of skilled workforce as well as a wide range of public services available locally. Suppliers of automobile and high-tech electronic industry settled here and set up their plants, which provide employment to high-skilled but also to some lower-skilled workers. One of these companies employs 700 people permanently and additionally 150 persons periodically and pays 50 per cent of venture tax of the entire county! The other company employs 500 people, most of the highly skilled but several low-skilled employees as well.

Another important factor was that the public service sector remained large and highly important both in terms of employment potential and quality. The town operates five kindergartens, four primary and five secondary schools and two dorms. Although the population is between 16 and 17 thousand, six thousand students study in the town, attracting youth from a large part of the county. The town situates the county court as well as a large prison. It also has a hospital with 800 beds. Alone in the county, Bulltown has a crèche for young babies, a social care centre, a large psychiatric centre, a homeless care centre, and a refugee centre. Earlier, it was also a home for a large front guard, but due to the Schengen accession of both Hungary and Slovakia, this institution lost its foundation.

Two smaller settlements in the neighbourhood of Bulltown were also included in the research. One is Santo, which is a direct neighbour of Bulltown, virtually merged with it. Many of the industries are settled here – three large factories belonging to multinational production companies, and one smaller but still significant factory, producing electronic components, belong and pay taxes to Santo. The village is therefore important for Bulltown in terms of employment opportunities: many of its residents work in these industrial plants. The other village, Chavel is, is situated a bit further away, 13 kilometres from Bulltown. This is a village where the road ends and thus economic activity beyond home gardening is basically missing. The village's population is 850 out of which approximately 75 per cent are Roma, according to the estimations of the mayor. Until 1948 there was practically no Roma in the village, but in the end of the 1940s a few Roma families moved here from Slovakia, and have become a majority by now due to demographic trends. The general level of education is very low: only five per cent of the entire population of the village has higher educational qualification, but high school graduates are also less than 10 per cent, and only 10 per cent have vocational qualification. Consequently, approximately three fourths of the population have primary or no education. Unemployment is extremely high: approximately half of the total population is working age, out of whom 200 receive some subsistence supports from the municipality. Further, there are 50 of the working age individuals who are economically inactive. Currently just very few people (two dozen in the mayors' estimation) have a job, though earlier, before 1990, almost everybody was employed: working one of the factories situated in the nearby towns, or on constructions around Hungary, and a few earning a living in agriculture.

1.1 Economy, labour market and the crisis

In the first quarter of 2011 the rate of unemployment in N county was 18.5 per cent accompanied with a very high 49 per cent rate of economic inactivity. The rate of employment was 41.9% in the same time period. In relation to these rather distressing county level indicators, Bulltown is performing much better, somewhere around the national average. Besides the extensive public sector a substantial private sector operates in the local economy. A US multinational, a supplier of the automobile industry employs 700 permanent and 150 temporary employees. The vast majority of the workers are highly skilled. Another company, the heir of the former large metal plant, employs 300 workers, many of them low-skilled. Further, a large employer is another supplier of the automobile industry, and a German company supplying multinationals with electronics parts. The latter company employs 500 people, most of whom are highly skilled, but some – operators of production tapes – are low or medium-skilled. The greatest service sector employer is a large international chain store, which employs 100 people, serving also a large population arriving from Slovakia. Earlier, the textile industry used to be a very important sector in the local economy, but due to the competition from the Chinese textile industry it went bankrupt and caused one or two thousand people to lose their jobs.

Due to its educational and social institutions, the state and the municipality are the largest employers and this is even true with respect to the low-educated workforce. Among the most important state-owned employers we find the Water Management Directorate responsible for water and flood management, the Road Maintenance Public Company, the state Forestry and the Town Management Company. These companies are the major actors of public employment programmes as well.

Although agriculture was never an important economic sector in this town, low-skilled people often took on seasonal work in agriculture in the county or further away. In addition, construction industry provided informal though rather regular employment for the low-educated. The 2008 crisis hit both of these sectors extremely hard. A large part of berry growing farms in the county stopped production during the last 3-4 years, while the crisis of the construction industry was the deepest among all economic sectors in the country. Thus, employment opportunities for low-skilled workforce were diminished by the crisis disproportionately.

1.2 Roma/Gypsy in Bulltown and Chavel

We received very different estimations about the size of the Roma population in Bulltown. According to the Central Statistical Office the proportion of Roma in the town is only 1%. In the 2010 election registry even less, only 250 individuals registered to vote for the Roma Minority Self Government, but according to the mayor this is about three times higher (seven to eight hundred), although their share within the working age population is higher (around 10 per cent following the Mayor's estimate) due to the shorter life expectancy. The president of the N county Gypsy Self Government stated that 1560 Roma lived in the town, including those, who were born within mixed-marriage families. The president of the local Gypsy Self Government estimated a total of 1200 Roma in the town. A Roma NGO conducted a survey among the Roma population of the county recently. This survey provides us with the demographic and employment profile of the Roma in the region. According to this survey 1859 Roma of the age 17 and above live in Bulltown, which indicates that their population share is somewhere around 15 per cent. According to the survey, the adult Roma population is very young: 40 per cent is between the age of 26-45 and 25 per cent belongs to the age-group of 45-65. Only 10 per cent is older than 65. The level of education is generally low when

compared to non-Roma: 26per cent of those living in the town have not graduated from primary school, they do not have any formal education. Almost half of the adult Roma have primary school education and 20% have some vocational qualification. Only 6% finished secondary school. Consequently three fourths of Roma in Bulltown belong to the category of low educational qualification. Still there are significant age differences in this respect: younger Roma have significantly higher educational qualifications than the older generation (Chart 1 in appendix). Among adolescents between 17 and 25 years the share of those with low education (primary and below) is only 50per cent, while over a tenth possesses secondary school maturity, while the highest proportion of individuals belonging to the lowest educational category is in pension age. This is very obviously the consequence of the educational expansion after 1945.

There are only two types of data included in this survey about the labour market situation: the share of long-term unemployed (LTU) and the share of those with restricted employment abilities (disabled or those with health problems). The proportion of those with restricted abilities is 4.5per cent. Long-term unemployment however is widespread among Roma of Bulltown: a third of them mentioned to be without a job for over a year. The most serious situation is that of the youth: while the share of LTU is 28-29per cent among 26-65years' old cohort, half of the adult young Roma are unemployed.

The most important employment opportunity for low-skilled Roma is offered by public employment schemes. The largest public employers are the water management company, the forestry and the road maintenance company. Although these employment programmes are not designed specifically for Roma, most of them find employment here. Welfare allowances are scarce to provide for the basic needs. When we asked about the sources of subsistence of poor Roma families without a stable job, we got a wide variety of answers: commute to work abroad, collect metal, collect wood for heating in the winter, selling everything, collect mushrooms, herbs and berries in the woods. These, however, are seasonal activities, providing unpredictable, temporary and insufficient income. However, there are a couple of Roma entrepreneurs who employ other Roma.

It is important to stress, however, that in terms of North Hungary, this town is characterized by social inclusion and peaceful interethnic relations: there is no segregation, either spatially or educationally, there are no Gypsy colonies, the leadership of the town cultivates partnership relations with representatives of the minority community and the Roma/ Gypsy tradition is respected. A sign of respect is a number of memorial tablets placed on the main street remembering famous Gypsy musicians of the town. The pro-active attitude towards Roma integration is well reflected by the fact that we met with several Roma employees in various public offices (mayors' office, employment office, church). People, with whom we managed to talk, regardless of whether they belonged to a minority or majority, unequivocally mentioned that ethnic discrimination was atypical in the town, though it may occur. *"I don't feel at all. I do not have such experience (of discrimination), but I have an acquaintance who experienced ethnic discrimination"* (Roma interviewee). Even those, who mentioned some experience with unequal treatment, told that the main problem was not discrimination but the lack of jobs, which results in various ways of unequal treatment and reliance on personal relations in the course of employing workforce. *"The problem was that she (sister of the interviewee) had higher qualification than the chief nurse and not that she is Roma. ... There is some discrimination, but the real problem is that unemployment is very high"*.

Gypsies of Bulltown represent a kind of elite within the county, though. The situation in the surrounding villages is significantly worse in terms of interethnic relations, sources of subsistence, job opportunities, social exclusion and poverty. There are several villages in the

direct surroundings of Bulltown, where Roma compose a majority of the population. Roma in Bulltown despise them *“We, Gypsies in Bulltown, we are ambitious Roma, we make efforts to integrate into the mainstream European society. But there are some, who are not like that, who did not graduate even from primary school. Moha and similar villages.”* (Roma interviewee from Bulltown). Many Roma in villages live in desperate poverty, there are no employment opportunities, and deviances related to social exclusion and desperation have widely developed.

2. Methodology

2.1 Field selection, methodology

Bulltown and Chavel were selected according to selection criteria defined by the project during its kick-off meeting. Bulltown corresponds to these conditions in the sense that it is a town with a Roma population above the average characterizing the country; it is also economically in a difficult situation but is definitely not among the most deprived towns in Hungary. In the selection process we used the National Statistical Office's and the National Employment Office's database on economic performance, on unemployment rates while for the share of Roma population we consulted census data, Kertesi and Kézdi 1998, and collected stakeholders' estimations. We also consulted information published by Roma NGOs on their local development activities. As a result, three towns were selected, two in North East Hungary and one in the south of the country. In order to make the best possible decision, we conducted a preliminary interview with the representative of a leading NGO that had experiences in the selected settlements. We also made exploratory journeys to two of the settlements. The result of the exploratory investigation was unequivocal: Bulltown fitted best into the criteria set by the research while it also proved to be suitable from the point of practical implementation. Although none of the researchers had previous experience with Bulltown, the leaders of the settlement (mayor, deputy mayor, head of the employment office) as well as the Roma minority community were open to participate in the investigation and were ready to provide us with information, while they also supported the research by recommending interviewees and helped to approach them.

The selection of the village proved to be more difficult: in most of the villages in the proximity (25 km) of Bulltown no ALMP functioned. Two villages were ruled out because of the lack of readiness to participate on the side of the local leaders. Further villages did not fit into the pattern defined by the research: either because they were not rural, but industrial or because they did not belong to the commuting area of Bulltown. Finally Chavel appeared to be a village which was in good reach from Bulltown, with a large Roma population, a supportive mayor and in which there was ALMP operating and which has a rich experience in employment programs previously.

2.2 Selection of interviewees: stakeholders and employers

The fieldwork consisted of a large number of interviews and one focus group discussion. The detailed list of interviews is provided in table 1. First we approached the mayor and the deputy mayor of the settlement. They were open to participate but required more information about the research. After sending a one-page description of the aims and the process of the envisaged research, they were ready to host us for an interview. This inventory interview clarified issues that were uncovered by the desktop research and confirmed that Bulltown fitted into all requirements that were defined by the team for selecting the field. The inventory interview proved to be very useful giving important

information about the town, its history, its economy, and employment situation on the one hand, but also it provided the research with valuable contacts in the town and its vicinity (names and contacts of employers, stakeholders, NGOs, Roma community leaders). The possibility of referring to the deputy mayor as the source of contact proved to be extremely useful: all of our interviewees in the public sector accepted our invitation to participate in the research on the premise that the interview was anonymous. The only exception was the Employment Office, which is a highly bureaucratic and centralized organization and thus, the head of the local employment office required the consent of the regional director prior to the interview. It was a bit time consuming, but after all, she gave her consent and we could go on with the research.

Table 1. Summary table of the interviews

Stakeholders	Mayor, deputy mayor at Bulltown
	Mayor of Chavel
	Head of the Employment Office
	Roma Coordinator at the Employment Office
	President of the N county Gypsy Minority Self Government (GMSF)
	President of Bulltown’s Gypsy Minority Self Government
	Financial manager of the GMSF
	Leader of a Roma NGO active in implementing employment programs
	Coordinator of the Roma labour market coordinator programme
	Leader of an NGO involved in employment programmes targeting disabled persons
	Roma leader of a religious faith community (new protestant) with a dominantly Roma membership
Head of the Social Welfare Office of the Municipality	
Employers	Human Resources Manager of a German multinational
	Manager of a private company employing low skilled workforce
	HR at the Water Management Company
	Technical expert (engineer) at the Water Management Company
	Director of the Forestry
	Director of the Municipal Enterprise
	HR manager of the Prison (responsible for implementing employment programs for prisoners)
	Manager of a small-size company, with Roma owner (car mechanic, wheel repair)
Employees, unemployed	unemployed, coordinator of a Roma employment Program (Roma, female, upper secondary school qualification)
	unemployed, participating in a Roma employment Program (Roma, female, primary education)
	unemployed working in public employment scheme (non-Roma, female, tertiary education)
	unemployed working in public employment scheme (non-Roma, male, university degree)
	unemployed, participating in Roma employment programme (Roma, female, vocational qualification)
Focus groups (FG)	Female focus group
Unsuccessful interviews	director of the cable factory

Unsuccessful focus groups	male focus group discussion with publicly employed in the forestry
	mixed group in the village
	female Roma group, participants of ALMP

It was more difficult to convince private companies (i.e. employers) to participate in the research: most typically they did not directly refuse our invitation but tried to find an excuse. We could convince most of them, after repeated phone-calls and mails. The only exception was the director of the cable factory, with whom we had four independent appointments, all of which he withdrew shortly before the meeting.

Unexpectedly, the most difficult task was to organize focus group discussions. First, we approached Roma NGOs and community leaders to support us in this effort, but received little effective assistance: they argued that people were reluctant to talk in a group and that it was difficult to convince them to come. Even offering some presents to participants did not break the ice. Then, we approached the implementing agencies of public employment schemes (the forestry, the municipality and the employment office) to help us with organizing FG. The forestry was open to assist us but only on the spot of the public work (in the forest) and only for a time-period of 30-40 minutes. We had to postpone this FG because of weather conditions several times (rain and cold) and the last time the head of the group withdrew from participation arguing that people were reluctant to talk to us. When inquiring about the possible reasons we were told that employees were afraid of saying something wrong, that could threaten their position within the public employment programme. Finally, we asked the mayor of the village to assist in organizing an FG discussion in the village with unemployed and ALMP beneficiaries. He promised to do so, but later he withdrew, telling that he did not expect people to be so reluctant to participate. He also said that they were afraid that participating in the research and sharing their experiences could endanger their situation as a public employee. After this chain of rejections we decided to replace focus group discussions with interviews, in which some unemployed were ready to participate. Nevertheless, this level of mistrust and concern on the side of unemployed, which we never experienced before in any of our empirical research, is an important symptom of the social crisis and the defencelessness of unemployed under the new system of workfare (Messing 2013, Köllő & Scharle, Csoba & Nagy 2012).

3. Findings

Most employers of Bulltown and the surrounding settlements are informed about and take advantage of available active labour market programmes and supports. However, the group in the focus of our investigation, the low-skilled, vulnerable and Roma unemployed, are reached dominantly (though not exclusively) by only one programme type, public employment. Besides this measure we found several small scale programmes, which target Roma, and are managed by Roma or pro-Roma NGOs. Such programmes, however, are typically small scale, short-term, temporary and incalculable. They support their beneficiaries as long as they operate and leave them alone after the term of the programme has expired. Such programmes are important, however, because some of them offer significant innovation in ALMP and their experiences may offer models for innovation for designing new programme types on large scale.

The broad spectrum of active labour market measures employed locally, such as wage subsidies, employment support, start-up incentives, and investment subsidies leave low-skilled Roma population usually unaffected. Even those programmes, which explicitly give

advantage to low skilled individuals, reach Roma to a negligible extent. A creaming effect is clearly present in relation to most of the ALMP, which target vulnerability in broader definition.

3.1 Job creation: public employment

Earlier in this report it has already been mentioned that public employment is the only ALMP, which reaches Roma in large numbers. Although this ALMP is not ethnically targeted, our research suggests that predominantly Roma are its beneficiaries. In today's Hungarian regulations two subtypes of public employment may be distinguished that provide very different conditions both for the employers and the public workers. The *state (country-wide) programmes* are organized and managed by large state-owned companies or public institutions, while the *municipal programmes* are organized locally by municipalities. In case of Bulltown national public employment programmes are organized by three actors: the Road Maintenance Public Non-Profit Company, the Mid-Danube Water Management Authority, and the Regional Forestry. 100% of wages and contributions of employees employed under the public employment scheme by these companies are reimbursed to 100%. These companies provide full time jobs typically for longer term (6-12 months). In contrast, municipal public employment programmes provide less advantageous conditions: reimbursement of 70% of wages and contributions of employees. As a consequence, municipalities have to provide 30% of the wages in addition to contributions, which is a huge, sometimes unmanageable burden for many of the small and poor municipalities without external income. Therefore, they organize short-term (1-3 months long) and part-time employment in order to include as many unemployed as possible, who otherwise would drop out of the welfare net²⁸. Bulltown's City Management company operates municipal public employment, while among the near-by villages only those municipalities are able to organize public employment activities, which have their own resources to fund the 30% own contribution. The poorest villages, with an important share of Roma population do not have sufficient funds, therefore long-term unemployed in such settlements are excluded from public employment opportunities.

3.1.1 Country-wide public employment programmes

Among the three companies which organize and implement national public employment programmes one, the Road Management Co., refused our request for an interview. Thus information was gained from two companies (Water Management Co, and the Regional Forestry) in the course of three interviews. As these programmes cover larger geographical areas (several settlements) only a small share of the employees are actually from Bulltown and Chaveland.

The Regional Forestry is a state-owned company managing a 65thousand acre forest territory. It has 174 employees. It has been running public employment programmes since 2004, but the number of public employees was the highest in 2012/2013: 375 unemployed, which is twice the number of their regular employees. Only 28 of them are residents of Bulltown: ten work in the town forest and 18 work in the garage. Other public employees live in other settlements and work there. The forestry runs a 7 months' long programme now but they expect an extension. The programme was expanded significantly in 2011, when the number of public employees doubled (earlier their number was always below 200). Activities include forest cleaning, collecting trash, forest cultivation, wood cutting and reparation of

²⁸ In Hungary the current regulations unemployed who cannot prove at least 30 days of public or volunteer work lose their entitlement to welfare allowances

trails. These activities would need to be completed irrespectively of public employment schemes; in response to our question about who would do this job in the absence of public employment programmes, the representative of the company said that they would probably outsource the work to smaller companies, but it would cost the forestry a lot more, as public employees are ultimately free workforce for them (though efficiency of the work would be higher in case of outsourcing the work to entrepreneurs).

Two thirds of public employees at the forestry are men and one third is estimated to be Roma. But they usually report a much lower share of Roma, because according to regulations, a company implementing ALMP has to cooperate with the Roma Minority Self-Government if the presence of Roma exceeds 20%. The forestry wanted to avoid cooperation with RMSG. Age had no relevance in employment: youth who left school recently were participating as well as men short ahead of retirement age. The majority of public employees was unskilled and only about 100 public employees were registered as skilled workers. The gross monthly wage of unskilled workers is 75 thousand HUF (€250), for skilled workers 97 thousand HUF (€325) and brigade leaders receive 106.5 thousand HUF (€360).

Our interviews with unemployed revealed that getting a position – even as a public employee – at the forestry is perceived as a privilege, because jobs are relatively long-term, stable and well paid, while *“the work is all right”*. According to several interviewees *“one can get into the pool of forestry public employees only through personal contacts, if someone recommends you”*. Our interview with the representative of the company revealed that there is a core team, consisting of approximately 120-130 individuals, who are recurrently employed within public employment schemes. People with whom the company is satisfied, are always referred to the Employment Office, which constitutes the first round of the recruitment procedure. As to the remaining part of publicly employed, recommendations made through personal channels are considered. Interviews with both employers and employees confirmed that someone without a personal reference is rarely employed, only if there is a larger recruitment round. The representative of the Forestry argued that the Employment Office keeps on sending unemployed without any prior selection and thus, they need to filter out those who might potentially cause problems. In order to be on the safe side with new employees, they always offer short-term contracts for the first time (3 months) and renew them if there is no problem with the individual.

The Mid Danube Water Management Authority (MD-WMA) is the largest public employer in the town and the wider region. It employs 1200 public employees; presently 600 of whom work at the Ipoly river crossing Bulltown (600 work at another river in the county). They do heavy physical and sometimes dirty work: the cleaning of the rivers and smaller incoming water-streams, the cleaning and cutting of vegetation along the banks (6-10 metres zone) of the river and water streams, collecting communal garbage in this zone, collecting and cutting all items in the water that may obstruct the streaming, and sometimes elutriation, bush-cutting and reaping along the river-banks. This list clarifies that work may be extremely hard.

The number of public employees is defined centrally for each settlement along the river. In Bulltown 60 unskilled workers and 20-30 other (administrative and skilled workers) participate in the programme. Our interviews revealed that even highly skilled people are employed as public employees accomplishing scope of activities that necessitate high qualification: for example, an HR administrator with professional qualification and 30 years' of work experience was employed as a public employee, similarly to the young technological inspector, with university degree.

Our interviewees estimated the share of Roma among the public employees in the company to be around 75 per cent; the proportion of men is dominant due to the heavy physical work they have to accomplish. In terms of the age distribution there is a greater deviation: many start their employment career here, but one may find individuals of retirement age as well.

Similarly to the forestry, the MD-WMA utilizes the public employment scheme to test new workers: they employ new graduates in the framework of public employment for one or two years and if the company is satisfied with them it might employ them with a regular contract, later on.

The recruitment of public employees is based on earlier experiences and personal contacts, references. The lead of a brigade compiles a list with whom s/he prefers to work, while in smaller settlements such lists are usually compiled or double checked by the mayor, who has knowledge of the needy in the village. Simultaneously the Employment Office also directs unemployed individuals to the company, but there is no obligation to place them. Public employees without a personal reference are rarely offered a job even within the public employment scheme. In case of any problems (being late, alcohol, leaving work without a permit) the contract is stopped immediately, and as a consequence the public employee loses the entitlement to all welfare allowance for two years. There is no space for an appeal on the side of the public employee.

We asked the interviewees from the Water Management company how they organized the work before the expansion of public employment schemes. Apparently the same amount of work was completed by 6-8 regular employees with machinery before public employees were hired (now 600 public employees do this work!). They still have the machines, which stand in the garage. When we inquired about any additional advantage of the programme, and specifically referred to potential ecological benefits, the interviewees stated, that *"maybe, cutting bushes by man instead of machines is somewhat more ecologically friendly, but the most important and maybe only rationale behind the economically irrational hiring of 600 public employees (instead of 6-8 regular employees and machines) is the improvement of labour statistics by the government"* (engineer).

Activities of the water management authority are dominantly **ecological**: the company is responsible for doing work in order to prevent flooding and inland inundation or - if this is not possible - to treat and limit their consequences. Flood prevention and management is a principal priority of the activities within the company, while ecological aspects appear only vaguely within public employment programmes. One activity, which can be referred to as considering ecological sustainability is bush-cutting and cleaning of river banks and waters by hand power. Another activity that bears ecological aspects is that collected garbage (either communal or natural) can no longer be burnt on the spot: because it would pollute the environment, it has to be transported. But ecological considerations do not go beyond these evident measures despite the fact that the large quantity of biomass cut and/or collected from the waters and its banks could be utilized for energy-production. Or, the activities could cover the protection of natural waters-streams from poisoning by agricultural chemicals by cultivating bush-lanes separating agricultural fields from water protection areas (6-10 metres from the river). We did not find any trace of such thinking in the Water Management Company.

The lessons learnt from the fieldwork concerning country-wide public employment are the following:

- 1- Public employment functions as a second, subordinate labour market to the primary LM. Employees receive a lower salary compared to the minimum wage in the primary

LM and employers have a very restricted pool from which they may select workforce. In return, the cost of HR is zero.

- 2- The example of the Forestry and the Water Management Company shows that employers participating in public employment programmes behave like market actors: they select the “best” applicants, try to reduce the cost of selection through utilizing informal information channels in the course of recruitment and cream out ‘best’ (i.e. with education and work experience) unemployed, irrespective of the fact that they constitute free workforce. The Employment Office, however, does not have the tools to push companies to accept unemployed without selection.
- 3- Public employment programmes, especially in such large scales, have a crowding-out effect: they interfere with the labour market equilibrium by (1) filling up regular positions with publicly employed (2) employing people whom they would have employed anyway. The case of the forestry demonstrates that the work done by public employees would have been done anyway, public employment programs just make it much cheaper for the company. The case of the Water Management Company, however, illustrates that even highly skilled workforce is employed in the framework of public employment, which is very advantageous for the employer who has no HR costs, but disadvantageous for the employee, who receives a considerably reduced wage. Also, the case of the Water Management Company, where 600 publicly employed substitute the work of 6-8 machines, shows that the reorganization of work may become economically completely irrational, following the exclusive political goal, namely that of improving labour statistics. Therefore, none of the publicly available employment statistics provide data disaggregated by public and regular employment.

3.1.2 *Municipal public employment programs*

In Bulltown the City Management company has been organizing municipal public employment programmes since the mid-1990s, while in the villages of the region the municipalities do this only in case they have the necessary resources to cover the own contribution.

