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— Dušana Dokupilová**

**FIELD SOCIAL
WORK CONTEXT
EVALUATION
Final Report Summary**



OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME
HUMAN RESOURCES

Published by the IA MPSVR SR within the framework of The National Project for the Field Social Work in Municipalities (ITMS 2014+: 312041A138)

This project is implemented thanks to the support of the European Social Fund within the Operational Programme Human Resources

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**Richard Filčák — Zuzana Polačková
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In the frame of publishing the results of our evaluations, we decided to provide space for the presentation of the works of artists who, as well as the field social work, are trying to set the mirror, initiating, or even directing action in pointing the injustice of the society's approach to the lives of people, and even the entire communities on the edge of the society. We think that linking public administration work and independent initiatives like that artists' work may also have a more effective impact on the positive change in society we try. In our own way, we try to achieve similar goals, the value shift of perception in society.

Miro Miklas (*1975, Bratislava) is a graduate of a bachelor study at the Institute of creative photography in Opava. He works as a professional photographer. He focuses on topics, not only as a photographer, but also as an observer. He works on long-term analog documentary projects such as Dobrá Voda – stories of people living in the village, Another supermarket – from the life of the open air market in Miletičová street in Bratislava, or a special ensemble devoted to his own children under his name Postcards From Childhood, as well as others. He exhibited in several galleries in Slovakia, in Poland, or in the Vienna Schauraum 11 / nullnull gallery.

He writes about his work: "If I photograph a document, it is mostly a long-term project that deserves a relationship with the environment, with the country and especially with the people. With the people who have often filled me with the knowledge about man and myself."



Miro Miklas, *From Solitude Cycle*

Foreword

The context evaluation (which final report you are holding) was part of a more complex process – the searching for the optimal shape and for the positioning of field social work (FSW). We, in the project team, were thinking more intense about the future of FSW since spring 2017. We had decided to establish a space for a public discussion, in which key stakeholders from the broader range of organizations professionally close FSW topic could be participated. By this way we had rejected an isolated expert solution, on the contrary our aim was to try to link expert opinions and solutions with the discourse within the working group.

From September 2017 to June 2018, the working group has been grown into an opinion – wealthy group, in which successively proposed particular topics were being lively discussed. As stimuli for discussion, partial outcomes of context evaluation were being submitted to the working group. It resulted in valuable feedbacks which helped evaluators to formulate the final form of the evaluation outputs. Thus the final report of evaluation is also partly a result of this process. This way of thinking about the future context of public service is not common in the sphere of Slovak public affairs, but has proved to be very productive. It brings solutions that take into account a number of professional insights that better identify possible risks and provides them greater acceptance and legitimacy.

The partial goal and the ambition of the final report is to promote the public discourse on the FSW through multiple arguments taken down in favour of competing possible models. Our aim was to lay the firm foundations for future decisions of the authorized authorities which should be based on the professional discourse and/or argumentation of the context evaluation itself.

I would like, on behalf of the project team, to express our gratitude and appreciation both to members of the evaluation team and to all participants (both members and guests) of the working group meetings for very interesting and inspiring discussions, in which we could have been involved.

On behalf of the project team Marcel Fukas

Introduction

Field Social Work is currently an above-sectoral programme focusing on marginalised Roma communities and homeless people. It is a necessary basic programme to activate the potential of people, supporting positive changes in the areas of housing, education, employment and social inclusion.

The extent and structure of the final report from the *Field Social Work Context Evaluation* is based on the specification identified by the Implementation Agency with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and focused on 4 main objectives:

- To identify the most suitable model of field social work implementation, providing the quality and financial sustainability of its implementation.
- To study several models of the field social work implementation and to get the most optimal model supported by arguments to be implemented under the conditions in the Slovak Republic, after taking their strengths and weaknesses into account.
- To identify the entity, by presenting arguments, which should bear the main responsibility (and i.e. the main financial burden) for the field social work implementation and to identify options/alternatives of financing the field social work performance, where inevitable.
- To define a demarcation line between localities where “the field social work has to be implemented“ and those where “ the field social work may be implemented“, i.e. to define a group of communities/localities where it is inevitable to implement the field social work.