Earlier, the City Management (CM) company was the largest public employer with 150-200 positions for public workers. The activities cover the cleaning and maintaining of public spaces in the town and public buildings. Since the introduction of the new public employment system (dividing the programme into state and municipal programs and giving priority to the former category) the CM company has an intake of 30-40 public positions yearly. Implementing organizations (municipalities or their companies) need to provide 30% own contribution to the cost of labour. Before this proportion had been 15%, consequently the change in the regulation caused serious obstacles to municipalities, especially those which are small and poor, to implement public employment programmes. Taking into account that the municipality’s expense per public employee is 17000 HUF (60 EURO) whereas paying the same person welfare allowance costs the municipality 4500 HUF (15 Euro) only, many municipalities are considering to withdraw from the programme. These changes explain the sudden decrease of the number of public employees in municipal programmes well: in Bull-town 10-20 per cent of the earlier number will be employed, while in Chavel they could not tell, whether they would be able to continue with the programme. For beneficiaries this programme type is also less advantageous, because it offers a job only for a very limited time span (1-3 months) and most typically only for part time (0.75FTE) employment with corresponding wages. Here, the main goal on the side of the municipality as well as the unemployed is the prevention of the exclusion from welfare allowances. Thus,

types of wage support are targeted at various vulnerable groups and the level of support depends on the level of vulnerability. Our interviews with companies revealed two very different strategies on the side of employers. On the one end we may find those multinational companies, which are suppliers of top multinational car and electronic companies in Europe (there were several of these in our field). These companies produce top-technologies, are present in an extremely competitive market, and therefore employ predominantly qualified workers, who work on specialized and very expensive machines. The available subsidies are negligible in relation to the total wage costs and it is usually not worth to do all the related administration for the available support the subsidies would mean to the budget. *“Subsidies are usually not designed for companies like ours. Either individuals targeted by the subsidies may not be employed (lack of education, lack of flexibility) or the conditions are unacceptable (further employment). Most of the times our company simply does not fall into the category eligible for the subsidy.”* (HR manager of a multinational company). Several high-tech companies had such attitudes, although, if there is any universal subsidy requiring acceptable administration, they make use of it (i.e. Start Card). Our interviews revealed that these companies have a good relationship with the Employment Office and also receive unemployed from the EO for recruitment, but rarely do the latter pass the admission tests of the company. We found no traits of ethnic discrimination practices in multinationals: both stakeholders and unemployed interviewees confirmed that any Roma who would fulfil the requirements is offered a job. Our Roma interviewees mentioned these companies as the only chance for a job (besides public employment). When we asked about the possible solutions with regard to unemployment the HR manager unequivocally opted for more education and specialized trainings, instead of wage subsidies and other support schemes, which - in his opinion - solved the situation of the unemployed only as long as the subsidy lasted.

The other subgroup of companies were constituted by those firms, which shaped their employment strategy such that they gained the most support out of labour market subsidies within the framework set by ALMP (or beyond). One of these was a small company that produced electronic particles. They employed mainly low-skilled workers whom they trained on the spot and who performed extremely monotonous work, with totally unpredictable time-schedules. Sometimes they had to work 10-14 days in a row, later they could stay at home for several days - depending on the labour demand. Also, working hours were incalculable. Workers are paid according to pieces done, independently of the time spent at work. This meant that those who were less experienced earned even less than the amount of social benefit and those who were more trained and experienced earned wages around the minimum wage. Only the most experienced and skilful (and of course flexible) workers could earn more than the minimum wage. The company had an extremely bad reputation in the settlement. Approximately half of the employees were stable and the other half was constantly fluctuating. Still, this company was profiting most from ALMP. For most of its employees it claimed and received wage subsidy from the labour office, even if sometimes it was not clear whether they met the fundamental standards concerning employment. The owner and manager of the company introduced his company as a last resort for the low-skilled, long-term unemployed. The other side of the coin was revealed by a coordinator from the Employment Office: making use of wage subsidies and other ALMP supports, most of its employees did not cost him a penny, as costs of employing long-term unemployed falling into one of the category of vulnerability were entirely covered by the state for three months. This was also an important reason for the huge fluctuations within this company.

Apparently, the administrative costs, the bureaucracy and the low level of flexibility of ALMP supports force companies to decide, whether they optimize the HR strategy regarding labour market subsidies, or try to make profit on the market, irrespective of the subsidies.

3.3 Ethnically targeted, Roma employment programs

In Bulltown several Roma and pro-Roma NGOs are actively applying for funds targeting labour market inclusion and complex community development. In Chavel there is one Roma NGO, which had been active in implementing employment programmes, but they did not demonstrate any activity at the time of research. The most active organization in the town and the smaller region are the county division of the Hungarian Gypsy Self Government and Bulltown's Gypsy Self-Government. Both of these are elected bodies, which won their legitimacy during the minority self-government elections. Besides, there is a very active and socially embedded NGO in Bulltown and its direct environment. All of these organizations have applied to, won funding and implemented several labour market inclusion projects.

There were two recent or still ongoing labour market projects run by the N county Gypsy Self Government (GSG). The first is titled "*Growing chance for women*", which will be implemented soon by the local GSG in Bulltown and its closer environment. A great advantage of the planned programme is that it targets a multiply vulnerable population segment: Roma women persistently excluded from the labour market. The programme is country-wide, and is implemented by local GSGs. It offers training to women, in "female" professions, such as kindergarten nurses and social care givers. The programme is gigantic, in each county (there are 19 in the country) several hundred Roma women are expected to be involved. Although, according to the programme description on the webpage of the GSG it is "*a training and employment in the social and childcare system*" programme, we did not find any clue of the employment element of it in our fieldwork. Neither the person responsible for local implementation, nor women participating in the programme were aware of the employment part. It is still a question, whether this highly relevant programme will turn into an efficient employment programme or remains to be one of the many training programmes.

Another, recently finished programme, funded by the EU development funds (ÁROP 2.2.15), consisted of four elements, out of which two were implemented locally. In the framework of the "Labour market coordinator" programme 19 Roma unemployed were employed as labour market coordinators for a nine-month period. Each of the coordinators covered 6-8 settlements, where they had to recruit six unemployed every week. Optimally, the recruited unemployed were not registered at the Employment Office, or though being registered, still have not been offered a job for the last 12 months. The interview with the leader of the programme and the focus group discussion with participants were rather confusing and many details could not be clarified. The goal of the programme remained unclear: we assume that the aim was to reach out to the population of the most disadvantaged, segregated villages and shepherd them into the system of Labour Market Services, provide tailored services and consultations for them, and support them in finding a job. The programme did not seem to be very successful locally in the light of the fact that even the local programme leaders and participants were not aware of their tasks and duties: for example FG participants were uncertain (the FG was completed in the last week of the nine months long programme) whether they had to recruit six individuals every week or altogether, and they seemed to be unaware about what they should have done with the recruited unemployed. The limited success of the programme may be explained by the fact that the implementing organization (GSG) had no professional knowledge and experience in labour market programmes and they did not look for (and according to an interview with the Employment Office they refused) cooperating with professionals and labour market

organizations in the field. Coordinators in the programme were similarly unprepared for the task, and did not get any training. The only result of the programme was the compiling of a registry about unemployed Roma in the villages of N county, about their labour market status, education, and all important socio-demographic characteristics. The interviews did not shed light on how these registries will be utilized in the future, but they were not shared with Labour Market Services (Employment Office).

The second element of the programme had finished by the time of the fieldwork. Within this programme-element Roma people were provided with a job in public administration offices. The aim was to have Roma servants in the public administration offices to which Roma clients would turn with their administrative problems (documents, permits etc.). The motivation behind the programme was the frequent complaints by Roma about not being listened to by the administrators and maltreatment in the offices. On the homepage of the GSG we found no reference to the number of employees, the budget and the terms of employment. We could not get any information whether any Roma got an administrative position in Bulltown or the neighbouring villages. Nevertheless, we find the basic idea to be beneficial: it could provide an opportunity for qualified Roma to get a job in public administration while it is also probable that Roma clerks would treat problems and cases of Roma clients with more tolerance and care.

Our interviews revealed that there was no monitoring or evaluation of the programmes in Bulltown, the database compiled during the program was not used for purposes of quality control.

The Safer Future Association is a civil organization established by local Roma in Bulltown. It is very active in applying to, gaining and implementing employment and complex programs in the micro-region. According to the director of the NGO there were two programmes that have been implemented recently. One is a predecessor of the labour market coordinator programme described earlier in this report that is now implemented by the GSG. Safer Future has elaborated originally this programme type and implemented it in the period of 2009-11, with the funding of the Operational Program of the National Development Program. 300 Roma participated in this programme during which Roma labour market coordinators were trained and allocated among small settlements in north-east Hungary. Their task was to find long-term unemployed Roma people living in the settlements and support their integration into the labour market service system through tailored consultation and support. When compared to similar programmes currently implemented by the Gypsy Self Government there are several important differences to be recognized: in the course of the programme the NGO has intensively cooperated with the Employment Office both in terms of selecting participants and training them. Although there was an in-depth monitoring of programmes within the OP (including this programme) the access to the results is unfortunately restricted for the public.

4. Conclusion

As a conclusion of the fieldwork we may say that public employment programmes are the most wide-spread ALMP in the field, especially for low-skilled Roma unemployed population. There is a robust internal hierarchy within the public employment schemes: the country-wide programmes provide full time employment for a relatively long period, and although the wages are lower than the minimum wage, unemployed are competing for such possibilities because in settlements, where due to the lack of companies there is no other opportunity for a job, public employment is the only possibility to earn income. This is

especially the case for low-skilled Roma with large families, who have very limited chances to find a job by commuting. In parallel to this, the municipal public employment programmes provide a – usually part-time - job only for very short periods of time, with correspondingly low wages. The only “good” thing in this programme is that it enables long-term unemployed to receive entitlements for social welfare allowances. But due to its short-term, part-time nature, and the fact that the most needy (and least suitable) workforce is employed, the efficiency of the work is usually extremely low. *“With public employment we achieved that we give money for people not to do anything useful. It has no influence on the Hungarian economy at all, it only helps to produce more favourable statistics. It even increases tensions within the settlement, because people see, that public employee Roma do nothing for the same amount for which Hungarians work a lot”* (lead of the Roma self-government). Although there are several inaccuracies in this quotation, it sheds light on the futility of public employment: people are paid for doing work, which is either not very useful (swiping the street up and down all day), or which otherwise would be completed by regular employees (as in the case of the forestry).

When speaking about public employment we may state that it often traps unemployed people: instead of supporting unemployed in their return to the primary labour market by enhancing education and providing some vocational qualification, or work experience with employers, it traps long-term unemployed in the vicious circle of public employment and social welfare benefit. Experts as well as many of our interviewees confirmed that many implementing companies and institutions in fact abuse the system and make use of the free workforce conversely to the original goals of the program. Many of the implementers fill in their regular positions with public employees, even by firing regular workforce. As a consequence the present regulation on the programme has a crowding out effect: institutions may replace their regular workforce by public employed. The option of free workforce (free for the institution or company) may sometimes result in highly irrational economic behaviour.

A further consequence of the differentiation and different conditions of state and municipal public employment programmes is that exactly those are excluded from programmes providing relatively favourable conditions, who are most in need of them. The intersection of various disadvantages leads to the fact that the most disadvantaged people stay out of the reach of public employment.

The next conclusion of the fieldwork is that other, more favourable ALMP types hardly reach Roma unemployed. The only programme type, which demonstrated a significant increase in reaching out to low-skilled Roma were training courses organized by the Employment Office. This change may be attributed to a modification of the regulations, which now include a preference towards 20% of Roma participating in trainings.

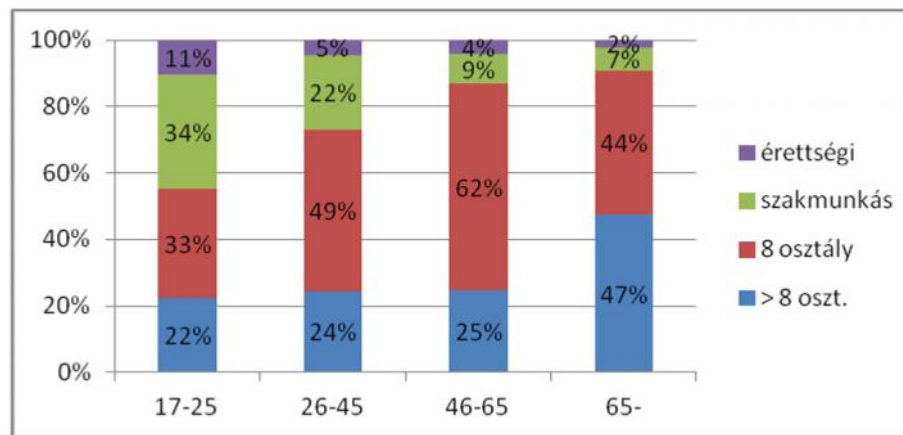
NGO activity is very vivid in Bulltown and its surrounding. The analysis of the programmes operated by NGOs indicates that personal dedication, professional preparedness and the knowledge of the community together with good working relationships with majority institutions are essential for the successful completion of such programmes. A major difficulty in this context is the unpredictability of funding and the immense administrative burdens attached to it.

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Appendix

Chart 1. Educational qualification of adult Roma population in Bulltown. (source: survey of Roma in N county, 2012)



History of Roma in Bulltown

According to a local Roma leader, Roma have settled in Bulltown in the 1500s, mainly wealthier merchants who brought musicians with them. There were (and to some extent still are) famous musician dynasties living in the town, though most of them have moved away from here. During the state socialist system many Roma lived here, and a large number worked as musicians in restaurants, hotels (there was a 100 person orchestra in the town), and a large share of the Gypsies worked in the industry.

After the transition in 1989 being musician as a source of subsistence disappeared and many of the families started small retail businesses or left the town. Many of the former industrial plants have also stopped their production, though not immediately; more typically the cutback was gradual. Many of those who became unemployed started to commute to Budapest and other regions of the country working in constructions. Agricultural work is less characteristic of this region: the branch of agriculture providing seasonal employment is the growing and picking of berries. Besides, low skilled unemployed people are involved in picking mushrooms and herbs. Large scale agricultural production is missing in this region.

Rather exceptionally in N county, Roma in Bulltown live spatially integrated, there is no Gypsy segregate in the town. Educational level of working age Roma is higher than that of the Roma population in the county as a whole. According to the leaders of the Roma community interethnic relations in the town have always been peaceful: ethnic majority Hungarians have respected Roma, there was a market demand for Gypsy music: *“Musician Gypsies have been respected and recognized even 15 years ago”* – says a leader of the Minority Self Government, who is a descendant of a musician family. After the system change in 1989 this has changed: music ceased to be a source of subsistence. Many have reacted to the new situation with emigration: several extended families have migrated to Canada, and many to other towns of Hungary. The wealthier musician families started with small retail business, or micro enterprises in construction industry. However, most of the Roma did not have the capital and HR resources to start a business: most of them found employment as unskilled or

low-skilled workers at multinational companies in the town or in another town 40 km away, with several multinational companies during the 1990s. By today, most of these factories have closed down (or moved further to the east) and employment opportunities, especially for low skilled workforce – and Roma among them – have shrunk considerably. Most of the Roma live in the rotation of unemployment status and public employment. According to a local leader *“many of those who worked earlier stay at home since 2009”*

Another important and quite recent phenomenon in the town, mentioned by several Roma community leaders, is the widespread indebtedness of Roma families. Several researches prove that this phenomenon, and its most extreme type, usury credits, are widespread in several parts of Hungary (north east and south west) but N county was relatively unaffected by this phenomenon until recently. Economic crisis, hitting unskilled and vulnerable groups most harshly, the disappearing job-opportunities for them has stimulated the vicious circle of indebtedness and lack of income.

An important fact about the Roma community of Bulltown is that a large share of them joined a new-Christian Church, named Congregation of Faith. The congregation, the leader of which is Roma himself, has established an important community for Roma/ Gypsy people and *„it has totally changed their image. There has not been any shouting and hype ever since”*. Leaders of the congregation have a great authority among local Roma, their opinion is always respected. They regularly organize cultural events and festivals, care for the needy.

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List of abbreviations

CAE	County Agency for Employment
MIG	Minimum Income Guarantee

1. Introduction, description of the field

The two settlements selected for the case study are Lenta and Bita²⁹, both located in the North-Western part of Romania, in Bistria-Năsud county.

Lenta

Lenta is a village with a population of 5503 situated in the South-Western part of Bistrița-Năsăud county. The Roma living in this region migrated here in the pre-communist and the communist period. According to the 2011 Census, the ethnic composition of the population is as follows: 3964 Romanians, 1056 Roma, 464 Hungarians and 19 others. The most important economic activities for this region are in the fields of agriculture, commerce and services. The majority of employers and available labour market force are concentrated in agricultural activities such as plant growing, viticulture (a tradition for Lenta region), farming, wood industry, and bread manufacture. According to City Hall representatives, investments are scarce. A general concern regarding the local labour market is the acute lack of employment opportunities.

Roma in Lenta

In terms of housing, the living conditions of the Roma are generally poorer than those of the non-Roma in the village, especially for the Roma living next to the landfill. Concerning education, the majority of them received primary education (four grades) or less. The Roma in Lenta think that during the communist period they had better employment opportunities than today, especially in the local agricultural state hold and the factories located in Bită's industrial platform. After the collapse of the communist regime, the agricultural state company closed down together with many state owned factories, leaving a large share of the Roma population unemployed; at present, the number of those having permanent employment contract is no higher than 5%. The majority of Roma are involved in informal employment in the fields of agriculture, constructions, cleaning or iron collecting.

Bită

Bită is situated in the Central-South-Eastern part of the county and has a population of 85334 citizens, with a majority of 90.2% Romanians, followed by 6% Hungarians and 3.6 % Roma.

According to the 2011 Census, the national average for the Roma population is 3.2%, which means that Bită has a Roma population share exceeding the country's average. The economy of Bită has encountered significant difficulties during the transition period, when several factories collapsed. A large number of workers were laid off, which affected the Roma as well. In a labour market with a lack of employment opportunities, especially for the low-educated, it became very difficult for the Roma to find employment. Many of them remained unemployed, working only in the informal economy and receiving Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) benefits.³⁰

In terms of employment, the service sector accounts for the highest number of employees in Bită, followed by industry and construction. Representing 2 % of total employment opportunities, agriculture also plays a mentionable role.

²⁹ We are using pseudo-names of the towns in order to provide anonymity of our interviewees.

³⁰ According to Law No. 416 from 18/07/2001, published in the Official Gazette of Romania No. 401 from 20/07/2001

Roma in Bita

According to the City Hall representatives, the majority of the Roma community in Bita settled down during the communist times. A part of them used to live in the historic centre, but they were recently relocated to a marginal community outside the town. Others live in two marginal localities, also part of Bita town: Sata and Signu. In general, Roma in Bita have a low degree of education, but the representatives of the City Hall estimate that 70% have completed mandatory education (8 or 10 grades), while less than 10% have not completed primary education. Roma communities are underdeveloped in terms of housing, with numerous families and poor living conditions, except for a few commanding appearance houses, usually inhabited by Roma working abroad. Local authorities from both Bita and Lenta state that the migration ratio in the case of Roma is no higher than 5%. With regard to the Roma workforce, it is important to mention that the majority of employed Roma fall into the category of unskilled workforce.

1.1 The experiences of Roma with job opportunities

According to results from focus group research, job opportunities are scarce as Roma face a number of obstacles such as the collapse of local factories, the lack of sufficient education and job qualification, commuting expenses and discriminatory practices on the labour market.

Industrialization and commuting expenses

Due to the fact that many factories closed and people lost their jobs, many of the participants mentioned that Lenta *“developed from the richest village in the county, to the poorest.”* Others mentioned that industrialization led to a decrease in local employment opportunities such as daily working in the agricultural sector. When asked if things had changed regarding job opportunities, one participant said that it was worse now because the salaries are lower and because of the necessity to commute.

“Before, we could work in Sata. Now we can't... they are not interested in us... we are forced to come to Bita... it's not a problem, but it's a problem that we don't have enough money for the commute.”(Unemployed)

Education and qualification

The level of education was also brought into discussion as an obstacle to finding employment: *“They won't hire you if you don't have studies... they don't appreciate when a young person is looking for a job... especially when it's about ethnicities (...).”*

They also mentioned that because many of them were under-qualified, they could only apply for certain jobs: *“If you don't go to school, you can't go anywhere, you can only sweep or work at the glass houses.”*

Discrimination

Discrimination seems to be widespread and a serious obstacle to Roma employment. A significant part of the focus group participants presented experiences with regard to discriminatory practices in employment, most typically on grounds of ethnicity and age. One participant from Bita told us:

“At five kilometres distance from us there is a syringe factory. Gypsies from our village went there and they wouldn't take them (...) it is written outside, there is a sign, just like in prison (...) we do not hire Roma ethnics.” (Unemployed)

The majority of the participants explained how they were refused when looking for a job or when participating in a job interview: *“When you arrive there, he looks at you once, from head to*

toe, the boss or whomever - I'm sorry, all the jobs are taken." One participant considers that discrimination is not always overt- because it is illegal -, but it is a frequent practice.

"When he sees you are a little bit blacker, he asks: "How many years of education have you completed"? If you are applying as an unqualified worker, you don't need an education (...) but when they see you, they say no, because if one steals, they say Roma are taught to steal, are taught to lie and are taught not to work. There is a great deal of discrimination."(Unemployed)

Roma ethnicity is considered to be a more important criterion than work experience, some of the participants think. Ethnicity surpasses education, too. Some were even told straightforwardly that they will not be employed because of their ethnicity: *"(...) Why did you turn me down? 'Because you are a Gypsy'. Yes, this word came out of his mouth. When you are a Gypsy you are not a priority as a human being."*

Discriminatory practices are so frequent that one participant views them as normal. She states: *"It is something normal that Roma have less opportunities because we do not have a proper education, and moreover, we are Roma..."*

A problem they were all faced with was the content of the documents they needed to provide in the selection process, be it the CV or other application materials requested by the employers. These documents make them susceptible to discrimination by inquiring about their ethnicity, health status, and age.

Discriminatory practices arise even in the context of meeting up with employers at the County Agency for Employment (CAE) office. Several participants reported being refused because of their skin colour or age. The official at the CAE also addressed the issue of discrimination, but from another perspective:

"Indeed, they are discriminated against. Yet, I don't know if we can call it discrimination because the economic agent needs first of all to employ someone who is qualified, young, and strong, with no health problems, because when a person is older than 45-50 years old, it is probable that he develops other problems, but he needs to be at work every day. And of course, there are other categories which are discriminated against as well, not only the Roma. Maybe they have problems at home, in their family and they cannot concentrate on their work, cannot fit in at work." (Stakeholder, Official of the County Agency for Employment)

Sources and channels used in finding information

The shared opinion of the focus group participants is that no NGOs are active in the field of employment of vulnerable groups. They would consider this to be a great help for them, but *"no one is interested in what concerns us."* Although the Roma Party has an office in Lenta, participants claim it has never been involved in helping the community. When asked about sources and channels used in finding information about labour market opportunities, the majority of participants have no knowledge of where to find information or whom to turn to. While few reported making use of newspaper advertisements or the internet, the most common source for finding employment is the informal network such as asking friends, relatives, and acquaintances for information and direct recommendations. Another resource mentioned was religious community.

They also mentioned the CAE as a source of information, but when approaching the employers identified through this channel, they usually found out that there were no job openings. Some of them reported directly contacting the employer, leaving their CV and their phone number, others filling out documents at the employers' offices. However, employers never got back to them. This brings up another issue, namely the expenses paid

on transportation in order to meet with employers or enquire about job vacancies at the companies' headquarters.

2. Methodology

2.1 Field selection, methodology

Throughout the process of selecting the field for the case study, other settlements were considered as well in Cluj county. After several rounds of communication, we were refused by the head of the CAE in Cluj, who concluded that the study was not needed there, because there were sufficient internal evaluations of the implementation of active measures. Therefore, we turned our attention to Lenta village and the town of Bită, where data document the presence of numerous Roma communities, facing difficulties on the labour market. The main reason for choosing this site was the fact that it illustrates the situation of many Romanian small industrial towns and nearby villages, where the collapse of industrial factories led to serious socio-economic difficulties for the local population.

2.2 Selection of interviewees: stakeholders and employers

We started our research in the settlements by arranging a meeting with the head of the CAE in Bită, who decided to delegate the responsibility to meet with us to one of the Agency's counsellors. Eventually, we received scarce information from CAE representatives, who refused to answer some of the questions and to discuss the implementation of active labour market measures. We have partially completed the missing data by requesting information from the City Hall, but this was only possible for the statistical and descriptive data. Therefore, we could not gather sufficient information on CAE representatives' opinion and evaluation of local implementation of active labour market policies.

In Bită, we selected the employers by consulting a database of all active employers. Out of this list we selected 50 employers using the following criteria: number of employees (we selected the largest 10 employers) and activity domains (we selected the domains in which statistics show that Roma are usually employed or in which Roma are usually not employed). We further checked and completed the list by asking Roma representatives and stakeholders about the main employers, the employers who usually employ Roma and those who usually do not. The final list consisted of 30 employers, whom we contacted via e-mail and telephone, presenting the purpose of the study and asking for their consent to participate in the interviews. We then arranged interviews with the eight employers who agreed to participate.

Concerning Lenta village, there has not been a Local Employment Agency since 2010. In Lenta, we interviewed the person delegated by the Mayor to offer information to us regarding the locality and the local labour market. We addressed the CAE in Bită and asked for data regarding Lenta village, but the answer was that in their statistic reports data were not collected at the locality level, but at county level and because of that they could not provide the requested data. In Lenta we contacted all employers having more than five employees, as described by the interviewee at the City Hall. Two employers agreed to participate in the interviews. There were no important difficulties throughout these interviews, only one firm requested to preserve confidentiality of the data.