The context analysis of the field social work has got 3 main parts:

- Quantitative context analysis;
- Field social work in the local and international contexts;
- Formulation of field social work models.

Within the quantitative context analysis, a **technical necessity index of the field social work** was made to compare the state of the infrastructure, and economic and social situation the villages and towns are in. That index was subsequently validated using the socio-economic indicator of registered unemployment rate in the district. Model costs needed to perform the field social work were compared with budgets of villages and towns, from the perspective of modelling the potential burden on their budgets. Results of the quantitative analysis indicate, that majority of municipalities would not be able to finance the field social work implementation from their own sources and a strong external financial support would be needed to perform the field social work. In Slovakia, there is high number of municipalities where the volume of costs related to the field social work exceeds several times the current budget of self-governing bodies allocated to all social services in the community. There are also extreme cases where the difference is even higher. At the same time, there are communities where neither field social work nor other similar social services are financed, but the index of the field social work necessity indicates the need of those services. Presented analyses show that **only a small number of municipalities are theoretically able to take over the burden of financing the field social work from their own financial sources**. After splitting municipalities in 5 categories according to the index score (where the category 1 are municipalities with the highest value, category 5 are those with the lowest, i.e. relatively positive situation), index results were analysed within the context of budgets of villages and towns. In major part of localities in all 5 categories, according to the index of the field social work technical necessity, **financing within the context of overall income and current expenses for the social area, would mean great burden which in many cases could not be covered from the budget of the municipality**.

In the second part of the context analyses we focused on the assessment of the field social work in the local and international context. Proceeding from quantitative to qualitative parts of the analysis, several options of alternative approaches to the field social work implementation were listed and described. These options were identified based on outputs of the involved focus group and semi-structured interviews carried out with stakeholders and members of the working group established for the purposes of the context evaluation with the Implementation Agency with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic.

In the terrain, the presence of field social work is perceived, thanks to its focus on the individual and family, as the basic condition to implement other supporting activities in the community and its role is understood as unreplaceable. Despite the support to the programme declared by all participating subjects, **financing of the programme has been secured only on the level of the project**, what represents significant risk for the continuous and quality-based programme implementation.

The analyses of foreign experiences identified 2 main conclusions: i) **it is in principle impossible to sustain wider geographical range and focus of field social work without an active participation of the state (incl. budgetary financing)** and ii) besides the “core” of localities implemented and managed like this, **wide spectrum and plurality of supplementary approaches may exist**, based on created conditions for their existence. Main outputs of the analysis are the **option grid**, describing a spectrum of alternative approaches on the performance, financing and quality assurance of field social work implementation, and **elaboration and assessment of selected models of alternative field social work functioning**. There were 5 basic models created based on the grid.

Each of them describes certain combination of options how to address the performance, management, financing and quality control of the field social work:

- **Model 1** (*combined model/current situation*)
- **Model 2** (*centrally managed and implemented model*)
- **Model 3** (*transferred to the local level*)
- **Model 4** (*regional approach*)
- **Model 5** (*central programme completed by the alternative performance*)

Each of the models is described in more details in the next part of the report. Based on the analyses of those 5 model situations, which have to be understood within the context of quantitative and qualitative indicators on the economic and social situation in villages and towns, the evaluation identified 3 main conclusions and recommendations:

- *The role of the state as the financial gestor/manager of the field social work (as well as other programmes focused on the social inclusion of people from marginalised Roma communities (MRC) shall be of a key character in the future. After the support of ESIF (European structural and investment funds) terminates, the field social work shall be not realistic without financing of at least the “core” localities and the programme in its current extent shall very probably extinct, or the field social work shall be performed only in some financially strong towns/villages and its quality shall vary.*
- *The analysis shows that Model 2 (centrally managed and implemented model) and Model 4 (field social work built on the regional principle with significant technical and financial support provided by ESIF and the state) seem to be the most perspective models.*

- *The future and sustainability of the field social work requires it is more anchored in national strategies and policies. It is necessary to consider how to stabilize this successful programme by elaborating/adopting a concept or another programming document following the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Inclusion of Roma up to 2020 and interconnected to the context of financing social services. The key task is to provide for a long-term financial stability, by combining state budget sources, temporary absorption of ESIF and establishing conditions for an alternative financing through subsidy/ grant schemes and by supporting local donors.*