Table1. Interviewed stakeholders and employers

	Bitá	Lenta
Stakeholders	Official of the CAE	Official of the City Hall
	Official of the City Hall	
Employers	Director of the Public Services department at the City Hall	Director of a company working in the field of brick making
	Director of a company in the field of metallurgical technology	Human resources specialist of a company in the field of dairy industry
	Manager of the human resources department of a company in the field of copper and aluminium electric cables	
	Financial director of a company in the field of cable harnesses for the automotive industry	
	Production manager and economic director of a company in the field of components and machinery for earth-moving equipment	
	Manager of the human resources department of a company in the field of manufacture of batteries for automobiles, trucks and locomotives	
	Manager of the human resources department of a company in the field of systems and solutions for installations and construction	
	Director of a company in the field of sanitation	

2.3 Recruitment and organization of focus group discussions

We organised a total of 6 focus group discussions, three in each of the settlements. A description of the participants, organisation and recruitment is presented in table 2.

Throughout the focus group discussions, some common aspects emerged. In general, participants were not familiar with this type of meetings and were surprised why we were interested in their opinion. They felt more comfortable discussing freely, rather than following the questions we addressed. They largely discussed the aspect of discrimination and lack of support from the local authorities. A high share of the participants has hardly been included in any active measures, or some of them did not even have knowledge of the existence of the CAE.

Table 2. Description of focus group participants, recruitment and organisation

Bita	Lenta
<p>Focus group 1: 7 participants <i>Recruitment and organisation:</i> with the help of CAE representatives and the Professional Training Centre <i>Participant description:</i> six Roma and one Hungarian, four men and three women, aged 25 to 54. Participants declare to be household workers, and the majority receives MIG benefits.</p>	<p>Focus group 1: 6 participants <i>Recruitment and organisation:</i> with the help of the former employee of the Local Employment Agency <i>Participant description:</i> six Roma ethnics, two men and four women, aged 32 to 42. Three participants are household workers and three occasionally work as daily labourers. They also receive MIG benefits.</p>
<p>Focus group 2: 7 participants <i>Recruitment and organisation:</i> with the help of City Hall representatives <i>Participant description:</i> seven Roma, five men and two women, aged 22 to 62. They currently benefit from two forms of social benefits: MIG or social canteen. They also work as informal daily labourers in agriculture.</p>	<p>Focus group 2: 6 participants <i>Recruitment and organisation:</i> with the help of the former employee of the Local Employment Agency <i>Participant description:</i> four Roma men and two Roma women, aged 32 to 42. They have neither working income, nor MIG benefits. They work as daily labourers in agriculture, when opportunity arises.</p>
<p>Focus group 3: 13 participants <i>Recruitment and organisation:</i> with the support of an informal leader of the Roma community <i>Participant description:</i> 13 Roma, seven women and six men, aged 20 to 42. Six participants state that they have been legally employed at some point, but the majority for short periods of time. All participants declare that they currently do not have any income, except for incomes from informal work (agriculture, constructions and iron collecting).</p>	<p>Focus group 3: 11 participants <i>Recruitment and organisation:</i> with the help of the former employee of the Local Employment Agency <i>Participant description:</i> 11 Roma people, five men and six women, aged 25 to 62. One female participant reported being a household worker, the other ten participants daily labourers. For all of them, the main sources of income are MIG benefits.</p>

3. Findings

3.1 Overview of the local labour market

Bitá’s economy is based on the services sector to a large extent, along with the industry sector and constructions. The local industry produces mainly goods for export; some of the most important employers in Bitá operate in this field. In Lenta, the main employers are active in the agricultural sector, food industry, wood industry, constructions and the extractive industry. The interviewed employers share the same perspective on the local labour market, describing it as somehow contracting and with insufficient working opportunities. When asked about the local labour market during the last five years, there was an agreement among all employers about the impact of the economic crisis: “(...) there are a lot of companies in difficulty. (...) I blame it on the economic crisis, which, unfortunately, is accentuating, and it is not as we expected, that the market would make a comeback.” Some employers also mentioned the difficulty of finding qualified employees in Bitá. Because of this, their company was forced to relocate employees, even if it imposed higher costs upon the company.

3.2 Local active labour market schemes

Representatives of the CAE stated that they implemented all measures established at the central level. At this point, it is important to mention that the CAE is subordinated to the National Employment Agency and to the Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection and Elderly. Therefore, the interviewee from the CAE enumerated all active labour market measures stipulated by Law no. 76/2002 on Unemployment Insurance Fund and Employment Stimulation and Law no. 116/2001 on Prevention and Fighting Social Marginalisation.

The CAE in Bita refused to offer detailed information regarding the budget and financing of the policy measures implemented locally, as well as the rate of Roma participants. They only provided some statistics to us, presenting the total number of participants in active labour market measures in Bistrița-Năsăud county in 2012. These statistics illustrate that, when compared with the national level of reaching the objectives of the national employment plan for 2012, Bistrița-Năsăud has reached its employment targets more than 100% in 7 of the 11 types of employment measures. No reference is made to the Roma population in these county level statistics or in the National Activity Report for 2012 published by the National Agency for Employment.

In terms of targeted population, as explained by the interviewee at the CAE in Bita, none of the measures addressing unemployed individuals target Roma specifically. Moreover, the representative of the CAE added that she disagrees with targeted employment policies for Roma, since she believes that they accentuate Roma exclusion. When asked to evaluate the active labour market policies implemented locally, the CAE official only mentioned that *“All measures are good...they are our measures after all, of courses we say they are good.”* In relation to the active labour market measures, the employers and the focus groups participants identified only a share of them as measures they have knowledge of or measures they have participated in. Accordingly, the participants' experience with these measures will be presented in the following.

3.2.1 Subsidies offered to employers when hiring young graduates and unemployed persons over the age of 45

These measures aimed at stimulating employers to employ persons registered at the CAE by offering subsidies for hiring young graduates, or unemployed either (1) older than 45 years, or (2) head of a mono-parental family, or (3) eligible to solicit anticipated old-age retirement in three years' time. In the case of employing unemployed persons over the age of 45 receiving unemployment benefits, the employer is remitted from taxes to the unemployment fund for a period of 12 months and receives a monthly refund equal to the social reference indicator. In order to benefit from this measure, the employer needs to have that person employed for at least 2 years. For employing young graduates, employers are also exempted from taxes to the unemployment fund for a period of 12 months and receive a monthly refund, with the condition that employment contracts are offered for an indefinite period of time.

The majority of the interviewed employers declared that they were not very well informed about the labour market policies promoting employment of vulnerable groups. They stated that the major channel of information in this respect was the legislation. Out of the 10 employers in Bita and Lenta, nine stated that they were currently implementing or had recently implemented a labour market measure addressing employment of vulnerable groups in their company. Four of them are currently implementing both the measure regarding subsidies offered to employers when hiring young graduates and the one offering

subsidies when hiring unemployed persons over the age of 45. Employers stated that they might have a few Roma employees through this measure, particularly unemployed over the age of 45, but the percentage was very low.

Employers' experience with the enumerated labour market interventions is described by employers as a great help on the one hand, since they reduce the wage costs. On the other hand, employers identify a series of risks when using these subsidies. They argue that when employing young graduates, they usually end up with inexperienced workers, in whom they have to invest massively in order to become profitable. In the case of unemployed persons over the age of 45, they mentioned the risk of not knowing why that person was laid off by his or her previous employer. One employer argued that it is rarely the case that you can find a valuable employee from those who register as unemployed at the CAE; in his case, he thinks that he found his best employees by using his informal networks.

All employers presented as a negative aspect the condition of having to sign permanent or long term contracts with the potential employees in order to be eligible for subsidies. In terms of recommendations, employers suggested that active labour market policies should focus more closely on providing professional qualification courses for the low educated, while considering the local labour market demands. Another recommendation was that the CAE should become more involved in working together with employers and inform them regularly about the facilities and subsidies available. In the same respect, employers recommended that legislation should be more friendly towards employers and should not stipulate that subsidized employees remain employed for a long period of time in case they do not match the employer's criteria. One employer stated that the subsidies were too low thus not motivating employers to offer attractive salaries and not motivating employees to work. They also mentioned that besides the CAE as the implementing agency, more local institutions should be involved, together with employers, in integrating vulnerable groups on the labour market. In this respect, they mentioned the City Hall, local NGOs, as well as Roma parties. One employer came up with a noteworthy idea of how stakeholders could take the role of a trustworthy reference and break the vicious circle stemming from stereotypes and the lack of trust towards Roma workforce: *"(...) maybe brought in by someone from an association or an NGO, it would be beneficial for us because it would be someone they know and recommend."*

3.2.2 Job fairs

This active measure was described by the CAE representative as one of the most important active measures the agency was implementing at the moment. Job fairs are events organised by the CAE to facilitate the direct meeting between employers and potential employees. The CAE official reported that Roma job fairs used to be organised, but now they only carry out job fairs addressing all people searching for a job.

"(...) we are not discriminating against anyone. I could not organise this action only for the Roma. Although we did this in the past. But back then, the economy was flourishing, they needed workforce (...). Now they can pick and choose. And if they are not good with the employer, the latter immediately hires someone else." (Stakeholder, official of the County Agency for Employment)

The majority of the focus group participants did not have knowledge of this type of measure, except for the Lenta participants. They reported that job fairs for Roma were conducted twice in their village, with the support of the local Roma Party, before the displacement of the CAE local office. Employers referred to the job fairs as events to which they were constantly invited by the CAE, several times per year. They described that they sometimes participated,

depending on their job offer at that moment. One criticism was the low number of qualified persons searching for a job participating in the job fairs. None of the employers referred to experiences with potential Roma employees in this type of measures.

3.2.3 Professional qualification courses

As described by the CAE official, the main goal of the professional qualification courses is that of answering to the labour market demands by supplying suitable workforce.

It was only the focus group participants who referred to qualification courses in more detail, most participants having knowledge of courses implemented by the CAE. Some participated, while others could not, because of the difficulties they encountered: *“there are all kinds of problems. Until you are accepted to take the course, you need money to prepare papers and documents.”* Others, having finished only four grades of education, did not meet the education criteria in order to participate. A problem identified by the participants in Lenta was the displacement of the local CAE office. Before this, they participated in qualification courses, but now they have to travel to Bitá to find out about courses or job offers. Moreover, it is difficult for them to participate in courses far away from home.

3.2.4 Job creation: Minimis Aid Scheme

A type of active measure in which some of the participants were included was the fixed-term employment, under the Minimis Aid Scheme for “Temporary workplaces in the local community development for the unemployed workforce”, as developed in Governmental Order No. 308/02.07.2008. In our settlements, this measure has been implemented until 2009. Trying to reach those having difficulties with entering the labour market, the measure consists of subsidies for a maximum period of 12 months offered to local authorities for creating temporary employment in public work in the interest of local development. Subsidies covered the employment costs, for a maximum period of 12 months. The scheme addressed unemployed persons, regardless of whether they received unemployment benefits or were just registered as job seekers, including MIG beneficiaries.

The majority of participants were aware of this type of employment, involving a fixed-term contract, but only few have participated in this measure. The strong points identified for this were the fixed monthly salary and the benefits offered by the employee status: years certified as work experience and the possibility of buying different food items or medications on debt from local shops.

The employer from the Public Services Department describes his experience of working with Roma employed through this measure as mostly negative, and also as creating a *“Gypsy department”*. The problems he reported ranged from unreliability, unwillingness to work to stealing: *“(…) they are futile... I told you, they came to work and after two, three hours they left (...) a vulgar behaviour...”* He would rather not employ Roma, given the risks he would have to face. The Public Services Department representative added that his judgment was based on a very good knowledge of the local Roma community and his 19 years of managing this department.

3.3 Seasonal employment made by the City Hall

Some focus group participants referred to small rehabilitation project or employment coordinated by the City Hall in the field of sanitation, in which workers from the locality could have been recruited. It is important to mention that this is not a type of subsidized employment, but it is often referred to as public employment, given the fact that it is coordinated by the City Hall. The majority of the participants in Bitá revealed that, in their

opinion, the selection organised by the City Hall for this type of employment was not an open and fair one, and that they felt discriminated against on grounds of ethnicity.

"No, no. Even when they were recruiting for employment at the City Hall they employed Romanians. In no case Gypsies, it can be stated, no Roma were recruited." (Unemployed)

The same situation was reported in Lenta as well, for the jobs offered by the City Hall to maintain green areas. Aside from ethnicity, participants think that for this type of employment acquaintances, family relations and bribery were other reasons why some were selected and others were not.

3.4 Labour market services at CAE: counselling, information, job mediation

Throughout the focus group discussions, Roma participants were mostly familiar with active labour market policies because of their status as MIG beneficiaries. The law stipulates that it is mandatory for this category of persons to participate in active labour market services provided by the CAE. According to the law, these services range from providing information, career guidance and job mediation to MIG beneficiaries in qualification courses, consultancy about starting a new business, subsidies offered to unemployed persons who find employment before the termination of the period in which they are entitled to receive unemployment benefits, and stimulating workforce mobility.

MIG beneficiaries describe their mandatory monthly visits at the CAE as coming for the visa: *"(...) we come, they give us the visa and we go. In two minutes we're done. But we don't talk, we only give them our identity card and that's it."*

When asked to offer an account of their interactions with the civil servants at the CAE, the descriptions were quite similar among participants. They stated that they were scheduled to come every month on a certain day for the visa, and not coming on that particular interval might cost them losing the MIG benefits. When arriving at the CAE, they had to go to a counter where the civil servant checks the documents they brought and he either gave them the visa or asked them to bring some other documents: *"(...) they behave so badly when you go there, they even tore my papers (...) maybe I don't have anything to eat and maybe my child doesn't have anything to eat."*

Focus group participants described even cases of extreme racial hatred by CAE officials, violating the dignity of Roma clients.

"Just now when I went for the signature, you have to climb the stairs and I was tired, and at the counter there is a line drawn that you shouldn't cross (...) she told me sir, go further back because you will give me a disease." (Unemployed)

"They're not interested, they ignore us and many times they would say that they are sick of us. (...) 'I'm sick of you coming here'." (Unemployed)

It is only in few cases that they mentioned being told about vacancies, especially the younger participants mentioned this, and when this happened, they describe receiving a piece of paper with the name and address of an employer. Other participants declared that when they came for their monthly visits at the CAE, they usually asked the civil servants about vacancies, but they seldom received a positive answer. Moreover, there were examples of participants in our focus group discussions who received an allocation of a work place, but found out that the information provided by CAE was incorrect when contacting the company: there was no vacancy at the company or the company was looking for a person with other characteristics in terms of gender, qualification or age.

Also, by not contacting the employer, the participants believe that the civil servant at the CAE does not take the necessary measures to prevent them from being discriminated against by employers. Therefore, they consider there to be no difference between asking civil servants and looking at the vacancies posted at the entrance to the CAE. The experiences participants had with the former Local Employment Agency in Lenta were different than with the CAE. They mentioned that when the Local Employment Agency functioned in Lenta, they were welcome at the agency and the civil servant there provided them with job mediation and counselling. They stressed that they never felt discriminated against at the Local Employment Office in Lenta and that there were cases when they found employment.

Asked if they could identify ways in which they could optimize the activity of the CAE, the participants mentioned being informed about job vacancies. They also emphasized that they would like the CAE representatives to verify the validity of the employment offers. Another suggestion was to organise requalification courses so that their qualification would be in line with the new labour market requirements.

To a large extent, the recommendations revolved around the behaviour of the CAE staff and their interactions with the Roma: *"(...) it would all be different if they would be nicer, regardless of ethnicity. Maybe then something will change. But as long as you are Roma, when you go in, that look says it all."*

The need for a Roma representative within the CAE is brought into discussion by a Bitá participant, while another considered that there was a need for Roma targeted programmes at the CAE.

All the participants from Lenta expressed their wish for the CAE to reopen the previous local office. Some participants brought forward the proposal of a CAE representative that could come to their village with the job openings and available qualification courses or of these offers being posted at the City Hall.

Other possible resources identified by participants from Lenta were the mayor, the City Hall or the Government, besides CAE: *"We think that only the City Hall can solve something, to find an owner, a company to help us, to hire us, otherwise it is not possible."*

When describing the experience of civil servants working in the agency with the MIG beneficiaries the CAE official stated: *"(...) we do not do things the way they want us to do every time. They have the impression that we have something against them, but we are trying to help them (...)"* In reference to situations in which Roma are sent to different employers, but are not employed, she adds: *"(...) it is very much up to him. I believe he was not interested in the job; the employer is not the only one to blame. It takes an effort."*

One of the employers in Bitá considered that CAE's job mediation activity is merely a formality. He describes several situations when unemployed persons entered his office with a piece of paper, which he called a repartition from the CAE. He thinks that these persons, oftentimes of Roma ethnicity, just wanted to receive a signature from him, stating that he refused to employ them, so that they could continue receiving benefits and working in the informal labour market.

4. Summary

The research conducted in the selected settlements illustrates to a large extent the challenges in the design and implementation of the active labour market policies. It also draws attention to the interest that employers and unemployed share in this type of employment schemes.

We acknowledge as a limit of the present case study that the official of the CAE has refused to evaluate the existing measures and to make recommendations.

The focus group participants revealed information about the scarce job opportunities on the one hand, and discriminatory practices on the labour market, on the other hand. They mentioned ethnic discrimination as the most important barrier in finding employment, followed by education, commuting expenses and lack of professional qualification.

Our participants, both employers and unemployed, have limited experience with employment schemes. Besides the CAE official representative, who enumerated all the measures stipulated by law, most employers and focus group participants said that active labour market policies consisted of subsidies offered to employers when hiring young graduates and unemployed persons over the age of 45, job fairs, professional qualification courses and Minimis Aid Scheme. They also mentioned seasonal employment offered by the City Hall and labour market services provided by the CAE to MIG beneficiaries (counselling, information, job mediation).

Our findings illustrate that a low number of Roma participate in measures such as subsidies offered to employers, job fairs and professional qualification courses. In addition, subsidies are the measures known best by employers, while focus group participants are most familiar with the Minimis Aid Scheme and the labour market services provided to them as MIG beneficiaries.

Although focus group participants consider the Minimis Aid Scheme as a successful strategy at creating job opportunities for the Roma, the official at the City Hall who implemented this measure in the period of 2008-2009 could identify no positive outcomes. His descriptions reflect strong discriminatory practices, enforced by the complete authority the director states having over the department. Moreover, he reveals that he is determined not to employ Roma minority ethnics in his department.

Another aspect discussed by all participants of the study was the support offered to MIG beneficiaries. Regarding this aspect, some employers disagreed with what they believe to be a large amount of money wasted from the public budget. None of the employers identified providing employment support to MIG beneficiaries as a responsibility of the CAE.

The MIG beneficiaries' perception of their interactions with the CAE is that they go there for the visa in order to confirm their unemployed status. They do not report participating in active measures, as stipulated by the MIG law. On the contrary, they describe their interactions with the civil servants at the CAE as very time-limited, stated that they felt discriminated against because of their ethnicity and offended by the civil servants several times. It is only few participants who declare having discussed job vacancies with the civil servants.

In terms of recommendations, we start by saying that closing certain Local Employment Agencies has limited beneficiaries' access to services provided by employment agencies. For the low income people, paying for transportation is rarely a financial effort they can afford. Moreover, as shown by our findings, a good knowledge of the local community, and by this we mean employers as well, was a premise for success in the case of the Local Agency for Employment.

It is only a few active labour market measures that employers are familiar with, which suggests that something needs to be done in this respect. Employers evaluate these measures as efficient on the one hand, but underfinanced and not sufficiently supported by the CAE during their implementation on the other hand. They have requested CAE officials to have regular information campaigns and to work together in accessing and implementing the

support measures. Some recommendations also regard the design of active labour market policies. Our findings illustrate that since the measures do not target Roma, the percentage of Roma included in this type of employment schemes is extremely low. In contrast, in the Minimis Aid Scheme, presented in our case study as public employment carried out by the City Hall, a higher number of Roma were included. This gives rise to the idea that there is a need for targeted policies, so as to reach those who otherwise remain unemployed for a long period of time or those who have never been included on the formal labour market.

Starting from our findings, we draw attention to the overt discriminatory practices described by the City Hall officials while implementing the public employment schemes, but also in other employment selecting procedures. Although recommending targeted public employment schemes for the Roma, we raise the question of who is the most adequate implementing agency. In the case of the City Hall, we identified no willingness to take part in this type of measures, nor any awareness of the necessity to implement anti-discriminatory practices.

Another aspect is the necessity to be aware of the specificities of the local labour market. In terms of labour market policies, it would mean that local authorities have more independence in deciding what policies are more suitable to their locality, instead of having all decisions taken at the central level. Partnerships among important actors in the field, such as the CAE, the City Hall and NGOs would bring more expertise to the field of design and implementation of active labour market policies.

Finally, there is a need to further investigate and understand in more depth the negative perception of the focus group participants about the CAE civil servants and the services offered. Their narrations illustrate abuses and little implementation of the measures they are supposed to participate in. In this respect, we recommend external supervisions and evaluations of the employment agencies' activity. We also recommend impact studies of the actual implementation of the active labour market policies, in which data are gathered about Roma beneficiaries as well.

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SLOVAKIA by Lucia Mytna Kureková and Judit Kontseková

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1. Introduction

This report summarizes field work research conducted in March 2013 in a district located in the southern part of Banská Bystrica region (Banskobystrický kraj), selecting three sites: the district main city and two smaller villages. For anonymity purposes, which we guaranteed to interviewed individuals, we will use codes for the municipalities, referring to the **district in general as P**, to **the district main city as C1** and to the **two villages as V1 and V2**.

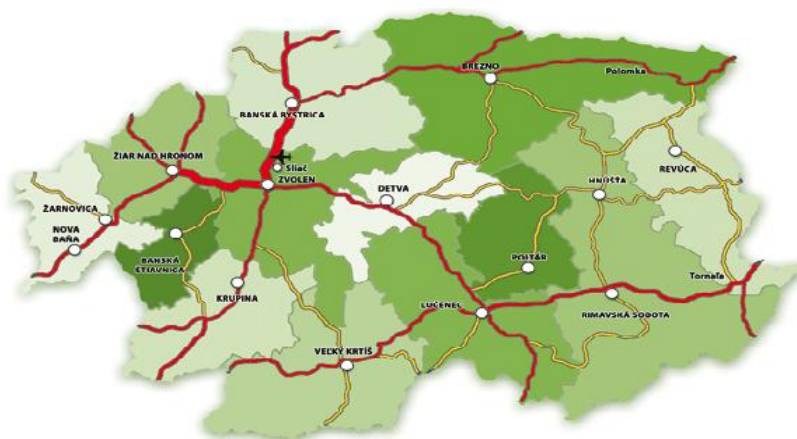
The main aim of our research, conducted in the framework of NEUJOBS FP7 project (WP19), was to learn about practices, experiences and perceptions of employment policies and their targeting on Roma in Slovakia. The field work was constructed in a way to gain opinions and experiences of a varied range of actors and included meetings and interviews with the local labour office, mayors, local employers and Roma participating in different measures. The research aimed to understand how employment policies and other measures or programmes targeting Roma in a more complex way are implemented in a given economic and social context and attempted to highlight positive and negative practices in implementation.

Section 2 describes characteristics of the field, including living conditions and employment opportunities of Roma. Section 3 presents case selection procedure and methodology. Section 4 documents findings about implementation of different types of policies and highlights views and experiences from different perspectives. The last section summarizes the findings, synthesizes the evidence and offers a set of recommendations which stem from the field research.

2. Description of the field

The field research was conducted in district P, and specifically in the C1 and two villages within the district: V1 and V2. P is located in the middle of Banská Bystrica region and consists of 22 municipalities: 21 villages and the city of C1 (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Map of districts in Banska Bystrica region with main infrastructural connections

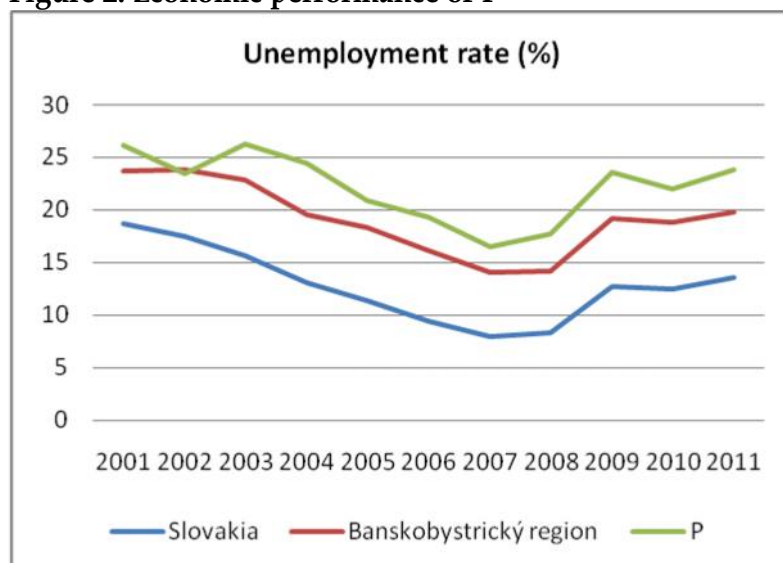


P is one of the smallest districts in Slovakia in terms of population size with about 25 000 inhabitants. According to the 2004 Atlas of Roma Communities³¹, 11 of its municipalities have Roma population residing in them. The district is surrounded by and economically interacts with two larger districts in which a significant share of Hungarian-speaking minority resides. From this perspective, P has been exposed to multi-ethnic and multi-lingual environment.

2.1 Economic and social conditions

High unemployment is the key problem of P today. The unemployment rate has in the past decade followed general trends in the Slovak economy and in Banská Bystrica region (Figure 2), but at a much higher level. In January 2013, the unemployment rate of P stood at 28.6% and was the third highest in the region. Large variation exists in economic conditions in the Banská Bystrica region with better economic performance in the northern district and worse outcomes in districts located closer to the Hungarian border. Poor infrastructure in the south contributes to these differences as highway connects the northern towns and seems to contribute to better prosperity. Unemployment is more spread among people with low education levels, youth and people above the age of 50. High unemployment rate is projected into poverty and dependence on benefit in material need. According to the interviews, it is not only Roma who receive income support, but also a share of majority population.

Figure 2. Economic performance of P



Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic and COLSAF.

The share of persons receiving benefit in material need is higher in the two villages than in C1. In V1 and V2V2, nearly each tenth inhabitant is a recipient of income support (Table 2). The numbers rose quite markedly between January 2012 and December 2012 from 57 to 93 in V1, from 219 to 270 in V2 and from 264 to 385 in C1. This could be the outcome of the closure

³¹ The 2004 Atlas of Roma Communities is the most comprehensive source about conditions of living and density of Roma population across Slovakia. Data was collected in 2004 and is recognized as a reliable source of information for research purposes. An updated version is under preparation, but not yet available. For more details see: http://www.minv.sk/?regiony_atlas

of a strategic employer in glass processing sector towards the end of 2011 and of several other smaller employers in the region. According to OLSAF data we received during the field work, 707 activation allowances were given in P in February 2013, out of which 37 were paid to long-term unemployed who began working.³² Out of this number, for 152 activated persons was the contract based/funded by the labour office, the remaining were organized on the basis of municipality contract. Protection allowance – typically paid to long-term sick or to persons on sick-leave – was given to 335 people in the district. This together compares to about 4% of district's population.

C1 and the surrounding villages have a strong tradition of mining and industrial production, especially in the field of glass processing and glass production. A glass production factory with a long history and several branches in the surrounding smaller villages – used to be a key employer in the region. In late 2011, it has been closed down, laying off about 400 workers, and currently is out of operation. In the past its workforce consisted of persons with all levels of education, including low education levels, as skill needs of this sector are quite specific and require on-the-job training and manual skills. The firm was late in paying wages to its employees, which has contributed to the growth of indebtedness problem. This has had implications on the solvency of citizens and until today is felt by a relatively high number of executions in the city and surrounding villages.

Public sector is the main district and city employer (schools, public administration). Business environment is not prospering and the number of people employed in private sector has declined. The remaining work opportunities are spread across a range of sectors which offer opportunities to skilled and unskilled labour. A few small businesses operate in service sector (hairdressers, cosmeticians, retail). In addition to this, there are agricultural cooperatives and several wood processing companies, all characterized by seasonal peaks in demand in labour. A number of the glass production factory former employees started self-employment licences in glass processing or glass decorating. The most successful developed into medium-sized company specialized in hand-made glass decoration for export which currently employs around 100 people, including several Roma. Due to the availability of land and forestry, region is considered agricultural, but our interviews revealed that the agri-business has been struggling quite considerably and has also shed much labour over the past few years. Northern villages of the district (e.g. V2) have developed tourism sector.

Both commuting and migration for work have been widely spread in P and represent a key survival strategy. Unemployed non-Roma females migrate bi-weekly mainly to Austria, while males migrate mainly to the Czech Republic to work in construction sector or perform other manual tasks. This was confirmed to be the case also for Roma men who participated in the focus group. Illegal work takes place as well, and has different forms. OLSAF director mentioned cases when people who are registered with the labour office would go and work abroad and return once a month to fulfil former registration criterion. The other form of semi-legality is employment through 'work agreement' (Dohoda o vykonání práce) whereby on a paper a certain number of work hours and payment is agreed, but higher amount is paid unofficially (and is then untaxed).³³ Opportunities to earn on the 'side' were confirmed

³² Activation allowance is 63.07 euro per month. Most people receive it for participating in small municipal works (activation works) as a top-up to benefit in material need which is the main income support scheme. For more details see Kurekova and Konstekova 2013 and World Bank 2012.

³³ Work agreement – dohoda a vykonani prace – is a form of employment where employer asks employee for task-based work for a specific and limited amount of time per month/year. The number of hours per year is regulated, and there are no social security contributions paid on this income up to

also by Roma whom we interviewed. Legislative changes effective since January 2013, which have led to less favourable conditions of employment on the basis of 'work agreements', have created uncertainty in the Roma community. The expectation is that this is likely to result in higher shares of illegal work.

We found a relatively vivid social fabric of civic sector organizations with many varied initiatives in the town and surrounding villages, and good and productive cooperation between the mayors in the region. We found peaceful inter-ethnic relations and references to good interactions between majority population and Roma population. Especially in C1 Roma were referred to as 'good' Roma who had worked hard in the past, and there were no references to petty crime by Roma in the town. The (assistant) field social workers in C1 were ethnic Roma women, and their office was co-located with other municipal offices in the town hall building. In V1 three Roma were elected into the municipal council. We nevertheless encountered complaints that the municipality has been unwilling to support Roma focused projects, and the relations appeared tenser. The third municipality which we visited - V2 - was very successful in getting EU structural funds and had surplus municipal budget. The positive impact on the living conditions of Roma minority however was less evident. The village is characterized by the presence of a strong Roma cultural and political leader respected also beyond the village and serving as an intermediary and a community role-model.

a certain level of income per month. This income was until the end of 2012 disregarded in the calculation of eligibility for benefit in material need.

Table 1. District of P: Basic living infrastructure of majority population and Roma households in selected municipalities

		Infrastructure of Majority				Households in Roma settlements						Inhabitants of Roma settlements		
		Accessibility of utilities				Total number of settlements	Share of legal settlements	Share of households connected				Number		Share on total inhabitants
Name	town/village	Water supply	Sewage system	Electricity	Gas			Water supply	Sewage system	Gas	Electricity	In settlement	Per one house	
V1	village	yes	no	yes	yes	20	100,0	100,0	0,0	0,0	100,0	193	10,0	20,8 ³⁴
V2	village	yes	partly	yes	yes	97	100,0	100,0	10,3	40,2	100,0	461	4,8	14,8 ³⁵
C1	town	yes	partly	yes	yes	130	100,0	100,0	96,2	60,8	100,0	600	4,6	9,8 ³⁶

Source: Atlas of Roma Communities, 2004.

Table 2. Description of localities

	Number of inhabitants (12/2011)	Number of BMN recipients (12/2012) *	Number of activation workers	Anti-flood measures (2011)	Local Strategy of Comprehensive Approach	Political representation of Roma in local governance structures	Municipal enterprise	Field social workers	Comm. centre	Active Roma NGOs
V1	983	93 (9.4%)	TBC.	20 (More than 50% Roma)	Yes	Yes	No	None currently	No	Yes
V2	3026	270 (8.9%)	106 4 coordinators, none is Roma	10	Yes	No, but local Roma Council as an advisory body	Yes	Yes, but working as mayor's secretary	No	Yes
C1	5794	385 (6.6%)	98 (70% are Roma)	10 Six Roma, 4 non-Roma	No	No, but the mayor pledged to have links and cooperation with local Roma leader	Yes	Yes, also Roma Out of five, two are Roma	No	Yes

Source: Authors, based on field work. Notes: (*) - share on total population in parentheses

³⁴ The mayor estimated the current share of Roma to be one third of the inhabitants, Local Strategy of Comprehensive Approach mentions 273 Roma/28%.

³⁵ This number is similar to estimation given by the mayor during the interview.

³⁶ The mayor estimate is that 620 inhabitants of the town are Roma, which is about 12% of town's population.

2.2 Roma community

The localities have significant number of Roma residing in them (Table 2). Approximately every fifth person in V1, every sixth in V2³⁷ and every tenth in C1 is Roma. In all three localities, Roma households were not segregated but integrated into the village/town, although Roma housing was typically concentrated in few areas in the given municipality (Table 1). In C1, Roma lived mainly in the buildings of block of apartments, in the villages they typically resided in houses. The housing situation in V1 was the most difficult as houses were overpopulated. This has led the local Roma community to demand construction of municipal housing, but the municipality council was unwilling to support the cause, which was the key issue of contentions in the village.

Most Roma have only primary education, though we met few Roma who had vocational license or took part in courses organized by the labour office in the past. Some Roma women were also currently enrolled in a degree study for leaving certificate (*maturita*) and a university degree, motivated by educational conditions required in order to work as field social workers or Roma assistants. None of the Roma we met at the time of the focus group organization had a formal employment (with the exception of Roma field social workers in C1), but in the past they had different employment experiences. Many Roma have been involved in small municipal works or other forms of public employment programs. Before the employment situation degraded to the current state, Roma travelled or migrated for work. Females typically commuted to nearby towns or cities to do mainly low-skilled or unskilled work, men had worked abroad, mainly in the Czech Republic but also in Germany or Italy, also doing low-skilled work (see Table 4 for more details). Their jobs were mainly low-skilled and manual. Work was often found and organized through temporary work agencies, much fewer opportunities seem to have been provided by labour office staff. Short-term contracts through 'work agreements' combined with illegal work have been frequent, especially in forestry work. During periods of no employment, especially in the winter, Roma rely mainly on income support, and combine this with participation in activation works. When possible, they take up seasonal opportunities for work, mostly by having 'work agreements'.

Job fluctuation is high, caused both by unstable contracts, but also low salaries. Poor wages in many cases do not provide incentives to commute due to high transportation costs and poor infrastructure connections which make commuting costly and difficult. Similar behavioural patterns were identified to exist also among non-Roma who faced long-term unemployment. Roma who started employment often stopped after few weeks as net income difference between benefits and low-wage employment is not motivating. In spite of this, most Roma we talked to during the focus groups took different employment opportunities in the past, doing mundane, and physically demanding, low-paid and unstable jobs. In many cases they accepted work far away from their families, if it brought at least some promise of improvement of their economic and social situation. Self-employment efforts were limited due to the lack of capital or fear of financial implications in case of failure to fulfil conditions when receiving self-employment contributions from public funds.

³⁷According to the mayor in V2, about a fourth of Roma were immigrants from other cities north of the village who came in the past decade due to lower property prices in the village and good cultural environment.

2.3 Experiences of Roma with job opportunities

C1area and its surrounding villages have a strong tradition of employing Roma. Many Roma in the past were employed in industry - glass processing factories or brickworks factories - as well as in agriculture. Several employers continue to employ Roma until today. Several references were made during focus groups, but also when talking to other stakeholders, that Roma used to be employed during socialist regime and their situation worsened significantly with the regime change. The existing opportunities are very limited, especially in the winter, and situation has worsened significantly during the crisis.

Roma gained information about labour market opportunities through channels outside labour office. They found out about opportunities through informal channels or advertisements of employment agencies. Labour office was not identified as an institution that would support Roma, but rather as a formal body to which they are once a month obliged to provide evidence of a job search activity. The visits are formal, while Roma are not being actively advised.³⁸ Instead of labour office staff, Roma were advised on various aspects of job search by field social workers. These who would assist them in writing or updating CVs, filling out job applications and communicating with potential employers via email, if necessary. Only seldom were Roma invited to labour office organized recruitment. Several Roma had gone through a training course organized by the labour office (flower design, basket making, etc.). They did not find these courses very useful for improving their chances on the labour market. In the cases of gaining employment through employment agency, cases of maltreatment were quite widely spread; examples included lower wages than agreed, worse working conditions or a lack of payment for the work carried out.

Opportunities for illegal work existed mainly in local forestry sector. Until recent reform in effect since January 2013, the availability of legal employment on the basis of 'work agreement' provided a legal way for earning additional income aside the receipt of social assistance, without incurring costs on the employer and high social security contributions on the employee.

Roma themselves referred to widely spread discrimination in the labour market based on the ethnicity. Employers would tell applicants that they do not hire Roma openly. Some Roma felt that they faced less discrimination on the basis of ethnicity abroad (e.g. Czech Republic). Even more educated Roma having vocational license or secondary school had difficulties finding jobs, which sometime dis-incentivized younger Roma (or their parents) to invest into education. We also identified elements of short-termism among younger male Roma who due to the fact that situation was relatively good at the time when they were about to finish their compulsory education and were therefore able to find job and earn income, they preferred to exit education as soon as possible.³⁹

Work of NGOs was generally viewed positively, but their scope seen as quite limited. Scope for bigger impact exists if more extensive funding combined with capacity building would be available. Some more experienced NGOs were able to provide short-term employment for local Roma in different types of projects. Female focused civic associations which we found in the field did not have a direct employment focus. Their positive impact rather materialized by providing a sense of community, motivation to study and support to local

³⁸ This has been found to be the case generally for any type of unemployed, as labour office staff is overburdened and does not have capacity for placement and counselling work (World Bank 2012)

³⁹ Schooling is compulsory up to 16 years of age in Slovakia. Roma males which we met at this age achieved different levels of education, but most of them only lower primary (i.e. elementary school) due to repeated school years.

women as well as means of access to information and experience. The most positive direct impact we identified was through the work of field social workers, especially those who were also Roma, who assisted Roma in various job-search related tasks and also provided knowledge, information and assistance in various aspects of everyday life issues.

3. Methodology

3.1 Field selection, methodology

C1 and the two surrounding villages was selected following selection criteria defined in the project to choose localities with an above average share of Roma, not the most deprived in the country economically, and with a mixed economic basis (industry, agriculture). We relied on the 2004 Atlas of Roma communities which maps residence density and conditions of Roma in Slovakia and is nationally and internationally used and recognized as a source of information about Roma in Slovakia. Given that instructions insisted on selecting a town and a village within the same district, this implied limitations on the possibilities of selection, as Roma in Slovakia are mostly rural residents. C1 was one of the few towns where we identified an above average share of Roma.

We considered a range of additional factors which we found important from the point of view of practical implementation of field work and in view of gathering data that can describe general conditions, interactions and implementation practices. Therefore, additional key criterion which entered into selection was to choose location which can be considered 'average' and where not much previous media coverage (positive or negative) has been directed. The next criterion was to select localities where a range of instruments are being applied to be able to evaluate implementation of different measures and tools. The fourth key element was to choose localities where we could identify active civic basis which we hoped to use in approaching Roma for focus group participation. C1 satisfied all the selection criteria. Originally we selected only V1 as field work village, but our initial investigation suggested that we might not find much activity there. This was not confirmed in the field, but we nevertheless also interviewed a smaller group of stakeholders in V2 and conducted a focus group there.

During internal team discussions we debated Banská Bystrica, Brezno and Moldava nad Bodvou (and Turňa nad Bodvou), as possible localities for the field research. We were not able to find suitable villages nearby Banská Bystrica where also the share of Roma is unclear in the city itself. Brezno is a home-town of one of the researchers and we decided to exclude this location to avoid possible biases. Moldava n. Bodvou and Turňa nad Bodvou are located at the Hungarian border and already in Košický kraj, which has had considerable research attention already, while our preference was to target less exposed parts of the country, not least to generate additional evidence to the existing knowledge.

3.2 Selection of interviewees: stakeholders and employers

The field work entailed meetings and discussion with a wide range of stakeholders, employers and four focus groups (Table 3). We approached our interviewees in advance by email or by phone. We found generally open attitudes and flexibility to our requests for the meeting and we did not encounter any major problems. The interviews were conducted during the week of 4-8 of March 2013 by both researchers present at all interviews. The availability of own car enabled to move flexibly between the localities and to conduct interviews efficiently. In our view, the interviews with stakeholders and employers covered all major issues, including questions such as discrimination, illegal work or inter-ethnic

relations. The majority of interviews were recorded. Prior to going out to the field, we conducted interviews with public officials in Bratislava.

We were unsuccessful at agreeing on a meeting with the forestry sector employer in C1 whom we in the preparatory phase identified as employing Roma. During the focus group this information was confirmed; we also found out that the hiring had aspects of illegal work and underpayment, which we suspect was the reason why the employer avoided meeting with us directly (he said he was busy or not anymore in the company when we called). We were also unsuccessful in meeting local Roma leader in V2. After few attempts we decided not to push this meeting as information about the NGO's work was available through other means.

Table 3. Interviewed stakeholders and employers

	C1	V1	V2
Stakeholders	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor
	Municipal enterprise director	Field social worker	Municipal enterprise director
	Field social worker and organizer of activation works	NGO representative and community coordinator	
	(Assistant) Field social workers and female NGO leaders	Roma NGO representative and member of the municipal parliament	
	NGO representative: Partnership for social inclusion - director		
	Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family - director		
	Secondary vocational school - director and vice-director		
Employers	Glass processing factory- former human resources manager	Agricultural cooperative in nearby village - director	
	Agricultural cooperative - director		
	Sonne Crystal - medium sized employer in glass processing and decoration		
	Billa - assistant manager		
	TESCO - manager		
Focus groups	Female focus group	Male focus group	Mixed focus group
	Male focus group		
Unsuccessful interviews	Forestry sector entrepreneur		Local NGO leader and musician

3.3 Recruitment and organization of focus group discussions

Four focus groups were organized in total in three different localities (Table 4). Focus groups in C1 and in V2 were organized with the assistance of field social workers, who were also present. In V1 we asked Roma municipal parliament member to organize the meeting for us, where he was also present and actively participated. We decided to organize focus groups of a smaller size which we expected to be more conducive to open and balanced discussion. Gender aspect was also considered and we requested one focus group to be only females (C1).

Table 4. Description of focus group participants

<p>Focus Group 1: male participants V1 Organized through a member of municipal parliament and vice-chair of Roma civic association active in the village <u>Participant description:</u> 5 Roma men participated, varied age groups, both single and married, with previous experiences of employment spell in labour market in the vicinity of the village and abroad, currently all unemployed, some currently participate in active labour market programs <i>Previous employment:</i> Yura (cable assembly Rimavská Sobota), Ipel'ské Tehelne (C1), cable works (Prievidza), Agency DELETE (that employed on behalf of the cable works in Prievidza), activation works, anti-flood measures Duration: app. 1,5 hours</p>	<p>Focus Group 3: male participants C1 Organized with the help of Roma terrain social workers, who participated in the discussion and helped to facilitate it <u>Participant description:</u> 4 Roma men, in late 20s-early 30s, all single, with primary education, with previous work experience in local labour market and abroad, all currently unemployed <i>Previous employment:</i> Yura/KIA (cable assembly, Hnúšť'a), Mladá Boleslav (car industry), glass industry, Czech Republic, Lučenec, bakery in C1; activation works, anti-flood measures Duration: app.1 hour</p>
<p>Focus Group 2: female participants C1 Organized with the help of Roma terrain social workers, who also participated in the focus group discussions, one non-Roma social worker was also present <u>Participant description:</u> 6 Roma women, 3 field social workers (2 Roma, 1 non-Roma), different age groups, mostly married with children, all with previous employment experiences, some currently in formal education, currently all unemployed <i>Previous employment:</i> glass production factory, municipality (field social workers), schools (teacher's assistant), gastronomy (bartender), supermarket (branch manager), nurse/educator in Málinec in social care, textile industry worker, activation works (manual but also tutoring of children).</p>	<p>Focus group 4: mixed participants V2 Organized with the help of local Roma terrain social worker originally from V2 but working in C1 as field social worker. <u>Participant description:</u> 7 participants; this was a varied group in terms of age and gender. 4 Roma women, 1 Non-Roma woman and 2 Roma men participated; terrain social worker was also present at the focus group (although she was working in another community in C1). Participants varied in age and experience. Older generation had varied working experiences, including self-employment (older Roma man), the younger generation had no or little experience with previous employment, with the exception of doing activation works in the municipality. A Roma woman with six children considered migrating for work to Austria to work in the home care sector.</p>

<p>Duration: app. 1,5 hours</p>	<p><i>Previous employment:</i> Yura/KIA (Hnúšťa), Utekáč, Czech Republic (manual work at a factories, not part of the core staff), NGO, sawmill, employment agency in Lučenec.</p> <p>Duration: app.1 hour</p>
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Discussions in all focus groups were very open, and the flow of conversation was good, with quite balanced input from nearly all members. All major topics were covered in our view satisfactorily, including the issues such as grey labour market or opinions on aspects of local inter-institutional cooperation. In the Roma women focus group we centred the discussion intentionally more on the issues of access to education, schooling and relatively less on the implementation and experiences of active labour market programs (due to time constraints). Women knew each other through the activities of civic organization aimed at gathering Roma mothers and preparing activities for them and their children, several of them actively engaged in child-oriented activities in local pre-school and primary school.

We evaluate focus groups as rich in generating information due to their smaller size, previous contacts between the focus group participants and the presence of local mediators (NGO leader/member of municipal parliament, field social workers) whom the participants knew and considered trustworthy. The presence of the Roma field social workers was beneficial for gaining deeper insight, as they were often able to clarify different aspects during the interview. We also provided small refreshments to create a more relaxed atmosphere open to discussion and non-hierarchical context. All focus groups with the exception of the one in V2 were recorded. We did not remunerate the participants in any material manner. On this aspect we sought the advice of field social workers who did not see it necessary or adequate. We decided to offer some refreshments during the meetings, which contributed a more relaxed atmosphere.

4. Findings

The localities we visited have been using a wide range of ALMP tools and other programs available for working with marginalized Roma communities. Their overview is provided in Table 2. According to OLSAF in C1, small municipal works are the most widely used ALMP measure, followed by anti-flood works and graduate practice. Indeed, the key measure targeting unemployed and people in material deprivation are small municipal works, which are implemented in all three localities with quite a high number of 'activated' workers. In the past all three localities also employed people on the basis of "anti-flood" measures, in which also Roma participated. Because only few Roma finish secondary education with a license, graduate practice is not widely used by them.

The villages developed Local Strategy of Comprehensive Approach (LSCA), which entail also projects with environmental aspects.⁴⁰ Municipal enterprises function in C1 and in V2. While these are not an ALMP tool, we investigated them to see opportunities for employment in the public sphere not provided through ALMP measures. We encountered work of field social workers which we will also discuss to explain their role in assisting

⁴⁰ C1 had also prepared Local Strategy, but it was not in the end submitted for evaluation. The reason we were given was that the process was quite demanding with the conditions changing throughout; this led some municipalities to give up on the way).

Roma in labour market matters. An important initiative which has been functioning in P is the Partnership for Social Inclusion, which has been active since mid-2000s. It first began as an informal forum for meeting of different stakeholders in 2004 and since 2005 has been formally registered as civic organization and a most part of its existence received public funding for its activities. Partnerships as a tool for social inclusion were supported across Slovakia as an instrument for bringing different stakeholders together in improving social cohesion in different parts of the country. Unlike in many other parts of Slovakia, where they seized to fulfil their initial functions, the Partnership has been active in P and has served as an important tool for networking, information sharing and expertise generating venue. Until recently, it held positions of 'community consultants' whose role was to provide advice and activation of local partners. Its seat is co-located with the seat of 'centre for first contact for investors' in P. All stakeholders we approached valued the work of Partnership and saw it as an important forum which helped them to gain information and – if needed – expertise and advice in preparing project applications for funding. The access of Roma NGOs to the Partnership and its benefits was clearly quite limited. We discuss each of these measures and tools in greater detail below.

4.1 Small municipal works and other employment creation measures

Activation works are the most widely used measure in C1 and the villages nearby. It is tied to the receipt of benefit in material need (BMN) and implemented by municipalities. It can be organized on the basis of the contract with labour office or on the basis of municipality contract where the relationship is established directly between the municipality and the activated person. Under both types of contracts, the participant receives top-up benefit of 63.07 EUR in addition to the benefit. According to the statistics of the labour office, activation works are now mostly organized on the basis of the municipality contract, the conditions of which were made stricter by reform in 2012. In practice, municipalities alternate people who are involved in activation works at any point in time on the two different contracts due to eligibility limitations defined by the law. Labour office director confirmed that demand for activation among BMN recipients is high and that there is fight among jobseekers as there are generally more interested persons than the available places (cf. (World Bank 2012). The participation in activation works was widely spread among Roma who participated in the focus groups, which revealed a diversity of activated people (varied age, gender, previous work experiences, included women receiving child benefits).

The activities done by activated people were generally unskilled and mundane with little upgrading element and involved mainly street cleaning and maintenance, up-keep of green areas and lawn-mowing. More sophisticated activities were not done widely, but existed. First, in C1 we found that activation workers were organized in cooperation with the municipal enterprise and participated in tasks done by their employees, which would be more sophisticated. For example, municipal enterprise produced bricks for very cheap prize, which were then laid on the streets in the town with the help of activation workers. This provided for more meaningful use of workforce and beneficial activity for the community. This activity is not done anymore, because funds were needed to produce additional bricks, which have not been available. Second, in C1 we found a more productive use of activation works stimulated by the presence of Roma female and child oriented NGO. The NGO leaders (who are also (assistant) field social workers) suggested to place Roma women participating in the activation works to tutoring activities in the local school. While there was a concern about the appropriateness of tutors' qualifications, NGO representatives with the support of the coordinator of activation works convinced the school that this support is

nevertheless useful as many children do not receive any support at home.⁴¹ A similar placement of Roma women was conducted to the supportive activities in the local kindergarten and the retirement home. This suggests that already prior to the legal change implemented in January 2013 which broadened organizations which can organize activation works, in some places activation workers have already been used in institutions funded by the municipality (e.g. primary school, menza, retirement home, etc.).