In the third part of the report, individual models are described and assessed by using **SWOT analysis**. In the final part of the report, their **comparison** based on 4 assessment criteria is presented: i) Assurance of the field social work in optimal extent and coverage, ii) Sustainable, systematic and adequate financing, iii) Quality assurance of the field social work, iv) Acceptability and feasibility of selected solutions. Based on the results of the comparative assessment, there are conclusions and recommendations formulated for further discussions on the **future of the field social work**.

1. Quantitative Analysis of the Field Social Work Necessity

The quantitative analysis of the field social work necessity aimed to provide a complex view on the situation and the context of the field social work performance on the level of towns and villages. Using mathematic-statistical analyses, in this part we focused both on the current and future targeting of the field social work that should take the infrastructure and socio-economic indicators in consideration when selecting localities. It is important to analyse the field social work performance at the same time, from the point of view of its costs and an economic strength of towns and villages. Based on collected and analysed data, the quantitative analysis focused on following research questions:

- What are infrastructure and socio-economic indicators of those localities, where the field social work has been performed at present and in how many municipalities and in which communities the field social work would be needed?
- Are there localities with communities() not currently covered by selected/monitored interventions?
- What is the financial situation of given towns and villages (with marginalised Roma communities present) and would it be possible in the future that they would cofinance or fully finance alternative models of field social work performance from their own sources/budgets?

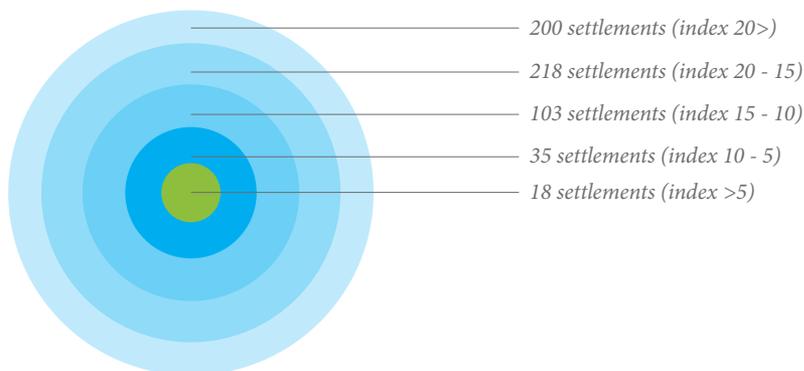
Schematic diagram on the procedure of preparing the quantitative part of the study



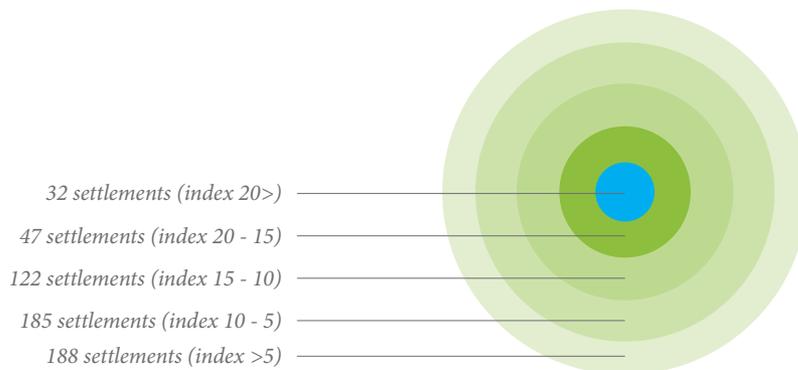
Two steps procedure was applied to solve above defined research questions. The first step was to create field social work index of technical necessity and the second one was the validation of the field social work index of technical necessity. Technical conditions in the settlements evaluated by the index of field social work technical necessity were correlated by a coefficient of registered unemployment rate on the district level, which was adopted as the main indicator illustrating the socio-economic situation in the locality. Classification of municipalities based on results of the field social work index of technical necessity and based on results of the validation by the registered unemployment rate coefficient generated 5 basic categories of settlements.