The municipalities have raised implementation problems related to the organization of activation works which related to the lack of funding to buy tools needed for conducting the activities but also to pay for the costs of activation works organizers. In V2, the workforce stability was ensured by alternating the labor office contract and municipality contract.⁴² Such system has been functioning for 6 years, offering more stable opportunity to the activated people. The municipality has on this principle been employing also coordinators of activation works, all of whom have been non-Roma. In C1 implementation problems are not tackled; while the city had 7 coordinators earlier for 120 activated, now there was only one person. The problem arose also due to the fact that a coordinator cannot be employed more than twice, and over the years they exhausted the pool of eligible persons.⁴³ At the same time, in C1a motivation system for activation workers was in place whereby they first offer a month-long contract to the person, and if the person performs well, s/he is kept for the whole duration (6 months).

In all three municipalities we found elements of institutional discrimination by the means of selection of non-Roma into 'cleaner' or more interesting activities (work in schools) and Roma into more mundane activities (snow shovelling). In C1 the situation improved after the work of Roma field social workers began. These came up with explicit propositions for Roma women placement in the local school or kindergarten, and also argued for fair distribution of places in anti-flood measures between Roma and non-Roma.

The evaluation of activation works by stakeholders has been generally positive. The labour office director saw the system as mutually beneficial: *"I think it helps the municipality and also to the citizens."* She considered activation works as a way in which the municipality can help people often in poor conditions to get some extra income and to retain working habits.

"As the loss of employment of those who were working for [glass production factory] for 30 years is reflected also in their health condition. Maybe they had already some work related illnesses in the past, but now there is evidence of more sickness... So the municipality is helping them with this little contribution, to maintain working habits – well, it is not possible in their profession – but so that they feel useful generally and for themselves." (Labour office director, C1)

Indeed, we found similar views confirmed by the mayors.

⁴¹ It however faced opposition from the parents, suggesting that the importance of education and school is not recognized in the whole Roma community in C1.

⁴² Small municipal works can be organized on the basis of labor office contract or on the basis of municipality contract. The first type brings to municipalities additional funding for tools and for covering costs of organizers of activation works, the second type has no contribution for municipalities. For more see Task 2 report (Kurekova and Konstekova 2013).

⁴³ The law allows employing one coordinator for 25 people if taken via labour office, with regards to the activation workers contracted via municipality it is not possible to have resources for a coordinator.

“A hundred of people have income that is indispensable for them. Two hundred could be possible, but it wouldn't be effective, and the motivational effect would diminish... This institute helps me to help these people.” (Mayor, V2)

The mayor in V2 suggested that a combination of activation works and public works would be a better system which would incorporate motivational element through the possibility to reward good workers by offering them more stable employment outlook. When prompted to comment on the possible crowding out effect of activation workers, he confirmed that the number of employees in municipal enterprise which has been naturally lowered (retirement reasons), will not be increased as he can replace them by activation workers.

“So they [activation workers] help me to save finances”. (Mayor, V2)

At the same time, the mayor acknowledges that a majority of the people could be employed. *“Maybe from those 106 that I have, I can say that some 30 are only able to hold this broom, but the rest of them are fairly employable. If I had a firm, I could maybe pay them a higher amount that these 60-70 EUR.” (Mayor, V2)*

Given the very limited working opportunities and harsh living conditions, the opinions of Roma about the possibility to do activation works were generally positive. They treasured this opportunity to gain additional source of income, which was helpful especially for Roma women who due to child rearing were less mobile.

“It helps; I cannot be involved as I am a member of the municipal council. My wife is working, and 63 EUR is also something, for us it is good. Mostly women work here on activation works.” (Focus Group, V1)

“The municipality employs many people locally. They are not complaining, there is at least something.” (Focus Group, V1)

The general population also viewed activation works positively: *“At least the city has been cleaned”, also the snow will be removed. ... Roma have the chance to demonstrate that, yes, they want, they try.” (Manager, retail sector)*

However, some Roma also saw the fact that given the amount of time they spend in activation works, they could also get employed: *“Well they could also employ me, as I work for them 4 days a week, 4 hours daily.” (Focus group, V2)*

Another negative feature which was identified related to the fact that general public started to rely on activation workers to the extent that they have stopped doing activities which they should, such as cleaning the premises near their homes or shovelling the snow. *“They are waiting for the activation workers.” Assistant field social worker, C1*

At the same time, the stakeholders as well as Roma found that ‘publicly beneficial works’ which existed prior to activation works were a better form, because they were based on an employment contract with the attached benefits.

“Maybe the form could be different; I had the chance to know and experience the public works and it was a better form. As it was on work contract, those people had even better feeling about that. Even if it was not a big amount of money what they received. But also for the fact that the incomes from this employment were counted towards their pensions. Now they don't have anything from this. Yes, I am at work – because they call it like this – I have an employer, I receive money for that and also I am needed. There are hundreds of people...” (Labour office director)

“We were at least ordinarily employed... this meant employment for 8 hours and a solid income.” (Focus group, V1)

In response to the economic crisis and the heavy floods which hit Slovakia around similar time (2009-2010), government introduced “anti-flood measures” as a new ALMP tool. Similarly to activation works, it is implemented by municipalities, but the participants are given 6 months-long employment contract establishing full-time employment. Anti-flood works were positively evaluated by all stakeholders as well as Roma, who valued additional benefits such as meal vouchers. The activities have more added value (cleaning fishpond, assisting in road construction, regulating river bank, etc.), which has been recognized by everyone involved.

“If there would be jobs like this, it would be suitable.” (Focus group, V1)

Perhaps the most direct critique of activation works was given by the representative of Roma Plenipotentiary Office: *“So the activation works are there to give the people some extra money for an activity that doesn’t have any sense and value at all.”* Based on the Plenipotentiary Office’s experience, municipalities are not able to use activation works meaningfully. They usually give Roma brooms and request them to tidy up, while mayors do not recognize that the range of activities could be much enhanced (e.g. civil patrols, afternoon/morning activities in schools).⁴⁴We however found C1relatively progressive in this respect.

4.2 Municipal enterprise

During the field work, we in particular concentrated on the interaction between activation works and municipal enterprises, also called „technical services” (technické služby). Municipalities in the past employed people with different skills to take care of municipal grounds and offered services, such as upkeep of public greeneries, waste collection, provision of municipal lighting, maintenance of publicly-owned housing, etc. Many of these activities are now being done by activation workers, indicating a possibility of replacement of employment through the possibility to have labour ‘for free’ on the basis of small municipal works. Municipal enterprises currently exist in C1and in V2.

In V2the number of employees in municipal enterprise declined from the peak of 50 employees – being one of the largest employers in the village in the past – to its current 17 employees. The current employees are on average older people who would be unable to find work elsewhere due to their age. In the past, municipal enterprise employed low-qualified workforce in waste collection, and many of those were Roma. None of the current employees are Roma, but one has recently retired. In the 1990s, the director of municipal enterprise cooperated with labour office when hiring low-qualified workers, but this stopped when the small municipal works were introduced. Now there is a close cooperation between the municipal enterprise and activation work activities. The activation works coordinator comes to the municipal enterprise and the director of municipal enterprise requests a certain number of workers who are needed, on average 15 people daily. The municipal enterprise owns vehicles, machines, and finances gasoline, while activation workers supply the labour. The activities which prevail relate to sweeping the pavements, cleaning the cemetery, mowing grass, digging, few women work in the local laundry, do some cleaning or tiding. Activation workers often assist more qualified employees from the municipal enterprise (for example to a tractor driver). In effect, the activation workers *supplement* workers in the municipal enterprise, and therefore no additional hiring is done. Field social worker during the focus groups noted that there are localities where municipal enterprises/“technical

⁴⁴ This suggestion is of course controversial, as while on the one hand more meaningful activities would be organized, even greater danger of replacement of job opportunities exists if more varied activities with no attached possibilities to shift to more stable/meaningful job is provided.

services” were closed down altogether and the activities are now fully done by activation workers.

4.3 Entrepreneurship and start up incentives

Contribution towards establishing small business (self-entrepreneurship) has been allocated a significant amount of resources of ALMP budget. The profile of recipients who are given the support, who are typically better educated (World Bank 2012), suggests that not many Roma are targeted by this measure. Focus groups revealed that Roma are aware of the existence of this measure, and one older Roma even had self-entrepreneurship license in the past. He did not take the contribution being aware that it would require him to pay social security contributions for two years, but his income was not stable enough to ensure that. The fear of not being able to pay social security contributions attached as a condition to the measure disincentivised the younger Roma from taking this opportunity. On the other hand, they lack own capital to start the licences without the government support. The field social workers shared their experiences that labour office staff typically discourages Roma from this measure. In addition, no capacity building to increase self-entrepreneurship skills is provided by labour office. In the civic sector, the Partnership for Social Inclusion organized such training, into which one Roma woman was also involved.

4.4 Local Strategies of Comprehensive Approach

Local Strategies of Comprehensive Approach are a key tool of complex approach targeting localities with a large share of marginalized Roma communities, and have been approved in 152 localities across the country (for details see Task 2 report, Kurekova and Konteskova 2013). When selecting the sites, we intentionally included villages where Local Strategy has been prepared and during the interviews enquired about the process of the preparation, its aims and implementation.

Local Strategies were written with the assistance of Partnership for Social Inclusion and consulted with the regional Roma Plenipotentiary Office. The interviewed stakeholders highlighted the competition aspect inherent to the selection procedure of Local Strategies. Initially the municipalities in the micro-region under the organizational leadership of the Partnership for Social Inclusion organized several meetings where they sought to design meta-strategy for the micro-region. This turned out not to be possible as Local Strategies were to be funded at the level of municipalities and not micro-regions, setting the municipalities into competition with each other. The municipalities therefore met to discuss content of the individual strategies in order to maximize their chances to have the Local Strategy selected in the national competition. The municipalities negotiated the types of projects to be included in each strategy with the aim to draw on different operational programmes and priorities and so to minimize that they compete against each other. Many stakeholders we interviewed considered an approach that would enable synergies better than competition. However, local interactions also highlight that funds allocated to marginalized Roma communities are often viewed in a rather opportunistic manner as a tool to gain access to additional resources. This came through in the discussions with the municipalities whereby the content of strategies was designed to maximize village benefit, at time without clear connection to what appeared most urgent needs of Roma community (for example, failure to include housing infrastructure project in the Local Strategy in one of the villages in spite of demands and needs of local Roma community).

In V1, Local Strategy suggested three projects: educational, environmental and infrastructural project, and was written by the previous mayor. The environmental project initially suggested building a composting place where 3 jobs were planned. This project idea

was transformed by the new mayor and municipal government into creation of waste collecting yard. The key reason given was the fact that the municipality is unable to finance three workplaces and the new project only requires to create part time employment for one person for the duration of 5 years. The municipality is waiting for a call to be able to start implementing the project. Educational project was targeted specifically on Roma and aimed to motivate Roma youth to education by innovative teaching methods. The infrastructural project, which was not approved in the Local Strategy, had planned to improve living environment in the vicinity of Roma households.

The preparation of Local Strategy in V2 was done in cooperation between a local Roma NGO and the mayor's office. The NGO was in charge of preparing and - if successful - of implementing 'soft' projects, while the mayor planned to steer mainly the infrastructural project aimed at reconstruction of the local policlinic. The attached employment goal was to create employment for locals during the reconstruction of the facility.

None of the envisaged projects are being implemented and we generally confirmed the initial findings of Task 2 review that Local Strategies have failed in their implementation stage due to time delays which shifted implementation to a point in time when finances are not available. Our interview at the Plenipotentiary Office confirmed that implementation is currently stalled as various operational programmes are nearing its end and resources have already been tied to other projects. This has implications on incentives on the ground. For example, many local strategies included infrastructure projects (i.e. hard projects) in connection to 'soft' projects, such as education and training. Due to the fact that funds have dried in OPs able to fund infrastructure focused projects (such as Regional Operational Programme), municipalities lack incentives to implement soft projects alone. Roma are more direct beneficiaries of these and local opposition from majority population might exist to the co-financing of projects which benefit primarily Roma. An additional obstacle which we identified in some localities is a lack of funds for co-financing which is an outcome of a smaller municipal income due to the economic crisis. In none of the villages, therefore, Local Strategy has been implemented and the interviewed mayors could not identify any major benefit of the comprehensive approach to date.

The key envisaged benefit of this complex approach has been hampered by the lack of coordination among the operational program with respect to the Marginalized Roma Communities framework. An additional key element to make the tool successful is the need to transform Local Strategies into a systemic tool. The Roma Plenipotentiary Officer highlighted that continued source of financing and implementation procedures need to be put in place in order to make a good use of Local Strategies and the complex approach. This has been lacking in many other good projects whose positive impact was clearly demonstrated but there was a lack of political will or power to secure stable funding (e.g. Roma health assistants).

4.5 Labour office assistance

Experiences of Roma with the labour office were neutral, but it was not an institution which they considered helpful in their job search. They have described encounters with the labour office staff as very formal. Jobseekers have to visit the labour office on a monthly basis to present evidence of job search activity. This is perceived as useless: *"It has no meaning to go there, they only give you a stamp, and so what? And if you don't go one day, they cancel you from the registry."* (Focus group, V1)

The labour office staff is not working with the clients actively. Job offers are available in a printed form on a notice board or a table. None of the Roma we met has been asked to

participate in a recruitment process organized by the labour office. A few were in the past offered training courses, which however often lacked genuine content relevant for the local labour market, and other supporting infrastructure (e.g. finances to start business). An administrative obstacle to participation in training and education courses is often the fact that initial secondary-level qualification is required in order to participate in the available courses or training.

“With regards to job search there wasn’t any help. Once they offered me a course of a basket-maker, so I had to make it, otherwise they would have cancelled me from the registry of jobseekers. It had no meaning. I would have needed to set up a business, but it was not feasible to sell these products.” (Focus group, V1)

Jobseekers therefore rely on other means to find out about existing vacancies, such as online portals, advertisements or private recruitment agencies. Networks of friends who had migrated for work were also used in the past to learn about employment opportunities abroad.

4.6 Illegality and social benefits

Roma and different stakeholders have confirmed existence of semi-legal or illegal employment, but it is difficult to quantify the scope and conditions. An opinion was spread that the level of social benefits provides disincentives for taking work. Wages in Pare very low due to oversupply of labour. For example, even in the retail chain which employed only people with secondary education the wages stood at roughly 400 euro gross (minimum wage is 337,70 euro). Compared to the amount of social assistance and additional benefits attached to it (free meals for children at school, subsidy to cover travel expenses of children to go to school, etc.), taking on low-paid employment, even if it was available, would be difficult on low-income families.

A combined effect of low wages and social assistance support providing disincentives for working was confirmed by the experiences of Roma. This situation was more the case among Roma with more children and was clearly linked to very low wage levels and additional costs attached to commuting to work. For this reason, many Roma preferred to get social assistance and earn activation benefits or combine social assistance with ‘work agreement’ work. If income was irregular or below certain threshold, this income was fully or partially disregarded in the calculation of eligibility for benefits. This condition has been changed from January 2013 and work agreement income will be counted towards family’s income in full, which is likely to enhance informal employment in the most deprived communities. We also found indications that selection into some types of ALMP measures was guided by the implications it would have on total family’s income. For this reason, anti-flood works were staffed typically by single men with no family obligations whose net income was not lowered by taking on half-year employment for the municipality in the measure.

4.7 Employers’ perceptions

Experience of Roma employment has been common in C1 in the past. This recollection came up in most of the interviews with employers and other stakeholders. During socialism, Roma were employed across different sectors, mostly in manual but also more skilled work, for example in glass production sector. While most sectors shed Roma workforce among the first during the restructuring phase in the 1990s (e.g. agriculture, brick production, etc.), a few Roma remain to be employed in the businesses in glass production sector which have remained. Employers’ experiences with employing Roma in the past or currently have been very good and they praised them for willingness to work hard. At its employment peak, as

much as half of low-skilled workforce in the glass production factory were Roma, doing the most difficult or tedious work. The most successful exporter of glass today continues to employ Roma, who represent about one/sixth of its workforce. No Roma are employed in agriculture sector, which has become more technological, and has experienced a major decline in labour. We did not find indications of illegal work in this sector. None of the retail chains hired Roma. The reasons could be mixed, ranging from secondary level qualification requirement to internal unofficial policies of not hiring Roma. Roma were not among temporary staff which the chains would use during the peak periods.

Employers we interviewed were reluctant to participating in most ALMP measures. Many of the existing employment support measures require that after an initial period of government subsidy, the workplace is sustained at the expense of the employer. Due to cash flow or uncertainty of future demand, employers considered this risky and preferred not to get government support. The most widely used measure has been 'graduate practice', with which the employers had mixed experiences. Some had difficulties to find interested graduates willing to undertake the practice, even if the remuneration was considered relatively high in local wage standards. Others could not find suitable graduates as the recent changes to the implementation of this measure require that the graduate undertakes practice relevant to his/her field of study, which in the case of glass processing industry is not anymore possible due to the closure of this specialization in secondary school. Administrative burden was also mentioned often as a reason preventing especially smaller employers to participate in ALMP measures.

4.8 The role of NGO sector

Pis characterized by a vibrant NGO sector activity and grass-root Roma activism. The key organization that has become an important interaction forum is the Partnership for Social Inclusions which was established in early 2000s as part of governmental initiative to create micro-regional partnerships. The Partnership has become an important platform where different types of stakeholders meet on a regular basis (typically twice a year) to share information and expertise. The Partnership played an important role in the process of preparation of Local Strategies by providing personnel who assisted in writing the strategies, and has been assisting municipalities or some local NGOs in other fundraising activities. It has contributed to establishing of good working relations at the local level and has generated a cross-sectoral know-how. While the assistance to creation and sustenance of civic sector has been among the Partnership activities, the involvement of Roma NGOs in the Partnership formal structure has been limited, due to difficulties to pay annual membership fees.

A set of other NGOs exists in the localities we have visited, and some of them are Roma led. In V1, there is currently inactive association of Roma, in C1 and V2 we found more active organizations with different aims and activities. Roma female focused organizations have been organizing activities for Roma children and mothers on a lower scale and with limited resources. They have been influential in providing encouragement and support to Roma women to continue in gaining formal education.

An established NGO in V2 was run by a local Roma leader, musician and political activist. In the past it was successful at gaining funds from different projects, some of them aimed also at (temporary) employment of local Roma. For example, local Roma women were funded to work as assistants in school/kindergarden based on a project earned through the NGO. NGOs however face limitation on getting employees in the framework of some ALMP (e.g. NGO sector cannot have workers through activation works). On the other hand, we found NGOs which used workforce through 'voluntary works' framework or graduate practice.

We also were told about activities organized independently from public support frameworks. For example, Roma NGOs self-organized soft skills and other types of trainings without any public funding.

4.9 Discrimination

Discrimination in the labour market entry is widely spread. Discriminatory decisions are openly expressed by employers, but no Roma that we spoke to have tried to formally deal with the instances of discrimination. When calling up to apply for vacancies, applicants are openly asked about their ethnicity and told that Roma are not accepted. Applicants with Roma sounding surnames are not invited for the interview or told that position is taken when potential employer in a direct contact recognized that the jobseeker is Roma.

We also found indications of in-work discrimination such as lower pay given to Roma workers. Institutional discrimination – though perhaps more latent – appears also widely spread. Roma face it in their interactions with labour offices or mayors. Examples include instances when activation work activities are allocated based on ethnicity, as the next quote reveals:

“I am trying – for instance for the laundry – to select a decent person, so that she is not the kind of a dirty gypsy woman, I tell you that openly. I rather take a whiter one. I am satisfied with decent gypsies. Here the Gypsies are not like those in East-Slovakia. The old settlers are good people, but their children and the new-comers are a problem. I was told that earlier the Gypsies had to go on Saturdays and had to sweep the streets for free. Now, nobody wants to do anything.” (Municipal enterprise in V2, director)

Discrimination challenge has been affecting them in their daily interactions. *“The feeling is such an anxiety then, there is a lot of fears, blocks.”* (Focus group, V2)

Roma subjectively perceived their status as more equal when working abroad.

“Abroad they treat you in a different way. There is no discrimination. The agreements are kept.” (Focus group, V1)

“I also worked in Czech republic, they didn’t make difference based on the colour of your skin. You wouldn’t receive there an inferior job. If you are interested and clever, they see that you can get trained and work for them.” (Female focus group, C1)

The work of field social workers has been important in mediating some of the upfront disadvantages. At times they accompany Roma to public institutions to assist them in interactions with public officials, including labour office.

“These people are often not respected. Therefore we go with them, and then they take them completely differently. Be it the labour office, be it the court.” (Assistant of the field social worker, C1)

None of the NGOs we met or the field social workers were directly involved or intended to deal formally with the instances of discrimination. Labour Office staff generally do not acknowledge existence of discrimination of Roma, and highlighted more the existence of age discrimination. Labour Office is not formally tasked and does not have capacity to deal with discriminatory practices.

4.10 Opportunities for education and training

An important theme which came up during the interviews was the opportunity for further education and training. Labour Office recognized this as a general need of workforce in P, and pointed out limited opportunities to offer re-certification courses to skilled people. For

example, in the region there are people who had worked as welders, glass processing workers, etc., whose licenses have expired and they cannot afford to renew them. Labour Office could assist in this process, as there is some potential to place these people abroad where these skills are needed. More emphasis on practical education and training, and also recognition of qualifications/skills based on previous work experience could improve chances of Roma and other long-term unemployed. Vocational secondary school in C1 has actively been involved in providing more practical courses to Roma youth who faced difficulties in finishing compulsory education. The school director however identified obstacles in social assistance conditions which were to be taken away if an adult Roma enrolled in day-time /full-time education.

We identified demand for education on the part of Roma women especially. Some of them are undergoing formal education courses at the vocational secondary school with the aim to earn school leaving certificates that would qualify them for the openings which might be available to Roma in public sector.

"I realized that without education I cannot find a job. (...) Sometimes you just aren't in the mood for that, I have 5 children, I am divorced and often I am really not in the mood to get back to the school. As I have worries and sorrows at home. But like this as we have the chance to talk [referring to the Roma women NGO gatherings], we really share all our problems, thus one has really a bigger strength and willingness to start from the beginning."
(Female focus group, C1)

5. Summary

The existing ALMP often represent the sole option for Roma residing in these localities and their importance might have risen with the worsened economic situation over the past months. The existing tools were generally seen as useful, but the implementing actors often lacked critical perspective which would evaluate net impact of the measure and possibilities for labour market inclusion into open labour market. We nevertheless discovered examples of local innovations to how labour market policy was implemented, such as linking activation workers to municipal enterprise to carry out more meaningful activities. Another example is the motivational and evaluation element introduced into 'hiring' of activation workers which helps to simulate more closely open labour market context.

Municipalities are large beneficiaries of the existing ALMP framework. Activation works in particular help municipalities to cater to a range of local upkeep needs which they otherwise would need to pay for or which possibly would not be done. However, beyond the existing framework, we did not find a genuine intention or a sufficient capacity to prepare projects that would seek to integrate Roma in a more systematic manner. One of the reasons could be the local opposition from the majority population which might exist against projects that benefit Roma to a greater degree. The opportunities to draw on funds allocated to marginalized Roma communities are typically viewed in a rather opportunistic manner as a tool to gain access to additional resources. Possibly due to prevailing opinions that the current situation of Roma unemployment and poverty cannot be (easily) solved, we found a lack of activity towards a more fundamental change that would benefit Roma, even if material conditions might have existed in some municipalities.

A more strategic vision and targeted thinking is missing completely on the side of labour offices. The most direct assistance to Roma on the ground appears to be provided by field social workers who supplement labour offices in important aspects of job search assistance, legal advice, sending of applications, and advocacy and mediation with various institutions

(lobbying for educational courses, sending applicants to entrepreneurship course, searching for teachers' assistants, writing CVs, etc.). Field social workers who were ethnic Roma enjoyed respect and appreciation among the Roma community which they assist; their niche lied in better understanding of cultural and language specificities of Roma communities. The NGOs we met – Roma and non-Roma - have been doing important work, but function in a tight budget environment and in a restricted policy framework.

We found evidence that activation works have pushed out low-skilled employment in the public sphere, but precisely for this reason are valued by mayors who save expenses on upkeep of local environment. Activation workers are also used in educational/social care institutions and in some cases to do more value added activities.

Roma seemed generally well informed about the most common measures which are available in the context of employment policies. Roma appreciated what was available to them in the form of ALMP measures and typically evaluated the approach and cooperation with municipalities positively. While activation works are viewed positively by Roma as often the only available source of legal additional income, they prefer forms of engagement closer to or providing actual employment (former public works, anti-flood works). At the same time, we identified disincentives to work especially among breadwinners with more children. The contributions provided to children when commuting to school or other children-related benefits represent important “in-kind” benefits that parents would lose when taking on formal legal employment. Commuting to work further away is a major obstacle for many low-skilled due to transport expenses and poor transport connections. Some Roma therefore refuse jobs to which they would need to commute because net income would be very low. Migration for work abroad, seasonal employment and illegal employment (construction, forestry) are nevertheless important survival strategies for many Roma.

In the pre-crisis period nearly all Roma we interviewed had spells of employment, some of longer duration, others short and interrupted. This might suggest that when general employment context is better, preferences of many Roma shift towards employment as wages are on average higher, but also that employers might be more willing to employ Roma under the situation of more tight local labour markets. The older generation of Roma has a tradition of employment in local glass production and decoration factory as well as in agriculture; some employers continue to employ both skilled (glass production) and unskilled Roma (forestry work). In public sector, employment opportunities for Roma exist in the positions of field social workers and teacher's assistants; due to formal education criteria but also crony practices, these are not always filled by Roma. While education requirements are a barrier for Roma who are typically less educated, we also found that it has generated incentives for Roma women to gain education in view of getting these employment positions once they qualify.

From the available ALMP measures employers used on a larger scale only graduate practice. High administrative burden and risks attached to the commitment to keep workplace after the period of support made employers not to participate more extensively in the schemes.

Local Strategies which were based on a complex approach have not been successful due to implementation hurdles. A more direct positive impact was therefore delivered by mainstream employment policy framework. Local Strategies nevertheless entailed the most explicit elements of ecological sustainability by including projects aimed at municipal waste collection and recycling.

Discrimination in the labour market entry and also on-the-job is widely spread. Public institutions also sometimes make decisions reflecting ethnic sorting. While facing discrimination frequently and implicitly even in the interactions with public bodies, Roma never initiate formal complaints.

The field work generated a series of recommendations, some of which were directly offered by our interviewees. We list them in no particular order below.

5.1 Recommendations

- Public works have been highlighted as a preferred model to activation works; they resulted in formal employment contract and entailed more meaningful jobs and higher pay; one of the suggestions included a system which would combine activation works and public works whereby public works would represent a “graduated” options;
- Anti-flood measures are viewed positively by all stakeholders as a more meaning full alternative to activation works. The participants several times mentioned and praised the possibility to receive meal vouchers;
- The current design of Local Strategies of Comprehensive Approach does not enable cross-municipal cooperation and the system in essence makes localities compete against each other; this precludes more systemic and comprehensive micro-regional approach that would enable strategic planning going beyond the village(“synergy rather than competition”);
- The partnership approach is very useful as a networking and information-sharing platform; Roma NGOs are poorly integrated in the Partnership for Social Inclusion, also due to difficulties to cover annual fees; allowing participation in the Partnership free of charge to institutions with their budget below a certain threshold would enable and support involvement of Roma NGOs;
- It is important to motivate and enable second-chance education as an alternative to subsidized employment without losing access to benefits/income (the current system does not allow day-time/full-time study and enrolment in education leads to a loss of benefits);
- Better education outcomes of Roma/socially deprived families could be supported by granting child-related benefits also for children in secondary education; child-related benefits are only available for primary school children and in villages where children need to commute this disincentivizes families to send children to secondary schools because they cannot afford it;
- Co-locating the offices of field social workers with other municipal offices is a good practice which gives visibility and credit to their work;
- Labour offices currently fail to provide any assistance to marginalized communities and serve mainly as administrators rather than mediators, job brokers, advisers, or consultants; a presence of Roma in labour offices could facilitate provision of more targeted services taking into account specificities of Roma communities;
- Long-term unemployed need more direct support in their transition to employment, a position of social tutor or social supervisor could be established, possibly located in labour offices and tasked with helping employees to overcome short-term difficulties which might otherwise lead to absenteeism (administrative duties, family issues, etc.);

- Projects whose benefits and effectiveness are demonstrated in practice should become parts of the system and be provided stable financing and human capital capacity, the lack of which often leads to stoppages in the provision of services, such as field social work.

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SPAIN by Bálint-Ábel Bereményi

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1. Introduction, description of the field

1.1 Context: County Muntanya

Catalonia (7,6M inhabitants) is the second largest Autonomous Community out of the 17 administrative territories of Spain (47,2M), following Andalusia. The province of Barcelona is the largest province (5,5M) out of the four main territories of Catalonia. Catalonia has the fourth highest *per capita* GDP in Spain, still over the average of Spain.⁴⁵

Both municipalities selected for the case study can be found in the Catalan county (*comarca*) **Muntanya**, close to the Mediterranean coast. Lleda is co-capital of the county. Aiba is a close-by small town.⁴⁶

1.1.1 Lleda

Due to its developed wool industry Lleda attracted labour force from different territories throughout the centuries. Nevertheless, since 1980s the textile industry ceased to be determinant for the city. With its more than 200 thousand inhabitants, extending in a territory of almost 40 km², Lleda is among the ten largest cities in Catalonia. It is located at a distance of 20 km from Mediterranean coast. Its population showed a dynamic growth in the period between 1950-1980s as a result of migration processes from different territories of Spain, and following the rural-urban migration trend.

1.1.2 Aiba

The landscape of Aiba is dominated by the high-rise buildings of the housing estate built by the early 1970s. Its current population comprising cca. 13thousand inhabitants is constantly decreasing. It is among the five most densely populated municipalities in Spain.

1.2 Population

The county Muntanya has been a dynamically growing territory throughout the past decades (Copevo, 2012a). Between 2000 and 2012 the non-Spanish population rate has incremented from 1,7% to 11,4%, somewhat below the average of Spain (12%) (For figures on ethnic composition see Table 1, Annex) Both municipalities have Spanish Roma population. Some non-Spanish Roma families, mostly of Eastern-European origin, have settled in determined neighbourhoods of Lleda Roma population of Lleda is estimated to be between 1.230 and 8.640 (Fundació Pere Tarrès, 2005; Méndez, 2005; Heredia, 2009). There are no estimations about Roma living in Aiba, though our Roma interviewee speaks about 8-10 extended families.

1.3 Productive Sectors in the County

Most significant sectors of the economy in the county are metal, textile and chemical industries, complemented by smaller factories in the furniture-making, IT, car, food production, pharmaceuticals, etc. (Copevo, 2010). Table 2 in Annex shows the number and proportion of work-places and corporations organized by economic sectors in Muntanya (Copevo, 2012b). We can observe the high relative weight of the workplaces engaged in

⁴⁵ INE (2012) 2008-2012. P.I.B. a precios de mercado y valor añadido bruto a precios básicos.

⁴⁶ In the report pseudo-names of the settlements are used in order to provide anonymity to the interviewees.

"services to companies", as well as industry and trade. Trade is emphasized for the high number of companies (and self-employed workers) involved in this sector. (Table 2. Annex)

In Lleda, the service sector has been developing most dynamically. In 2007, at the onset of financial and economic crisis 16% of the work-places belonged to the **construction** sector; by 2010 it shrank to 12%, causing the destruction of a significant number of jobs. Notably, construction is the sector which is producing the highest rates of direct entrance to unemployment with the least chance of finding new work-places in the same or in other sectors.

The largest part of the unemployed population (63-64%) in Lleda is composed of those with only *compulsory school credentials*⁴⁷. Similarly, great part of the unemployed population is comprised of non-qualified workers (28%-29%). Lleda with 65.345 work-places in 2010 is the most important city of the county concerning the volume of work-places (Copevo, 2011). Aiba is among the municipalities with less work-places (854 in 2010) both in nominal and relative (in function of its population) terms. Work-places in Aiba are limited to retail trade and some services, but no major companies are present there, therefore, people are forced to work outside the municipality.

In the county the number of **unemployed** doubled between 2008 and 2012: from 37.267 it rose to 85.589 (Copevo, 2012b). Aiba is the only municipality in the county with unemployment rate higher than 20%. As for financial support, 37.3% of the unemployed population of the county did not receive any kind of unemployment benefits (Copevo, 2013b). In this respect, Aiba is remarkable for its 46.1% of unemployed does not receive unemployment benefit and thus this population rely solely on social benefits. A relevant trend is that unemployment benefit structures have recently changed (Table 6, Annex). One can observe that non-contributory benefits⁴⁸ have gained a decisive weight within contributory benefits, welfare provisions and ALM Inclusion income due to that fact that they are expiring while no LM reincorporation occurs.

1.4 Roma communities

1.4.1 Size and characteristics

According to Méndez (2005) the estimated number of Roma population in the county is 15.100. While there are different estimations for Lleda, there is no official or unofficial data about the Roma community of Aiba.

1.1.1.1 Roma community in Lleda

The presence of the Roma population in Lleda goes back to at least the 18th century. (Méndez, 2005:223) As in other Catalan cities, the majority of the Roma population migrated from other Spanish territories, between the 1950s and 1960s. Méndez (2005) claims that Lleda has a 6.000-strong Roma population, while a more recent document (Heredia, 2009) refers to

⁴⁷ "Atur registrat per nivell d'instrucció". In: Anuari Estadístic de Sabadel. 2011.

⁴⁸ Contributory unemployment benefits stem from Social Security budget and depend on the previous contributions of the worker. Access to non-contributory welfare provisions (or subsidies), or in other words, the "last safety net", is a right of any citizen that can prove the lack of any financial income of the family, though the duration of these Minimum Income, "Extraordinary Aid", etc. provisions is limited. The purpose of Table 6 is to show how contributory benefits have lost proportional weight in unemployment provisions, while citizens increasingly rely on subsidies and ALM Inclusion incomes. In Aiba, a qualitative turn can be observed: more welfare provisions than contributory benefits. There are no data on how Roma people benefit from unemployment provisions.

8.640 individuals or 1.692 families. This population is, however, fairly diverse in terms of productive activities, labour market integration, socioeconomic conditions and residential location, among other aspects (Heredia, 2009). The majority of the Roma population of Lleda is concentrated in stigmatised and urbanistically segregated neighbourhoods, which in recent years attracted a great volume of immigrant population, including some Eastern-European Roma families. In spite of that, none of these neighbourhoods are Roma-only, or Roma-dominated districts. Many Roma families have limited access to average-standard housing, partly for economic reasons.

1.1.1.2 *Roma community in Aiba*

Approximately ten extended Roma families of Aiba own their 'state subsidized' flats in estates, bought under very favourable economic conditions back in the 1970s. The majority of the Roma and non-Roma families of Aiba, share a migrant background, many of them with past experiences of harsh living conditions in some of the shanty towns that used to exist on the outskirts of Barcelona city. Roma families of Aiba have widened family bonds with those of Lleda due to the shared Protestant cult and coinciding at the daily flea market places. No significant changes in the Roma population have been observed in the last decades. Roma and non-Roma families share similar living conditions. Despite the fact that Roma are the most rejected minority group in Spain (CIS - Barómetro Noviembre, 2005: N°2625), in Aiba, a **higher than average acceptance towards the Roma** was reported both by Roma and non-Roma informants.

1.4.2 *Major income source of the Roma*

FSG (2009) classifies Roma people's productive activities into four categories. The "traditional occupations" of the Roma include flea-market and street (ambulant) sale, urban solid waste collection, selection and temporary fruit-picking. "Liberal professions" consist of dealing with antiquities, merchandise (trade) and art-related professions. "New professional niches" can be divided into two sub-categories. Those that do not require qualification include construction-related jobs and public works. Those that require qualification embrace public servants and "other" new jobs carried out by Roma.

The most significant part of the Roma in Lleda, as well as in Aiba, is involved in the **flea market sale** despite its declining lifeline. According to Heredia (2009), those families selling in the flea market do not depend on welfare benefits or subsidies. Our fieldwork shows that the precariousness of the flea-market has significantly increased in recent years. A relatively smaller group of Roma from Lleda makes a living with **metal collection**, unregulated commercial activities or temporary fruit picking, among other productive activities.

Fieldwork has shown that most of the Roma in both municipalities tend to **combine different productive activities**, either at the same time or adapting themselves to seasonal works and emerging job offers. Regulated activities are combined with irregular or illegal activities. For example, family support on the markets is a general practice, but anyone who does that without social security registration, commits an offence. Vendors of the **flea market** tend to focus on nearby markets and have recently been giving up farther market places. Economic **crisis** is a fundamental element in recent changes. During the fieldwork, we collected information about Roma people who used to work in the **construction industry** at different levels: unskilled day-labourer, skilled brick-layer or technician and also as entrepreneurs. Fieldwork has also revealed a wide range of **mainstream activities** in which some Roma have also been engaged, mainly on a temporary basis: unskilled factory jobs, cashier, attendant, shop-assistant or store-auxiliary in supermarkets; intercultural (school, health, leisure time) mediator; employee or collaborator at (ethnic) associations, to mention

but some examples. Ethnic invisibility as a strategy can be observed in high-skilled jobs. A couple of identified Roma families have never stopped to drug dealing, but currently, some other entered as retail dealers. **Dealing with cars** or breaking them up and selling spare parts also belong to illicit activities some families have been reported to be engaged in. Besides, it must be mentioned that in some non-Roma informants' perception "*crisis has become tangible*" in that "*delinquency has been growing*", particularly that "*drug has come back*".

As for **international migration**, two types of strategies could be identified during fieldwork, though in a very minor scale. Some Roma families who have relatives in France spent some months there engaged in fruit picking. After having worked for a determined period of time in France, one is entitled to receive French unemployment benefits. The second strategy was recited by our informant from the municipal job centre who remembered having some Roma individuals who had been offered jobs in foreign countries, without being able to specify the country and the types of job. No significant differences could be found between the economic activities of the two municipalities' Roma population.

A distinctive fact is that a **major Spanish cleaning company**, CLECE, employs a significant number of Roma individuals from Aiba, mostly women (our request to have an interview with a representative of the company was refused). Municipal '**employment plans**' tend to benefit Roma individuals, engaging them mostly in low-skilled physical jobs, such as maintaining, cleaning or in jobs related to the Roma community (typically, intermediators). Still, these employment plans are short term one-off opportunities. Fishmongers' assistant, auxiliary works in nearby shopping centres, temporary jobs at factories, large supermarkets or coffee-shops/ restaurants are some of the low-skilled "mainstream" activities many Roma from Lleda and Aiba deal with. During high tourist season, some Roma youth work on the holiday resorts or in nearby restaurants. Several families are involved in occasional agricultural activities. Furthermore, those who have smaller trucks or pickups offer transporting services at a cheaper than average price. Also some Roma artists from Aiba and Lleda devote themselves to the artistic life within and out of Spain. An interviewed expert claimed that incentives for micro-enterprises (for example, offered by ACCEDER programme⁴⁹ run by Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG), a state-level pro-Roma organisation, did not deliver positive results among Roma. This was confirmed by FSG as well.

Application for **minor subsidies** from Social Services or charity organisations (Red Cross, Càritas, etc.) is another productive strategy that Roma families of Lleda and Aiba share. Minimum income scheme was said to get complemented by other illegally pursued productive activities.

In both municipalities, **gender differences** are highlighted in certain productive sectors, however, no reliable official local data are available in order to prove this aspect. Generally speaking, women are more prone to combine family and household activities with minor productive tasks, such as selling on the market or in irregular forms. Focus group discussions suggest that Roma men often keep their wives away from formal labour. Nevertheless, in all focus groups and among our interviewees Roma women were present.

There are **no estimated data on Roma involved in local "universal" ALM programmes**. One could say that Roma are made invisible within the system through a universalistic / mainstreaming and often "colour-blind" discourse. On the other hand, apart from some minor temporary or short-term contracts (such as mediators), the only Roma-targeted local

⁴⁹ Detailed description of ACCEDER, a Roma-targeted labour market inclusion programme, is to be found in the next chapter further on in this text.

ALM activities are related to the Fundación Secretariado Gitano and very few disaggregated data are made available in their annual activity reports. In response to our inquiry, we were informed by FSG staff that in 2012 they had 264 users who finished training itineraries (though not all of them were Roma), as opposed to 1763 active ACCEDER users.

1.4.3 Major factors influencing job preferences

Undoubtedly, the main factor influencing labour market participation of the Roma in both municipalities is the deepening financial **crisis and its impact**. Crisis has significantly increased competition in the labour market niches previously dominated by Roma, which has an especially harsh effect on **low-skilled** people with stigmatized ethnic origin.

1.4.4 Roma education

Within the Roma population there is a higher than **average illiteracy rate** (13-14%). Despite a slow growth of school integration among the Roma, interschool and within-school segregation, high absenteeism and drop out are still major problems affecting the Roma children, in general terms.

In **Lleda**, primary schools in neighbourhoods with high Roma population tend to have **higher than average absenteeism rate** as well as a higher rate of early school leaving (Heredia, 2009; Méndez, 2005). Also these highly stigmatized schools tend to absorb a significant rate of Roma and poor immigrant children. Secondary schools are ethnically more integrated due to their geographic situation. In secondary schools, **gender inequalities in terms of early dropout** are emphasized, with a higher rate of Roma girls leaving school during the first and second year of secondary school (at the age of 12-14 years). Another significant data from fieldwork is the extremely low rate of Roma students in more prestigious charter schools. In Aiba, school absenteeism and drop out are also serious problems that some experts relate to Roma families (Pérez Viñas, 2002). Interviewed experts and parents of school-aged children claim that practices of school segregation do not exist in Aiba. Roma children are enrolled in four different public primary schools and they tend to go to the same public secondary school than their non-Roma peers.

1.4.5 Local job opportunities

Roma people from both municipalities share a very negative perception of local job opportunities. They claim to have lost flea market as a secure source of income, as well as other activities related to the construction. In general terms, they feel obliged to be more creative and combine emerging productive activities. ALM training courses organised by job centres, employment offices or by local NGOs are not considered as a still valid solution, as in a stagnating labour market it does not bring good results, they are rather used as one alternative option among many. A generalised absenteeism and dropout at VET courses are indicators of disaffection and distrust. Fieldwork proved a lack of trust also regarding the intervening companies' underlying interests. Finally, ethnic-based negative discrimination on the labour market has not been highlighted during the fieldwork as the most determinant factor, though it was recognised as an existing phenomenon.

2. Methodology

2.1 Field selection, methodology

Catalonia has the second largest Gitano/Roma population in Spain. In Catalonia, the Roma population lives in urban contexts, often in working class urban neighbourhoods with high

concentration of Roma and immigrant families from poor countries. We completed our research bearing in mind the following **criteria of selection**:

A) **Size of the settlements**: **Lleda**, the fourth largest city in Catalonia hosts the largest Roma population in Catalonia, out of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area. **Aiba** is the fourth smallest municipality of Catalonia in terms of surface area.

B) **Type of settlement**: in **Lleda**, there are three major neighbourhoods where Roma people live in a concentrated way, while they are present in almost all the neighbourhoods in an integrated manner. In contrast, **Aiba** is a newly built housing estate; all the flats were state subsidized and the population remained constant. It became an independent settlement only recently.

C) **Interethnic relations**: many Roma in Lleda live in highly stigmatized and geographically segregated neighbourhoods. In Aiba, Roma families live well-integrated with non-Roma households within the same neighbourhood.

D) The fact that **ACCEDER** programme (run by Fundació Secretariado Gitano) has been carried out in Lleda also influenced our choice since the programme represents one of the most well-known Roma integration projects within the European Union.

Alternative sites included Albacete city and La Roda, both situated in Castile la Mancha. The interest in those sites was defined by the two "competing" ACCEDER offices, and a higher than average unemployment rate. Finally, the option was dropped due to the distance and difficult access to the communities.

2.2 Selection of interviewees: stakeholders and employers

We conducted interviews to key agents of the two selected municipalities as well as of the county Muntanya on a local level. Firstly, we got in touch with the **Employment Offices** of each municipality by phone and subsequent interviews were made with the heads of office. Secondly, **local job centres** were contacted. In Lleda, the Head of Intermediation of the municipal job centre was accompanied by a member of ACCEDER team, as they work in close relation with one another. Later on a second interview was requested with the regional director of ACCEDER programme. In order to contrast "official" data about ACCEDER, we also contacted ex-employees of FSG. Two social educators with field knowledge of Lleda were also interviewed. The most relevant municipal public services, such as education, social services and civil rights, were asked for a meeting too. Thirdly, we got in touch with a representative at the County Government but they referred us to "CONSOR", a relatively new joint public-private consortium working for the economic promotion and labour market activation of the county. We conducted an in-depth interview with the Responsible for Employment Programmes and Equal Opportunities, in order to map main stakeholders and economic situation of the territory. Finally, we contacted **local Roma associations and individuals**. At a higher institutional level, we contacted the **Federation of Roma Associations in Catalonia** (FAGiC) and the **Secretariat of the Coordination for Traders in Catalonia**, and carried out a joint interview in the FAGiC's office. Contact with the **companies** was the most challenging part of the data collection. It was difficult to find out which particular companies were involved in ALM programmes. Two of the three identified companies were available for an interview, while one refused to do so.

In sum, **27 individuals were contacted** on different occasions and 19 interviews were conducted with local agents and corporate agents (for a more detailed description of the interviews, see Table 7 in the Annex) Topics that have been insufficiently covered throughout the fieldwork were those related to ALM measures planned and coordinated by

the Department of Education of the Catalan Govern, and implemented by the local secondary schools, Schools of Adults, and Areas of Education under the local administration. No hard data on Roma participation in universal local ALM programmes were found.

2.3 Recruitment and organization of focus group discussions

All together three focus group discussions were organised. The first group consisted of five Roma youngsters, all of whom work on the flea market in Aiba, and had previously attended different vocational training courses. The second group of ten individuals (including one ethnic Roma and one of Moroccan nationality) was recruited directly from a non-paid vocational training course organised by the local job centre in Aiba. The third group of six individuals from Lleda shared the experience of long-term unemployment. The local job centre's staff helped us organise the latter group. (for more detailed description of the focus groups, see Table 8 in Annex)

1) Focus Group corresponding to active training projects of public administration and private organisations.
5 Roma individuals, Aiba: 4 women and 1 man. All Spanish nationality. All but one are of Spanish nationality.
2) Discussion Group. Vocational training course on Trade.
10 individuals: 6 women, 4 men. 3 Roma individuals: 2 men, 1 woman. All but one are of Spanish nationality.
3) Long term unemployment group
6 individuals, Lleda: 4 men, 2 women. 2 Roma individuals: 1 man and 1 woman. All but one are of Spanish nationality.

Gender balance was not aimed to be established. In the first group participants previously knew each other and they offered themselves as a discussion group. The second group was officially formed, while in the last one the common denominator of being long-term unemployed and the time pressure determined non-balanced gender composition.

3. Findings

ALMP intervention has different layers in the context of our fieldwork. Firstly, the **State Employment Service** (SEPE) is responsible for the unemployment benefits and subsidies. It distributes its services through the territorial (Catalonia) **Employment Offices** (SOC: *Servei d'Ocupació de Catalunya*). SOC publishes a wide range of public tenders for the execution of ALMP projects. The main target of those tenders generally includes public administrations, local organisations and non-governmental organisations. Local administrations and organisations tend to apply for ALMP financing in addition to other European, state, regional or private sources. **Consortium for the Continued Training of Catalonia**, another significant actor in Catalonia, was created within the SOC Employment Offices by main trade unions and employers' organisations. Its main task is to organize and manage capacity building and focused professional courses in order to improve adaptation of the work-force to employers' demands. Another organization to be mentioned is **Diputació** (governing

institutions of the Provinces of Catalonia⁵⁰), which also works for the invigoration of local economic activities (labour market and productive sector) through different calls for municipalities and supra-municipal organisations. Training courses are addressed to administrative staff in order to improve planning, managing and evaluating local ALMP activities. Capacity building courses are also offered to municipalities. Finally, another significant ALMP actor, "CONSOR" is a county level consortium for employment and economic promotion founded by 23 city halls, main employers' associations, trade unions, county Councils, regional government (*Diputació*) and the Catalan government (*Generalitat*). **Municipal Job Centres** are responsible for the local implementation of ALM policies financed by any institution or organisation. They have their own orientation, training, job-integration capacity and know-how.

Lleda **Job Centre's** main source of financing comes from public SOC-tenders, though not solely. ACCEDER programme, managed by the Fundació Secretariado Gitano, has its regional office on the premises of Lleda's Job Centre, and they cooperate with each other on several projects. Lleda has **two Employment Offices**, each covering the population of determined geographical zones. They manage partly different "portfolios" of ALMP policies offered for their target population.

Aiba shares **SOC Employment Office** with the neighbouring municipality. Being a small municipality (under 20.000 inhabitants) its **Job centre** cannot apply for a great number of tenders on its own, but it relies on collaboration with previously mentioned "CONSOR" consortium. We could observe a high level of ALMP application activity in Lleda, together with its higher than average financing coming from *Llei de Barris* (Neighbourhood Law). For example, in 2010 it achieved **157 Employment Plans**, out of which 91 (58%) was financed by *Llei de Barris* (*Project Treball als Barris*). In **Aiba**, a wide range of ALMP projects are offered, though their number has significantly decreased in volume in the last two years. According to SOC Employment Office staff, the available ALMP tools do not correspond to the specific situation of Aiba, as its highest unemployment rate in the county is not taken into account, an opinion widely shared by interviewed Roma and non-Roma inhabitants.