Dividing settlements into categories according to the Index of Technical Necessity and according to the Index after Validation by the Registered Employment Rate Coefficient (in Category 1 there are settlements with the highest reached value, in Category 5 those with the lowest)

a) Index of field social work necessity



b) Index validated technical necessity of field social work



The construction of the field social work validated index of technical necessity, taking the socio-economic situation in the region in consideration in the output, provides for context information for future alternative models of field social work financing and management. It is however necessary to consider that every macro-economic analysis has to assess also local specific features related to revenues and expenses of towns and villages. Financial flows analysis may provide for information useful to understand the options of alternative financing, eventually co-financing of the field social work. Relatively good, or relatively unfavourable economic situation

in the municipality, has to be analysed also from the long-term perspective and within the context of revenues and expenses structure. Based on the field social work index of necessity, the analysis of current costs to perform the field social work and of actual budgets of towns and villages, it is important to understand the context the municipalities operate in:

- Inability of small municipalities to provide for basic competencies performance: especially smaller municipalities can assure basic performance of the village mainly due to grants and transfers. Would we deduce grants, then 38 municipalities from the total number of 80 classified in Categories 1 and 2 would not be able to cover their current expenses. These are mainly smaller municipalities in marginalised, least developed regions defined pursuant to Act 336/2015 Coll. On Support of Lagging Regions. Other 89 of such municipalities are classified in Categories 3 and 4. It means that almost half of villages with marginalised Roma



Miro Miklas, *From Gypsies Cycle*

communities included in the category with most serious situation, identified according to the field social work index of technical necessity (Categories 1 and 2) belong at the same time to those poorest. The situation in the second half of municipalities is also not significantly better (the only exceptions are for example municipal districts of Košice).

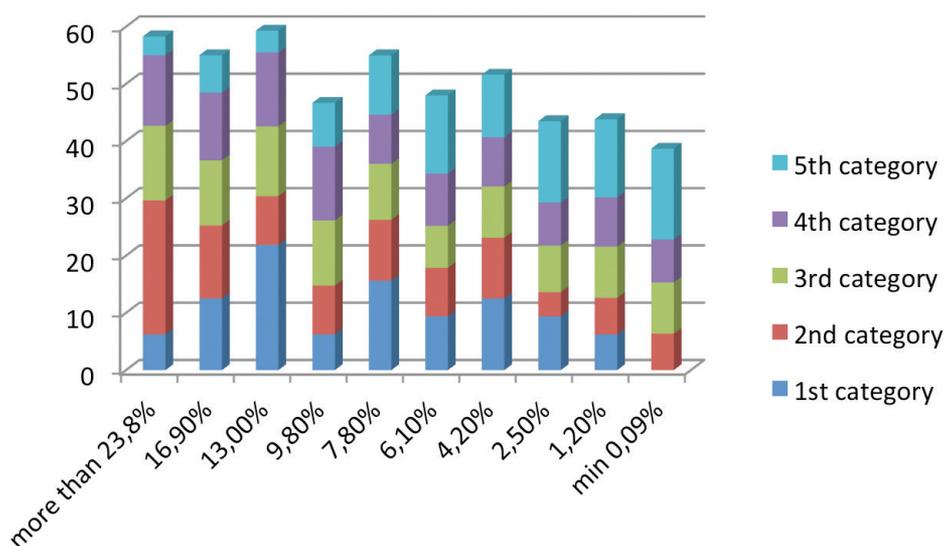
- Relatively small chances to influence financial means: Grants and transfers being of key importance for the functioning of municipalities are usually firmly connected to the purpose of their use. Municipalities therefore have only minimal chances to adopt decisions and they are dependent on where and what are the possibilities to apply for a support. The ratio of grants to current revenues is also important. In the observed group of municipalities (390 of them with the largest need of the field social work) there are more than 70 municipalities where more than 50% of current revenues come from grants. In the given group, only 80 municipalities show that less than 1/4 of their current revenues are covered from transfers and grants. High proportion of support coming from grants may indicate that the municipality office actively seeks sources of financing, but also the fact that the municipality does not have any other options how to increase its income. We may assume, that only a very small group of those municipalities have got financial means available which could be theoretically allocated for the field social work.
- Current pressure on financing the social services: The situation related to social services financing is critical in most municipalities and municipalities resist any kind of enlargement of those services. There are subjects in the analysed group where more than half of current expenses go to social services financing. One third of observed municipalities allocate more than 10% of their current expenses to social services. As mentioned in the text of the chapter, an exact calculation/ limit of percentage increase of expenses which would be affordable for the given village/town does not exist, as it is always conditioned by the structure of expenses and the local context, too. Municipalities have first to finance costs for services as stipulated by law, other depends on their decisions (i.e. also political pressures and opinions). Based on the analysis of budgets and field research results, one may assume that even a 5% increase of current expenses could be considered a limit that could be difficult to implement.