It is important to highlight **two main aspects of inequality** in terms of access of Roma people to ALM resources between the studied larger and smaller municipality. Firstly, the implementation of a complex local development programme financed by the Catalan Government, namely the *Project Treball als Barris* in Lleda, significantly favours the large municipality in terms of *Employment Plans* available, in which Roma people are involved (though no indicative figure has been obtained). Secondly, the fact that ACCEDER programme (targeting, though not exclusively, Roma population) operates within the local job centre of Lleda limits to a certain extent access of the Roma from Aiba to its services.

A critical finding of our inquiry is the **low level of transparency** of the aforementioned ALM measures. It is extremely difficult to gain an overall picture of the plans, programmes, one-off projects offered by different public and private entities in a single municipality. Also, one of the criticisms of both LM experts and ALMP users is the **constantly changing** structure and volume of the offers that makes it difficult to follow and check their mid-term efficiency or impact.

3.1 Comparison: Lleda - Aiba

In both Lleda and Aiba **one cannot identify Roma users** within the vulnerable population in **any official document or published figure**. There is no public record regarding ethnic

⁵⁰ Catalonia consists of four provinces, and is divided into 41 counties.

origin, and contacted experts do not provide any estimation based on ethnic adscription. Neither could we gain information on the particular training courses where Roma people were included through the partnership between Lleda Job Centre and Fundaci3n Secretariado Gitano (namely, ACCEDER programme). This latter organisation would not provide us with a detailed analysis of their users, thus our data on Roma solely stems from interviews and focus group debates. Interviews made with Employment Office employees did not clarify the volume and proportion of Roma participation in local ALMP policies. However, it was confirmed that they tend to participate in the majority of these policies.

In the following chapter a detailed description of the most recently implemented ALMP projects in Lleda is given. It is important to note that in 2011 and 2012 ALMP financing was seriously cut and the range was narrowed, so the present list does not reflect the situation before.

We organized main ALM projects, measures and programmes into three categories following field experts' explanations:

- Labour market /employment orientation;
- Training activities;
- Labour market /employment integration.

These categories are crosscut by several projects, as we will explicitly highlight it.

3.1.1 LM/ Employment Orientation

In Lleda, there are three separate services / projects focusing on labour market and employment orientation. The most traditional form called "**Job Mediation and Orientation Service**" is similar to "**ERAF: Space for Active Job Search**" and - "**DIRF: Integrated Devices for Job Research**" offered in Aiba. In Lleda, it represents the main profile of Lleda Job Centre: attending a great number of municipal service users, diagnostic of employability and orientation. This project is financed by municipalities' own resources. Target population of this service was defined as "population with special difficulties in the labour market integration". Statistics show that cca. 1000 users of "low employability profile" were attended.

Other services, such as Development of Transversal Competencies, "Interactive job search rooms", "Online Job Fair" and "Tailor-made Job Fair" were used by a much larger public. Official figures of the Job Centre reported more than 8.000 participating people in different activities of "**orientation**" in 2010. Altogether more than 750 sessions were held, suggesting a high activity rate of the Job centre. Unfortunately, no evaluation of these basic activities in terms of efficiency or public satisfaction has been published.

In **Aiba**, services offered by the project **ERAF: Space for Active Job Search**, self-financed by local administration, were reported to have been used by 544 people in 2012. Currently, the project goes on with reduced personnel and with no LM orientation expert in the team. An additional resource offered by Aiba Job Centre is **DIRF: Integrated Devices for Job Research**, financed by the Employment Office. In 2012, 99 users were reported by local administration, but no information about Roma users has been published. While Job Centre staff considers its programs as important source for job search, these projects have not necessarily been determinant for our informants. Many mention that even though having a physical space with web connection makes the job search comfortable, it is not necessarily successful.

The other project in Lleda "Job Mediation Device in the Neighbourhoods" was, launched in 2008. It is financed by "Llei de Barris", of the Catalan Government, aims to attend population with "low employability" profile in their neighbourhoods. In 2012, 600 service users were

registered. In those neighbourhoods where *Llei de Barris* were carried out, there is a high proportion of Roma population, so it is very probable that a significant number of users were Roma, but interviewees could not confirm it with numbers. The project delivers LM / employment orientation services directly to the potential clients by settling an employee of the municipal job centre in a territorial office of the neighbourhood. The local newspaper claimed that during the first 5 months of 2013 140 citizens were attended, and 14 of them found a job. No exact budget figures for Lleda were found, and no thorough evaluation of its implementation and outcomes has been made publicly available. It is known that the overall budget allocated to the Project "Treball als Barris" in Lleda was €1,55M. Though "job mediation" may imply labour market integration, this tool was classified by Job Centre staff as an LM orientation. **Aiba** does not offer this service to its citizens; being a very small municipality local expert did not claim it as relevant for them. Unfortunately, we could not confirm users' satisfaction with this particular service, as none of our informant participated in any "Treball als barris" programme.

The third significant LM/employment orientation program offered by Lleda Job Centre is the programme "**Get to know trades**", financed by the local administration, CONSOR, Provincial Government and private organisations. This programme aims to give some initial knowledge about different trades through the participation in 7 different vocational workshops. It focuses on last year secondary school students, who do not show any intention to continue their studies. In 2001, it was launched with 4 schools including 52 students. By 2009, it extended to 15 high schools including 170 students (Monterde, 2009), a volume that reduced to 100 in 2012. No information has been received on the proportion of Roma students. It should be highlighted that some published evaluations of this programme claim that it succeeded in driving participating students towards regulated or non-regulated VET courses. (Monterde, 2009:78). No users of the programme could be contacted throughout the fieldwork.

3.1.2 Training

LM/ employment orientation services cannot be clearly separated from training activities. **Personal itinerary of Integration (IPI)** is one of the programmes that offer orientation and training in collaboration with companies. Job Centre of **Aiba**, owing to this programme (financed by the "Impuls Treball" project and ESF) could send more than 200 unemployed youth to "CONSOR" offices to receive personalised professional orientation and training towards the labour market integration. The programme includes individual orientation, tutorial meetings and follow-up to establish and develop an employment itinerary. Group meetings focus on the improvement of communication competencies, motivational elements and job searching strategies and methods. In Lleda, we could not identify such bridging programme among ALMP.

In Lleda, different **occupational training courses** have been developed by Job Centres throughout the years in order to improve employability of people under 25. They have been financed from tenders launched by Catalan Employment Office. As they target generally, though not exclusively, unemployed people, they tend to be free of charge. According to Lleda Job Centre's staff, in 2012, 360 individuals participated in occupational training courses and 15 placement agreements have been signed with companies. Courses are offered in a wide variety of topics from maintenance of electric systems to community mediation. Presently, 14 courses are offered with different duration from 330 to 880 hours.

Aiba Job Centre also makes these courses available for their users. The call is repeated annually since 2002 and is considered to be the **most important for the municipality**. Earlier,

the municipal job centre tended to organise long-term courses. Recently, however, the long-term courses (160-480 hours) are split into short-term modules (30-80 hours) in order that they offer accredited credentials. In 2012, all together 5 courses were offered: healthcare for dependent people (480 hours in 9 modules); sales techniques 1st part (160 hours in 4 modules); sales techniques 2nd part (180 hours in 4 modules); electrician (390 hours); painter (380 hours).

Year	Total Hours	N° of places	Budget
2011	1.305	90	€113.757
2012	1.580	75	€117.999

As one can observe, this is one of the few courses, which budget has been increased. Numbers also indicate the present policy of Aiba to offer longer-term, more thorough training to the population with average level of qualification lower than in neighbouring municipalities, especially among unemployed people. With a similar budget, fewer places are offered, though for longer training. In none of the cases Roma participation (or other ethnic adscription) is registered, so we have no information on the proportion of the Roma in these courses. Our second focus group was made up of the members of the training course "Sales techniques" with two Roma men and one woman, who at least confirm the presence of Roma individuals in occupational training courses.

Generally speaking, **public satisfaction** with respect to these courses is questionable. Even if users value positively the possibility to carry out traineeships placements, they often feel cheated if the training is not followed by the employment, or if in placement the work is not remunerated. Such practices have become one of the mainstream ALM tools. Attendees often question mid-term relevance of the work-experience: if no direct LM integration occurs, what does this knowledge serve for? On the contrary, **employers** value very positively traineeship because it helps them to find solution for occasional employment shortfalls at no additional cost.

For those young people (below the age of 25) who dropped out from the compulsory school system without obtaining corresponding credentials, an **Initial Professional Qualification Programme** (abbreviated as PQPI n Catalan) offers second chance education of cca. 900 hours. Once the course is finished, it opens the way to the incorporation into regulated educational programmes or further professional trainings. It is financed by the Employment Office and coordinated by the Department of Education (Catalan Government). In Lleda, in 2010-11, there were 4 specializations (car repair, bakery, electrician, catering) offered and 58 young individuals (15 women, 43 men) enrolled in PQPI courses. In these officially recognised courses, they spent 2.553 hours at school (practical and theoretical training) and 800 hours in the companies, as trainees.

In **Aiba**, during the year 2011/12, two specializations (IT, trade) were offered to 16 +18 youth, while in 2012/13 it is only one specialization with 19 students. It was confirmed that last year in trade specialization there were two Roma students, but this year there are no Roma present in these courses.

PQPI users tend to evaluate it positively, because it does not only focus on school knowledge, but also includes real labour market dynamics in the learning process.

We have not contacted any company that may employ PQPI students, so we cannot judge their satisfaction. In general terms, PQPI should be interpreted as a **complex programme**,

including at least two different though interconnected sectors labour-market and education system. Drop-out rate in PQPI courses is reported to be relatively low, but no exact data was made available on that issue.

Training in Information and Communication Technology is also a widespread practice. In Lleda, in 2012 different modalities of IT training were introduced. In "**Aula Mentor**" Project Lleda. Job Centre offered a computer room so that students could participate in Distance e-learning process through a training network. Within this modality, 120 users were offered training. **ACTIC Project** offered the opportunity to accredit previously obtained ITC competencies that are required for any public job offer in Spain. 100 accredited users were registered in 2012. As an additional comment, it should be pointed out that no training course with the objective of preparing users for the labour market integration in foreign countries was identified. Very few informants expressed a clear project in this sense. In **Aiba, ITC courses** were not introduced through these projects, but rather through the previously mentioned PQPI with much more limited amount of places. Also, some regular occupational training courses contain modules devoted to information technology. Again, there is no ethnically disaggregated data available.

Nevertheless, a Roma woman from Aiba expressed her concern about the limited amount of places: *"the thing is, that because of the crisis, if this IT course is available, then all of the women want to register, but there's a long list, in all courses. I know a lot of Roma women with their husbands, young couples who are doing PQPI."* [CO:26_29:29]

3.1.3 Labour Market Integration

Labour market integration is the ultimate - direct or indirect - goal of all ALM programmes and projects, but not all of them manage to get job searchers to the last stage.

"**Youth for the employment**" is a complex programme in the end of the orientation - training - LM integration process. Under this framework "**EMO/293 Professional experience for the youth employment in Catalonia**" has been implemented in Lleda. The main objective is to combine integrated actions fostering labour market integration in companies or the return of the individual to the school system. As such, it is one of the few genuinely **complex actions**, integrating orientation, training and LM integration. This programme offers traineeships at companies for unemployed youth between 16 and 25, with a low qualification profile, and/or having training deficits, early school leavers. There were 120 users of this ALMP in Lleda in 2012. Relevant actions involved the following concrete measures:

- 1) Tutoring and accompanying, personal tailor-made orientation;
- 2) Training: professionalization, training practices in companies, complementary training, training for obtaining the secondary school credentials;
- 3) Fostering the participation of non-profit companies;
- 4) Professional experience in non-profit organisations or social enterprises through work contract.

Furthermore, both Lleda and Aiba (via CONSOR) promote EMO/2009/2013 "Programme of Professional experiences for the youth employment" within the framework of "Catalonia youth for the employment" as well.

"**Working in Neighbourhoods**" (*Treball als barris*) is a project under the wider framework of "Neighbourhood Law" (*Llei de barris*) of the Catalan Government. This project represents a policy framework for a wide variety of activities in two degraded sets of neighbourhoods, both with significant Roma population. In 2012, when general expenditure on ALMP was

seriously cut, this policy framework could still offer financial infrastructure for the continuation of the programmes. "Neighbourhood Law" was designed to finance integrated/complex projects for the general development of determined neighbourhoods throughout Catalonia, focusing on eight different fields: public space, infrastructural/urban equipment, rehabilitation, new technologies, accessibility, sustainability; gender equality and social programmes (SOC, 2011).

This last aspect allowed "Treball als barris" to make inversions in ALMP, partly financed by local administration. The project carried out a wide range of activities, and involved 708 project beneficiaries altogether. Mostly, it finances the contract-costs of some **Employment Plans**. Employment Plans offer a six-month-long public employment, strictly for "temporary work in public or social interest". Employment Office covers the costs of the employment, and the contract cannot be renewed even if all the parties wish to. Major employers in these schemes are municipalities and municipal public companies, NGOs, not-for-profit companies, and public universities. Within the "Treball als barris" framework we can mention the previously seen "Job Mediation Device in the Neighbourhoods" that gets labour orientation more accessible, especially to the most vulnerable potential users. "Sociolaboral integration Devices" [300 + 300 = 600 users] offer labour market prevision, labour intermediation, professional orientation, motivation for the employment, analysis of employability, among others. "Integrated training for youth" [20 + 10 = 30 users] is meant for those who do not hold minimum necessary school credentials. It may include professional training, building of basic and transversal competences. Other programmes include "Skills workshop" in sustainable urban horticulture [8 + 8 = 16 users]; "Employment Workshop: Street Cleaning" [8 + 8 = 16 users]; "Experimentation Programmes" [22 + 24 = 46 users].

As we can see, the main source of **Employment plan** in Lleda has been the "Working in the neighbourhood" project. Nevertheless, there are other sources of employment plans as well. "Projecte Impuls - Treball" and "Extraordinary Employment Plans" are general tenders of the Employment Offices targeting meaningful employment plans. For example, in Aiba, 32 employment plans were made for six months in 2010 in order to restore "urban equipments". In this modality, fulfilment of the professional training of 100 hours was a minimum requirement for the candidates. Furthermore, "Municipal Employment Plans" also permit local administrations to contract local labour force most widely for emerging low-skilled jobs.

Though various informants, both from Lleda and Aiba, mentioned that Roma young and adult individuals are often contracted through employment plans, throughout fieldwork, we could only identify one non-Roma man who participated in this type of programme. This particular user **was unsatisfied with** the implementation of 4-month plan because after the second month the payment was cut and the participants did not receive any salary afterwards. Nevertheless, positive references have also been mentioned by other informants.

Another programme in Lleda that targets **long-term unemployed** people and combines training and contracting (EMO/208/2012) is accessed through CONSOR and shares the ideological bases of the **continued training**, though it does not mean any substantial change. This tender is applied under the umbrella of **CONSOR**. In 2012, **3 training contracts** were also adjudicated for Aiba under this category. It should be underlined that this programme included a 400 hours training in **waste recycling** and the subsequent placement of trainees to companies of this profile.

Finally, it is worth to mention that Lleda Job Centre has developed a special profile focusing on ALM services targeting **mentally ill** patients. In 2012, a total of 200 users were registered in OTL and additionally 65 clients participated in the "PRELABORAL" programme that is

aimed for people of severe mental disorder. No similar focus can be found in Aiba. Just like in other programmes, there is no information whatsoever on ethnic belonging of the users.

Beyond universal ALM programmes and projects, the major Roma targeted programme implemented by Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) in Lleda should also be mentioned.

3.1.4 ACCEDER Programme in Lleda and Aiba

Originally, ACCEDER Programme was developed under the framework of the Multi-regional Operational Programme "Fight Against Discrimination", co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in 2000-2006. Besides European funding, it obtained other national, regional and local support in order to further develop sustain its activities. Under the "Orientation Network" of the Catalan ALM policies system, ACCEDER belongs to the "Second level of attention (to users)", more specifically, to the "Special orientation" addressed to "Individuals with special difficulties". Under this category, one can find "programmes of orientation and support to the labour market integration".

There are two ACCEDER centres in Catalonia - one in Barcelona city, the other in Lleda. FSG regional director argues that they received demand from Lleda's administration and this is why they originally chose Lleda as the second ACCEDER centre, instead of choosing another place further away from Barcelona. After a decade of dynamic growth, ACCEDER programme reduced its staff in 2012.

Lleda's FSG office is located on the Job Centre's premises. It claims to be a regional centre, nevertheless, the great majority of attended clients are from Lleda, and smaller number comes from Aiba and other near-by municipalities. FSG receives financial resources directly from the Town Hall to carry out activities addressing the Roma population, but no public data have been found on the agreement.

Due to the lack of statistics on the Lleda's FSG office, it is not possible to know about the demographical, socioeconomic and ethnic composition of the population ACCEDER programme deals with. Regional director claims that around 30% of their users are non-Roma individuals, a part of who are family members or friends of Roma users. Municipal offices often directly associate ACCEDER with the Roma population. Some claimed, and even the FSG staff was concerned with the fact that Roma people are automatically sent to this "targeted" service instead of first being offered mainstream treatment. In an interview with FSG staff, it was mentioned that municipal offices often use the motto "If you don't know what to do, send him to ACCEDER" (*si no sabes qué hacer, envíalo al ACCEDER*). This fact not only shows the high importance of FSG office in the local setting, but also the low commitment of public institutions towards the local "Roma issue".

Roma participation within the ACCEDER is a debated point. It should be recognised that being a pro-Roma NGO, FSG employs a great number of Roma. In Catalonia, only 8 out of 27 (29.6%) workers are Roma, which is lower than state-level average (40.7%, according to FSG Annual Report (2011)). The debate, however, is about the impact of ethnic belonging of the staff on the efficiency of the projects. The official FSG discourse points out that Roma staff-members who are from the very community, know better their cultural and socioeconomic conditions. Other informants claim that it is not ethnic belonging and membership of certain groups of the community that makes difference, but rather professional quality and capacity to treat individuals in any socio-cultural circumstances. Another informant claims that belonging to the community may even create the situations of inequality due to internal conflicts among families and interest groups. For example, one may accept a person who is conflictive within the community on different conditions than another person who belongs

to the same family as ACCEDER employee. Also, certain prejudices shared within the community may affect professional decisions.

According to 2011 Annual Report (p. 108-109), ACCEDER in Catalonia had 1.304 **beneficiaries**; out of which 464 were Roma and 188 were non-Roma (incoherence in numbers!). 410 users started a labour market integration pathway (though 820 pathways are also indicated in the very page 108 of the report), 286 (70%) out of which were Roma. 220 contracts were concluded, out of which 68 for Roma-users, and 42 for non-Roma users (incoherence in numbers!). The gap between 1.304 and 410 (or 820) sums 894 (484), and it most probably indicates the number of PRE-ACCEDER users. It is absolutely unclear what these numbers stand for, even though ACCEDER regional director claims that all are active users.

If one makes a quick calculation, it means that 54% or 27% (?) (220/410 or 220/820) of the users obtain work contracts. However, as territorial director says, "you can find both extremes, an individual with one contract, and another with six contracts per year". ACCEDER users claim that the overwhelming majority of the contracts are of less than a month, there are even many one-day substitutions.

2011 Annual Report claims that ACCEDER in Catalonia managed the budget of € 226,268. This budget is obtained by a diverse portfolio of tenders from public and private institutions and organizations, such as "Minimum Insertion Income" tenders for NGOs; Caixa-Incorpora call of a bank; Xarxa-Orienta call of Catalan Government, "Joves amb future" call of the Catalan Government, among others.

3.1.4.1 *Labour Market orientation*

ACCEDER's methodology involves an eight-stages long process, out of which the first four can be grouped under LM orientation: 1) dissemination, recruitment; 2) reception and information; 3) vocational diagnosis and design of the individual employment pathway; 4) guidance to active job-seeking and intermediate motivational actions to employment.

Vocational diagnostic, consultation, counselling and follow-up are all the elements that were generally considered in interviews and focus groups as a great help for people who are not previously accustomed to this exercise. ACCEDER staff argues that their initial assistance goes well beyond the mere preparation of users' CVs. Nevertheless, some interviewed informants pointed out the preparation of the CV as the most important element of their assistance. Others said that due to the over-crowdedness of the service and the shortage of staff, there was no sufficiently close and personal treatment to the users.

According to an ex-FSG-employee, after the first consultation and counselling stage, approximately a quarter of the clients is classified as "pre-ACCEDER" because of their low level of academic preparation. The informant claimed that, contrary to what one would believe, pre-ACCEDER individuals are less probable to be called to start a training-course than a better qualified ACCEDER user. One may believe that pre-ACCEDER users cannot produce success-figures for FSG, and for that reason they are not as important as the others. This opinion was supported by another critical element: "*Fundación Sercretariado Gitano does not take into account this type of Roma population. The Roma population is very diverse, but there is no specific plan.*" This latter judgement is very strong, because it highlights the phenomenon known as "creaming" that is the practice of many NGOs: namely to focus on activities that produce highest success-rate and suggest favourable rates of return to donors. At the same time, it also implies that the very dynamics violates the principle of equal treatment, and it produces processes of exclusion. We have no statistics to prove this opinion, which was only partially denied by FSG staff during the interview.

3.1.4.2 Training

Stage five and six of ACCEDER-process may be grouped under the concept of training. At stage five, users participate in vocational training, in-company internships, mixed training and employment programmes and PQPI (Initial Professional Qualification Programme) courses. At stage six, tailor-made and group counselling is organized aiming at active job seeking, together with possible self-employment projects.

ACCEDER users in Lleda are offered training-courses, organized by either (mainly) the FSG, or (less often) by the Job Centre. ACCEDER users have the option to access mainstream training courses (vocational training, etc.) of the Job Centre. Training courses organised by ACCEDER mostly, though not exclusively, for ACCEDER users tend to have a lower academic level so that Roma and non-Roma users with scarce school experience could prepare themselves for higher level trainings. It is conceptualized by ACCEDER documents as "pre-training and specifically tailored vocational training targeting the Roma population" (FSG 2009:16). ACCEDER courses tend to be shorter than average and has no officially recognized accreditation. Some informants claim that ACCEDER staff has low expectations towards its users. *"There are very low expectations towards the Roma population. They organise very short-term trainings and they offer low-level qualification. These are the typical trainings to work as a cleaner, or in order to work in a shop at the customer service. They do not qualify people well enough".* An ex-FSG-employee says: *"we were organising courses to train cashiers, electricians, different hotel and restaurant staff, in order to prepare them for labour market practices. The thing is that what we can see with the crisis is that without credentials of secondary education, they get nowhere. So you have very well trained people here, and you have the training courses that received a lot of money to do this kind of training, and they get nowhere. Nowadays, the minimum requirement is a medium-grade (accredited vocational training). So, I think this is one of the problems with ACCEDER".*

It is not only the length of the course and the accreditation, but also the competence/preparedness of the trainers that is questioned by this previously quoted ex-FSG-employee. An ACCEDER-user says that trainers could be better prepared as far as the teaching methodology is concerned. He mentions that trainers do not tend to apply up-to-date methodologies in order to motivate low-skilled population. For example, a young woman complained about a sewing course: *"If we learnt anything at all, it was because we asked all the time let me know how to do this and that, and finally we could get some funny thing out of it. But if it was not for us..."*.

An additional relevant difficulty in training courses that is not registered by ACCEDER in any document is absenteeism and abandonment. It is a valid concern because many informants claimed not to have concluded the training courses they started with ACCEDER, a fact that may impact negatively efficiency of those courses. Participation rate would make a distinctive indicator to understand motivations and usefulness of training courses. Though, it is a general rather than an ACCEDER-specific aspect.

It was not possible to learn about selection procedures and criteria related to training placements. Apparently, it is ACCEDER staff that makes pre-selection of the most adequate candidates for traineeships, and the company makes the final selection, as it was learnt in the interviews with employers. A fundamental point is to understand employers' interest in accepting assistant trainees at their companies. FSG Annual Report (2011) claims that on a state level 167 agreements were signed with companies (Alcampo, Mango, Leroy Merlin, Inditex, Carrefour, Eroski, etc.). These wider agreements have been taken advantage of on a regional level. Alcampo (*Auchan*) and Eroski are two market-leader supermarkets that receive assistant trainee practitioners through ACCEDER. Both recognise that their

fundamental interest is to cover occasional labour shortages and to exploit free or very cheap labour rather than to preselect personnel for eventual recruitment. Alcampo tends to organise training periods at the beginning of June, so that trainees can cover staff shortages in August because of holidays, and during the Christmas campaign. An ex-ACCEDER-employee said: *"even if they offer training, these girls made long hours alone in the cashier, and it meant a lot of free job for Alcampo. And as they were in traineeship they were not remunerated and in the end I think that it became a bad practice, and they directly asked for trainees for the Christmas campaign"*. Although this is the fundamental logic behind the part-time contracting, HR experts also mentioned "corporate social responsibility" framework (ILO, 2006) as a drive. Still, after these campaigns some Roma trainees could enter to work on longer-term basis in Alcampo. Eroski HR expert mentioned the same arguments. Nevertheless, it was interesting to find out that this person, new in his position of a company's HR, did not know about ACCEDER, but was aware of some agreements made through Aiba Job Centre, and the Roma individuals from Aiba who made their traineeship at Eroski. This fact calls the attention to relative importance that ACCEDER may have in wider context in terms of traineeship agreements for Roma. Even if any opportunity for work-experience should be positively valued, its impact on the Roma youth is doubtful. Some assess such treatment as exploitation and this opinion may have negative effect on the future labour-market expectations as well as on work-moral. A Roma woman with experience in one of this programmes said that *"they beguile you with future promises, and they say that you are going to have more options to access here and there... but finally nothing at all, it is just losing your time and that's it"*. ACCEDER staff claims that despite these conditions, many Roma people, especially youth, prefer rather to accumulate labour experience than passively wait for better opportunities.