When calculating expenses to cover the field social work in the context of local budget, it is obvious that there is a large group of localities where field social work expenses paid from the municipal budget would represent a substantive item

compared to current budget revenues. Model calculation of annual costs spent on the field social work compared to total revenues in the current budget shows there is number of municipalities, in case of which the costs related to the field social work would exceed 50% of their total budget (Sudince, Ploské, Jesenské, Ploské, Čierna Lehota, Jánovce, Bodružal). Even in 1/3 of municipalities, these costs would represent more than 10% of their current revenues. In other about 2/3 of municipalities classified in Categories 1 and 2 of validated index of necessity of field social work, these costs would hypothetically represent 5% of current revenues. This figure may not seem high on first sight, but it has to be perceived from the perspective of tight budgets and pressure of different requirements on the financing, whereas the priority is given to those where the non-compliance is related to possible sanctions.

Modelling the costs related to the field social work shows that only in 17 municipalities these costs would represent less than 10% of current budget social services expenses. This is the case of larger towns: Žilina, Nitra, Zvolen, Banská Bystrica, Martin, Komárno, Ružomberok, Levice, Prievidza. In the group of municipalities with low ratio of field social work costs compared to the total budget spent for social services, there are also municipalities with high costs spent on social services. Almost half of the expenses are allocated for social services there (Letanovce, Rakúsy, Prenčov, Trnovec nad Váhom).

Dividing municipalities according to ratios of the field social work costs to tax and non-tax revenues (divided into deciles and individual categories according to the validated index of the field social work necessity in percentage representation of the placement in respective deciles) provides an idea about options and limits of municipalities in 5 defined categories:

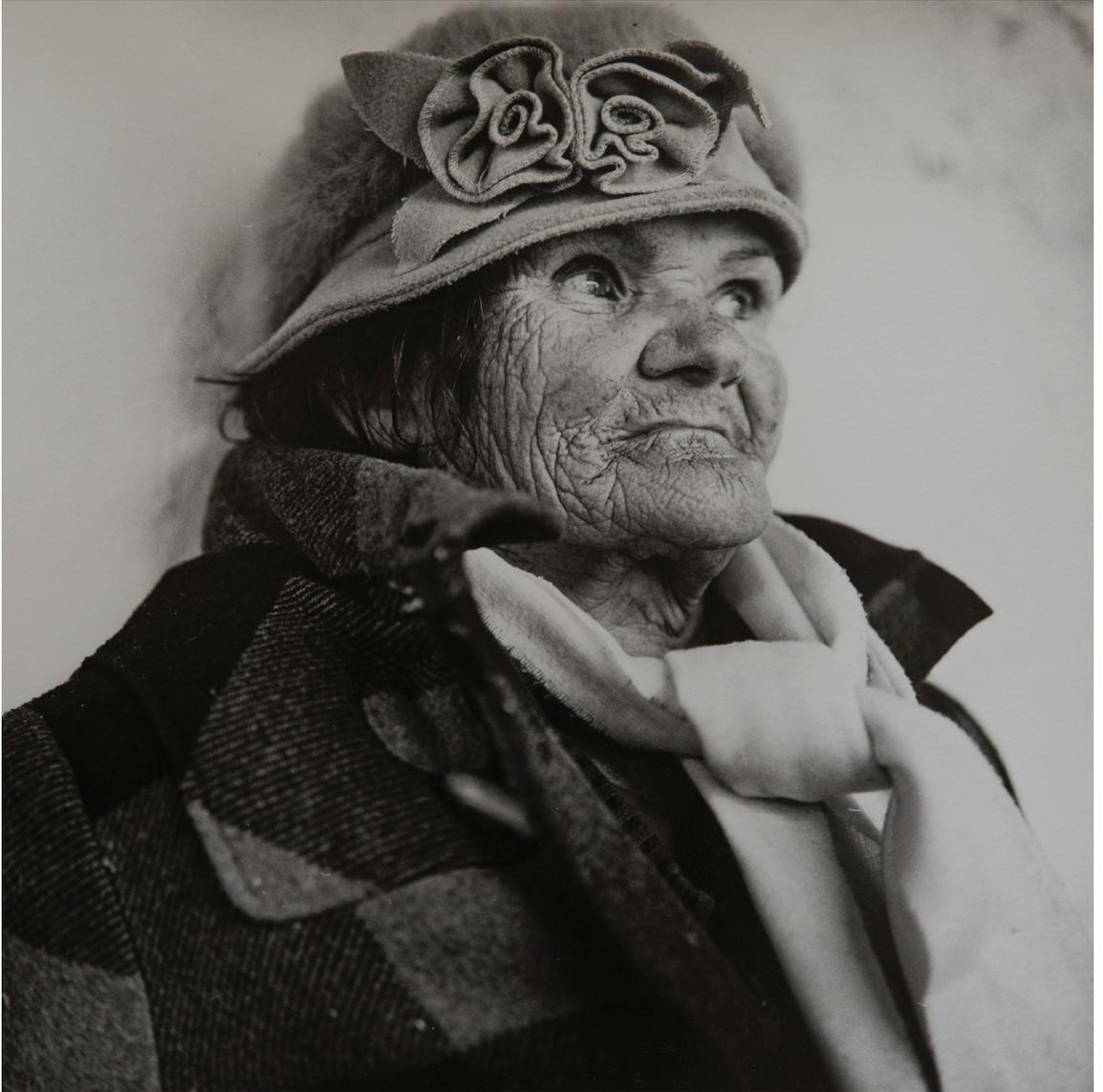


Given analyses show that only a small number of municipalities are theoretically able to take the burden of financing the field social work over from their own sources. In prevailing majority of localities in all 5 categories, the financing would represent a non-affordable burden in the context of overall revenues and current costs spent in the social area.

Municipalities have first to finance costs for services which are stipulated by law, then investment costs, ESIF co-financing, eventually the debt service. Only a very small number of municipalities can run a budget with a surplus. Any increase of expenses has to be adopted by a decision, what means that it is a subject to local policy and opinions of mayors, municipalities and citizens, too.

As mentioned above in the text of the chapter, an exact calculation/limit of percentage increase of expenses which would be affordable for the given village/town does not exist, and it always depends on the structure of expenses and the local context. Based on the analysis of budgets and field research results, we assume that even a 5% increase of current expenses is a limit that could be difficult to implement in the practice. Even in case if villages and towns would be obliged to perform the field social work by law.

The idea that a municipality could re-allocate an amount of money (high amount in the local context) to finance the field social work is highly problematic, even if there would be a will to do so. An expense in such an amount would in principle threaten the functioning of many municipalities due to their tight budgets and tasks defined for municipalities by the law.



Miro Miklas, *From Countryside Cycle*

2. Context of Local and International Approaches and Experiences

In the first part of the chapter, the report focused on the quantitative analysis of the context in which the field social work programme has been implemented. It aimed to provide data and information to identify and anchor alternative options of financing and performing the field social work programme.

In the second part the report focused on examples of international practice. There were 4 case studies from selected countries describing the environment in which field programmes has been carried out and comparable to the field social work programme through their methods and the target group. Qualitative context analysis, mapping and analysing of international approaches offered important inputs for models designed and elaborated in the following and at the same time final chapter.