3.1.4.3 Labour Market Integration

Methodological description of ACCEDER project underlines "intermediation" in the labour market as a crucial point of the "integration pathway". Prospectors are responsible for market-analysis and the individualised follow-up of the employed users, together with establishing and maintaining contact with companies.

Both ACCEDER staff and ACCEDER users say that real LM integration is not being done in any significant volume. Due to the crisis, companies are no longer interested in employing ACCEDER users when there is a huge labour offer through other contracting agencies as well. The majority of agreements are not operative in terms of contracting labour force. The most common way to assure mid-term contracts is to offer an "Employment Plan" (or other similar benefitting product) for the company, in the frame of which it is not the company who pays wages and corresponding expenses. It should be positively valued in terms of work experience and direct benefit for the employee, however, real transformative impact of ACCEDER can be questioned. Unfortunately, ACCEDER has not published any data on the labour market trajectories of their users, so it is impossible to assess its real impact. Especially, it would be important to know whether FSG's aim to empower its users with sufficient labour market autonomy has had positive effect or not. Several interviewed ACCEDER users claim that they "use" ACCEDER as an alternative "Temporary Employment Agency". It worked well before the crises, as ACCEDER - being itself legally an employment agency - received demand from companies, especially for low-skilled jobs and for short-term periods. But with the crisis, no demands arrive and consequently, it has lost its attraction for many Roma.

ACCEDER "individualised employment pathway" is supposed to support entrepreneurship as a form of labour market integration. According to the FSG regional director, Catalonia

lags behind the nation-wide average in terms of entrepreneurship activities - less than average self-employment initiatives are proposed, less than average initiatives become successful. Beyond interview data, no public details have been made available on this important aspect.

3.2 Complexity of the ALM programmes

Lleda's Job Centre offers all three types of services: orientation (counselling), training and LM integration together with the "Labour Market prospection" activities, that is, the study and analysis of emerging of new market opportunities or market niches. Some particular projects, such as the *Personal Itinerary of Integration* (IPI) (implemented in Aiba), are also designed as *complex actions* including orientation, training and LM integration. Nevertheless, from a critical point of view, complex actions should include not only different stages of orientation-training-LM integration, but also different sectors beyond labour market, such as education, health, housing or social services. In Lleda, the only **genuinely complex project** (at least by its project description), mentioned further on is "Work in the neighbourhoods" (*Treball als barris*) (Servei d'Ocupació de Catalunya, 2011:4), that includes actions in the domain of infrastructural, urban equipment, new technologies, gender equality, social intervention, among others. In practice, it is unclear whether the implementation of these connected projects is genuinely interrelated meaning that the same individuals can have access to many of these aspects in a comprehensive way. We would rather judge it as a series of *parallel* measures whose level of convergence and mutual impact is neither measured, nor evaluated in publicly published reports. Unfortunately, we could not identify any informants who have participated in those supposedly "complex" measures. In Aiba, no such a complex project was developed as it is not eligible for such a huge regional government financed intervention, which undoubtedly puts it in a handicapped situation.

The project called "Get to know trades", implemented in Lleda, involves last-year secondary school students in a preparatory training course in order to raise their awareness about the real labour market opportunities, so that they can design better their academic/vocational carrier. Notably, responsible experts in Department of Education (it applies to Aiba as well) were not willing to meet us to discuss active labour market measures, considering that ALMP was a concern of local Job Centre or Employment Office, and had nothing to do with education.

ACCEDER Project, carried out by Fundación Secretariado Gitano staff, also involves integrated actions. In the interview, regional director claimed that besides individual actions, they work on a group or family level as well, as it is officially detailed in ACCEDER methodological guide (FSG, 2011). "Our staff works with the father and the mother either a training or an employment itinerary and, logically, you are injecting the necessity of the continuity of the studies into the children, because look at that, what may occur to you...". She claims that their *educational team* has grown and is able to give support to children. Internal coordination between different areas is done at weekly meetings. ACCEDER regional director says that they are *embedded* in the local institutional network, so they can continuously coordinate with social services, job centre and local services in particular neighbourhoods, or even schools with Roma pupils. Still, we could not find out whether integrated intervention on individuals is an occasional or a habitual way of intervention, because none of the interviewed ACCEDER users and ex-ACCEDER-workers could confirm this approach by their own experience.

It must also be mentioned, that Lleda 's Job Centre has developed a special **attention to population with extra difficulties in their LM access**:

- Mentally-disabled people through the installation of a specific workshop called "Labour Technical Office";
- physically disabled people through close collaboration with ECOM, a federation that involves a great number of associations implementing integrated labour market actions for disabled people;
- Roma people, through the collaboration with Fundación Secretariado Gitano, and more specifically, with the ACCEDER project.

As for the **collaborating and cooperating companies** involved in the particular ALMP projects, little information could be collected as project organisers were not willing to reveal their collaborators. Actually, there is only one company mentioned as "best practice" on the official website of Lleda Job Centre. More information has been gathered about those companies that have collaborated with ACCEDER project.

4. Summary

- In the past decade, together with the growth of the welfare state, ALM policies have been diversified and deepened, and their financing grew to record levels. From 2009 on, state financing of ALMP has been cut year by year. Present budget (€3.8 billions) represents 46% of 2009 budget (€8.3 billions). Budget cuts affected different ALMP products in different way. Locally, some continued with the same budget, others continued with a slashed inversion, while some others ceased to exist, leaving demand non-responded.
- Local job centres have suffered reduction of personnel, that may further jeopardized local execution of still existing projects. For example, in Aiba, presently there is no labour councillor (*orientador*), though ordinary staff can fill this gap.
- Lleda and other larger municipalities have more self-financing capacity, and wider options to make a bid for public ALMP calls.
- The majority of calls for ALMP projects (by SOC - Employment Office) are published in the end of December which makes it difficult to design training courses and complex ALMP activities for the whole academic year.
- **Uncertainty** about the to-be-published ALMP projects (whether they are published, and with which budgets) makes local ALMP planning extremely difficult for local administrations.
- **Discontinuity of the calls** means for local administrations the discontinuity of local projects, or the necessity to finance ongoing projects from multiple sources and keep changing the scale of the offers (available places, length of courses, complexity of the interventions).
- There is an overall **perception of the questionable impact** of the ALMP interventions in terms of labour market integration. Deepening economic crisis serves as a moderating/hindering factor in all the observed projects.
- In none of the two municipalities could we obtain any official and **hardly any unofficial information on Roma users** of ALMP policies. Ethnicity is not considered to be a relevant criterion to assess eligibility of ALMP beneficiaries.
- A double process can be observed: 1) **no relevant impact of Roma-targeted projects** (ACCEDER) in the studied municipalities was recorded; 2) the Roma population in

mainstream/universal ALMP gets **invisible**. The possible impact of these measures on the overall Roma population or alternatively on the participating Roma individuals / groups is unnoticeable. This applies to other vulnerable groups as well.

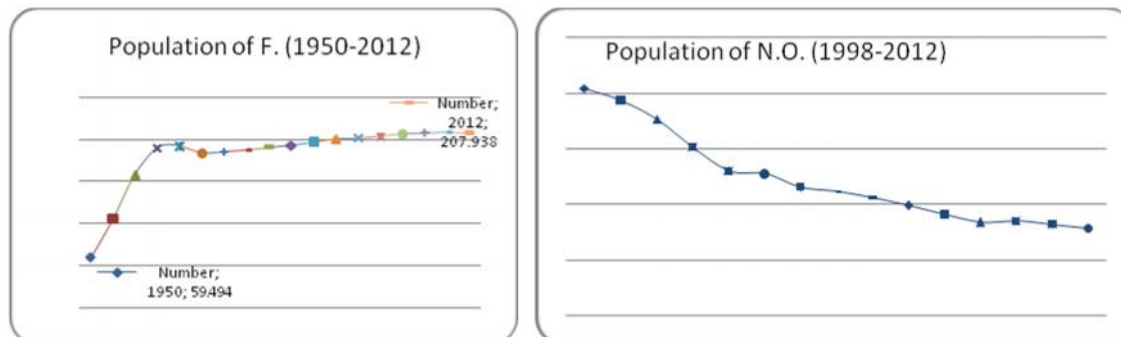
- **ACCEDER** programme does not collect systematically data on the users' trajectory, so it is impossible to evaluate the impact of their intervention. Data with major explicatory relevance are unpublished while published information is confusing. During the economic boom this service seemed useful for both Roma (and non-Roma) users and for employers. The crisis has significantly reduced its relevance for the local Roma population.
- The great majority of the programmes are **not complex** ones. They tend to involve different elements (orientation, training, counselling, mediation, LM integration) from a labour market focus, but only few includes a wider, genuinely integrated approach, implying focus on social, housing, educational or cultural elements.
- A significant missing elements from the global map of ALMP projects in the observed municipalities are integrated or one-off initiatives targeting European labour market. Although Eures Network is promoted by SOC, for example, training activities are not linked with traineeship in foreign countries.
- As for **international migrations**, two types of strategies could be identified during the fieldwork, though on a very minor scale and with no proof to be identified as trends.
- In the territory studied, ALMP do not make a significant emphasis on environmental aspects, or on the market niches related to renewable energies.

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Annex

Figure 1. Population growth of Lleda (1950-2012) and Aiba (1998-2012)



Source: INE (National Institute of Statistics, Spain)

Table 1. Most numerous foreign population in Catalonia, Lleda and Aiba, 2012

	Catalonia	Lleda	Aiba
Total Population	7.570.908	207.938	13.563
Total Foreign citizens	1.186.779 16%	25.340 12%	829 6%
Morocco	239.206 3%	4.604 2%	435 3%
Bolivia	50.188 1%	3.433 2%	25 0,2%
Ecuador	59.452 1%	2.385 1%	24 0,2%
Romania	106.023 1%	1.753 1%	28 0,2%
China	49.357 1%	1.091 1%	6 0,0%

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Spain (INE)

Table 2. Main sectors of activity by number of workplaces and by number of companies, county Muntanya, 2012

	Work places (employees and self-employed)		Companies	
Services to companies	77.108	24,2%	5.505	22,3%
Industry	72.806	22,9%	4.223	17,1%
Trade	70.471	22,1%	6.790	27,5%
Citizenship services	45.597	14,3%	1.910	7,7%
Consumer Services	31.808	10,0%	3.654	14,8%
Construction	20.215	6,3%	2.552	10,3%
Agriculture	490	0,2%	55	0,2%
	318.495		24.689	

Source: Copevo (2012) Flaix socioeconòmic Vallès Occidental - III trimestre 2012

Table 3. Main sectors of the economy by number of workplaces and by number of companies, county Muntanya, 2012

	Work places (employee + self-employee)					Companies						
	3rd 2012	Trimes variati on	Interannual variati on	Annual result	% of total	3rd 2012	Trimes variati on	Inter-annual variati on	Annual result	% of total		
Public administration	7.880	-2,50%	-9,50%	-830	2,50%	163	0,60%	-0,60%	-1	0,70%		
Agroindustry	7.122	-3,80%	-3,10%	-226	2,20%	356	-0,80%	-1,70%	-6	1,40%		
Other manufacturers	3.684	-4,00%	-9,40%	-382	1,20%	368	-4,90%	10,50%	-43	1,50%		
Car industry	10.409	-1,60%	-3,30%	-355	3,30%	813	-2,00%	-1,80%	-15	3,30%		
Trade, hotel and tourism	52.820	-0,50%	-1,70%	-910	16,60%	5.634	-1,60%	-0,70%	-37	22,80%		
Construction	28.417	-4,50%	14,40%	-4.776	8,90%	3.751	-4,40%	11,30%	-479	15,20%		
Wholesale trade, logistics	42.934	-1,30%	-3,30%	-1.474	13,50%	3.751	-1,40%	-2,10%	-82	15,20%		
Education, reserch	18.364	1,20%	-0,40%	-78	5,80%	752	-3,80%	1,80%	13	3,00%		
Energy, water	2.304	-1,50%	1,60%	37	0,70%	85	-5,60%	-1,20%	-1	0,30%		
Extractives	74	-2,60%	16,90%	-15	0,00%	5	0,00%	16,70%	-1	0,00%		
Metal	26.239	-1,60%	-5,00%	-1.391	8,20%	1.861	-2,10%	-5,00%	-98	7,50%		
Health	19.150	-0,70%	1,50%	283	6,00%	713	-0,30%	1,70%	12	2,90%		
Specific services for companies	33.461	3,60%	3,00%	963	10,50%	2.077	0,00%	0,90%	18	8,40%		
Social Services	5.844	-2,10%	2,40%	136	1,80%	256	-0,40%	2,00%	5	1,00%		
Financial Services	9.423	-1,70%	36,60%	2.526	3,00%	259	-1,10%	-3,70%	-10	1,00%		
Textil, Chemistry	19.220	-1,60%	-3,20%	-634	6,00%	1.069	-1,60%	-3,10%	-34	4,30%		
ITC	9.361	-0,70%	-3,80%	-365	2,90%	536	-1,70%	-0,60%	-3	2,20%		
Education, culture, leisure	21.789	-6,40%	-7,30%	-1.727	6,80%	2.240	-2,00%	-1,50%	-35	9,10%		
Total General	318.49	5	-1,40%	-2,80%	-9.218	100,00%	24.68	9	-2,00%	-3,10%	-797	100,00%

Source: Copevo (2012) Flaix socioeconòmic Muntanya - III trimestre 2012

Table 4. Evolution of Work centres and Work places (employees) by sectors of activity, according to Social Security categories. 1995-2010. Lleda

Sector	1995	2000	2005	2007	2008	2010
Work centres (companies)						
Agriculture	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Industry	26%	21%	16%	14%	14%	13%
Construction	9%	13%	15%	16%	13%	12%
Services	65%	65%	69%	70%	73%	75%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Work places (employees)						
Agriculture	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Industry	34%	25%	17%	15%	14%	12%
Construction	6%	10%	11%	10%	8%	6%
Services	59%	65%	72%	75%	78%	82%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Anuari Estadístic de Sabadell 2011.

Table 5. Volume of Unemployment by productive sectors. County, September 2012

	Unemployed	% of total	Annual variation
Agriculture	478	0,6%	-3,0%
Industry	16.735	19,6%	2,3%
Construction	14.073	16,4%	3,1%
Services	50.098	58,5%	9,8%
W/o previous employment	4.205	4,9%	-4,5%
TOTAL	85.589	100,0%	6,3%

Source: Copevo (2012) Flaix socioeconòmic Muntanya - III trimestre 2012, p8

Table 6. Beneficiaries of unemployment provision in Barcelona Province. In 2012/2009

Beneficiaries of unemployment provisions in Barcelona Province. In 2012 and in 2009.						
Territory	December 2012			December 2009		
	Contributory Benefits	Welfare provisions (Subsidy)	ALM Inclusion Income	Contributory Benefits	Welfare provisions (Subsidy)	ALM Inclusion Income
Lleda	49%	44%	7%	61%	37%	1%
Abia	44%	47%	9%	58%	41%	2%
Barcelona Province	55%	40%	6%	64%	34%	1%

Source: Diputació de Barcelona, Dades municipals

Table 7. Interviewed stakeholders and employers

	Regional or territorial level	Local level	
		Lleda	Aiba
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for Employment Programmes and Equality of opportunities at CONSOR. - Secretariat of the Coordination for Traders in Catalonia (also FAGIC) - ex'-employee of FSG - Barcelona office - ex'-employee of ACCEDER - Albacete office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director of SOC Employment Office (local implementation of Employment Office) - Lleda - Head of Labour Intermediation of the Municipal Job Centre '- Lleda <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Together with: a member of ACCEDER staff (Fundación Secretariado Gitano) - Head of Planning and Administration of Social Services (Lleda) - social educator who works in a leisure time centre in one of the neighbourhoods of Lleda with larger Roma population. - regional director and one local employee of ACCEDER (Fundación Secretariado Gitano) - ex'-employee of ACCEDER '- Lleda office - ex'-school promoter (school mediator) responsible for schools in Lleda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director of SOC Employment Office (local implementation of Employment Service of Catalonia) '- Aiba - Head of municipal Job Centre '- Aiba - Responsible for the Area of Civic Rights and Citizenship (Aiba) - Coordinator of Area of Social Action and Citizenship and 1 responsible for diversity. (Aiba) - president of Associació Tumenge Calí (Aiba) - key informant, Roma woman (Aiba)
Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - head of HR at a major hypermarket - head of HR at major hypermarket 		

Table 8. Detailed description of Focus Group Discussions

1, Focus Group corresponding to active training projects of public administration and private organisations.
5 Roma individuals: 4 women and 1 man. All Spanish nationality.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 woman, 25 years, primary school, currently: preparing access to university +25. Ethnic Roma - 1 woman, 19 years, secondary school experience but no credentials, Ethnic Roma, - 1 woman, 23 years, secondary school experiences but no credentials, Ethnic Roma - 1 woman, 19 years, secondary school credentials, Ethnic Roma - 1 man, 21 years, university studies, Ethnic Roma
<p><i>How the group was organized:</i> the group was organised through the aid of a key informant who lives in Aiba. We went to visit flea market in the morning to get to know the group of youth who were divided in different market stalls. She introduced us individuals who participated in different vocational training courses. We explained them the aim of the research project and fixed a day next week to conduct a discussion group. They called us in the last minute to postpone the meeting to the following week.</p> <p>The group was composed of Roma individuals only. The general ambient was really relaxed and an interesting debate was generated with quite active participation. Participants knew each other previous to the meeting. Apparently, they trusted our key informant. They expressed themselves freely.</p> <p>The most reemerging issues were the evaluation regarding the quality and utility of training and placement practices.</p>
2, Focus Group. Vocational training course on Trade
10 individuals: 6 women, 4 men; 3 Ethnic Roma: 2 men , 1 women. All of them but one of Spanish nationality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Woman, 16 years, Compulsory Secondary, lives w/ parents, ethnic Roma - Woman, 18 years, Compulsory Secondary, lives w/ parents - Woman, 25 years, university studies, lives w/ mother - Woman, 27 years, Compulsory Secondary, lives w/ parents - Woman, 29 years, Compulsory Secondary, lives w/ spouse - Woman, (aprox 35) years, medium level studies post-compulsory, married - Man, 24 years, Compulsory Secondary, lives w/ parents, ethnic Roma - Man, 24 years, Compulsory Secondary, lives w/ parents, ethnic Roma - Man, 26 years, Compulsory Secondary, lives w/ parents, Moroccan nationality - Man, 27 years, Compulsory Secondary, lives w/ parents
<p><i>How the group was organized.</i> First, we intended to organise a group of individuals with a more specific profile: those who had ever unsuccessfully tried to get an Employment Plan. It resulted hard to get these individuals together so we asked the staff of local job centre in Aiba to have a group with Roma and non-Roma members that all are paid by an employment project (ALMP). There were none, so we opted for the attendees of a non-paid course of electricity. We presented them the project and finally, the entire group wanted to enter into the debate group.</p>
<p>Difficulties: there was no debate, rather a collective interview. Opinions were fairly known among the participants and often shared by all the members of the group.</p>

3, Focus group on long term unemployment

6 individuals (4 men, 2 women; Ethnic Roma: 1 man and 1 woman). All of them of Spanish nationality

- Woman, 36 years, primary studies, married, three children, used to be a self-employed chef, ethnic Roma,
- Woman, 44 years, primary studies, married, three children, used to be a worker in a factory, also ex-entrepreneur, self-employed PIME
- Man, 27 years, secondary studies, lives with couple, no children, used to be waiter, Argentine nationality.
- Man, 36 years, primary studies, divorced, 2 children, used to be a truck-driver
- Man, 41 years, secondary studies + post-obligatory, used to work in a factory, married, live w/ couple, no children ,
- Man, 49 years, primary studies, married, 2 children, used to be a self-employed entrepreneur, live w/ couple, ethnic Roma,

How the group was organised: local Job Service in LLeida helped us to gather people with shared experience of long-term unemployment. They did not previously know each other, but they all participated in the orientation sessions in their neighbourhoods. The possible bias of the selection is that all participants have already participated in orientation courses. In the final group gender-balance was not possible to be maintained.

A difficulty stemmed from the very condition of the participants. They tended to speak about their hopeless present situation, rather than focusing on the questions. One of the Roma women burst out to cry in the middle of the debate. General atmosphere of the meeting was of a certain anxiety, even though people participated in an open and active way. The case simulation about the Roma worker was manipulated by the fact, that one man openly declared that he was a Roma. Influence could be clearly noted.

Table 9. Main ALMP identified in the selected municipalities

	LLeida	Aiba
A) LM/ Employment Orientation	1) "Job Mediation Device in the Neighbourhoods" (<i>Dispositiu d'Intermediació als Barris</i>), launched in 2008, financed by "Llei de Barris" public policy of the Catalan Government	No similar programme could be identified
	2) Job Mediation and Orientation Service (<i>Servei d'Orientació i Intermediació laboral</i>).	- ERAF: Space for Active Job Search. Financed by the local administration. - DIRF: Integrated Devices for Job Research. Call published under "Integrated actions for the employment 2010-12". SOC (Catalan Employment Service)
	3) "Get to know trades" - financed by Town Hall, CONSOR, Provincial Government, private organisations	No similar programme could be identified
B) Training		Personal Itinerary of Integration (IPI) is the orientation service for unemployed people. SOC (Catalan Employment Service) These itineraries bridge employment orientation and training at collaborating and cooperating companies.
	4) Occupational Training courses [EMO/286 Training Actions]	Occupational Training courses. [EMO/286 Training Actions] addressed principally to employees and unemployed people registered in SOC (Catalan Employment Office)
	5) TRE/371/2010, PQPI , an Initial Professional Qualification Programme offered for youth (>25) who did not obtain compulsory school credentials. Financed by SOC and coordinated by the Department of Education (Catalan Government)	TRE/371/2010 PQPI , an Initial Professional Qualification Programme, offered for youth who did not obtain compulsory school credentials.
	6) ICT (Information and Communication Technology) training courses	No similar programme could be identified
C) LM Integration	7) Project of " Treball als barris 2007 " (within the wider framework of 'Llei de barris')	No similar complex programme could be identified but Employment Plans were carried out through other programmes, notably: EMO/1679. Contracting unemployed workers for temporary work, and of general and social interest.
	8) EMO/375 Innovative and experimental projects . Co-financed by FSE, aiming at retaining work places, improving companies' competitiveness and promoting labour integration of unemployed individuals	TRE/2665. REINICIA'T Project . Individual accompanying service for the labour integration, addressed to people over 50 years. Call was made under: "Experimental employment programmes". SOC (Catalan Employment Service)

<p>9) EMO/293 Professional experience for the youth occupation in Catalonia. "Youth for the occupation"</p>	<p>EMO/209, Programme of Professional experience for the youth employment. A programme within the wider framework of the policy titled "Catalunya joves per l'ocupació". SOC (Catalan Employment Service)</p>
<p>10, Technical Labour Office of Lleda0 is an ALMP service for mentally ill patients.</p>	<p>No similar targeted programme could be identified</p>
<p>ACCEDER managed by FSG hosted by Lleda Job Centre: this programme covers all three aspects (A, B, C) of the process.</p>	<p>No ACCEDER and other Roma-targeted ALM programmes are carried out</p>



About NEUJOBS

NEUJOBS is a research project financed by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme. Its objective is to analyse likely future developments in the European labour market(s), in view of four major transitions that will impact employment - particularly certain sectors of the labour force and the economy - and European societies in general. What are these transitions? The first is the **socio-ecological transition**: a comprehensive change in the patterns of social organisation and culture, production and consumption that will drive humanity beyond the current industrial model towards a more sustainable future. The second is the **societal transition**, produced by a combination of population ageing, low fertility rates, changing family structures, urbanisation and growing female employment. The third transition concerns **new territorial dynamics** and the balance between agglomeration and dispersion forces. The fourth is a **skills (upgrading)** transition and its likely consequences for employment and (in)equality.

Research Areas

NEUJOBS consists of 23 work packages organised in six groups:

- **Group 1** provides a conceptualisation of the **socio-ecological transition** that constitutes the basis for the other work-packages.
- **Group 2** considers in detail the main drivers for change and the resulting relevant policies. Regarding the drivers we analyse the discourse on **job quality**, **educational** needs, changes in the organisation of production and in the employment structure. Regarding relevant policies, research in this group assesses the impact of changes in **family composition**, the effect of **labour relations** and the issue of financing transition in an era of budget constraints. The regional dimension is taken into account, also in relation to **migration** flows.
- **Group 3** models economic and employment development on the basis of the inputs provided in the previous work packages.
- **Group 4** examines possible employment trends in key sectors of the economy in the light of the transition processes: energy, health care and goods/services for the **ageing** population, **care services**, housing and transport.
- **Group 5** focuses on impact groups, namely those vital for employment growth in the EU: **women**, the **elderly**, immigrants and **Roma**.
- **Group 6** is composed of transversal work packages: implications NEUJOBS findings for EU policy-making, dissemination, management and coordination.

For more information, visit: www.neujobs.eu

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