Through the study of programme materials and assessments of the programme, in combination with semi-structured interviews carried out, the qualitative analysis focuses on 3 main research questions. These questions were formulated as follows:

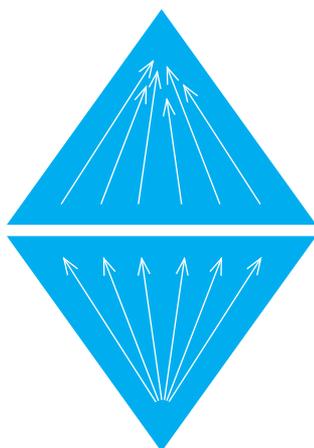
- Is the field social work the basic intervention for the target group of marginalised Roma communities creating essential conditions to other following interventions, or is it one of many interventions which are mutually substitutable/replaceable?
- Does the presence of other social services influence the necessity of the field social work in the community? May the field social work be potentially substituted by other interventions?
- What is the position of field social work in social services system (what the competencies and abilities to meet declared objectives is concerned)?

Countries were identified to enlarge the context of consideration on the future and alternatives of the field social work programme, countries where certain form of interventions is implemented, comparable to field social work programme, although these represent different approaches on solutions in the given area. In connection

with the analysis of foreign environment and examples of practices from other countries, respective case studies focus on 4 main research questions:

- What is the legislation environment and what is the context of national and local policies in which the programme comparable to the field social work programme is implemented?
- Who has been implementing the programme from the technical point of view, based on which approaches and principles?
- How is the analysed program financed, who and through which mechanisms the financial implementation of the programme is assured?
- Who has been inspecting the performance and how is the quality assured?

The field social work programme, together with programmes as Community Centres, Health-care Assistants, Local Civil Public Order Services and Teacher's Assistants, is generally perceived as the one from the package of programmes "focused on the Roma". As one of the respondents from semi-structured interviews stated: "...currently it is possible to observe new supporting programmes being generated, their culmination shall possibly come in 2019, although one may assume that their number shall decrease again after 2023". This statement may be illustrated using a diagram of a diamond shape.



Year 2023: Highly probable decrease in the number of the existing programs

Year 2018: Culmination of the number of the provided numbers (Field social Work, Community centres, Teachers assistants, Local order civic service...)

Year 2002: Field social work programme

Expected culmination and subsequent decrease of the number of programmes may be interpreted through the availability of ESIF sources, as all those programmes are currently financed from ESIF.

Reducing support programmes to one joint programme, which would integrate all of them, is not expected and considered correct by any of the respondents as each of given programmes is specific in its character. Nobody from the respondents however did exclude better coordination among implemented programmes and their mutual synchronisation for the benefit of the client. Based on the findings, one may state that both the programme of health-care assistants and the field social work programme (carried out either by the Implementation Agency, or the **Office** of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma communities), or the programme community centres, try to motivate their employees and partners to the mutual cooperation, and in number of communities the mutual coordination has been reached.

In each positive example there is however strong success element representing personal and professional determination of individual workers, who would significantly mutually coordinate their activities also in case if not motivated by their programme-leaders. Local activities coordination is taking place usually on an informal level, eventually the efforts to formalise it happen with no external pressure.

International approaches were analysed using a sample from selected countries with the aim to enlarge the context of consideration on the future and alternatives of the field social work programme. Examples from the practice were identified where certain form of comparable interventions are implemented, and which at the same time represent very different approaches to solutions in the given area. The efforts were to identify programmes explicitly designed for the needs of people from the environment of marginalised Roma communities, as in these cases also the issue of ethnicity has to be taken in consideration, besides poverty and social exclusion. Based on both local and international studies, we know that the ethnicity may represent one of main obstacles to get out of a difficult situation and it is a significant barrier for the social inclusion. Based on identified information we may state, that programmes explicitly implemented for the benefit of the Roma are identifiable only on the project basis (Hungary, Belgium). In case of majority of countries public social services are not explicitly focused on the Roma or any other ethnic group. Services are usually provided within mainstream social interventions (Finland, Great Britain). They are eventually defined as services designed for people from socially excluded environment, what in fact includes people from the environment of marginalised Roma communities (Czech Republic).

Studying the context of local and international approaches and experiences provided us with following data and information to create models of field social work in the context of the Slovak Republic:

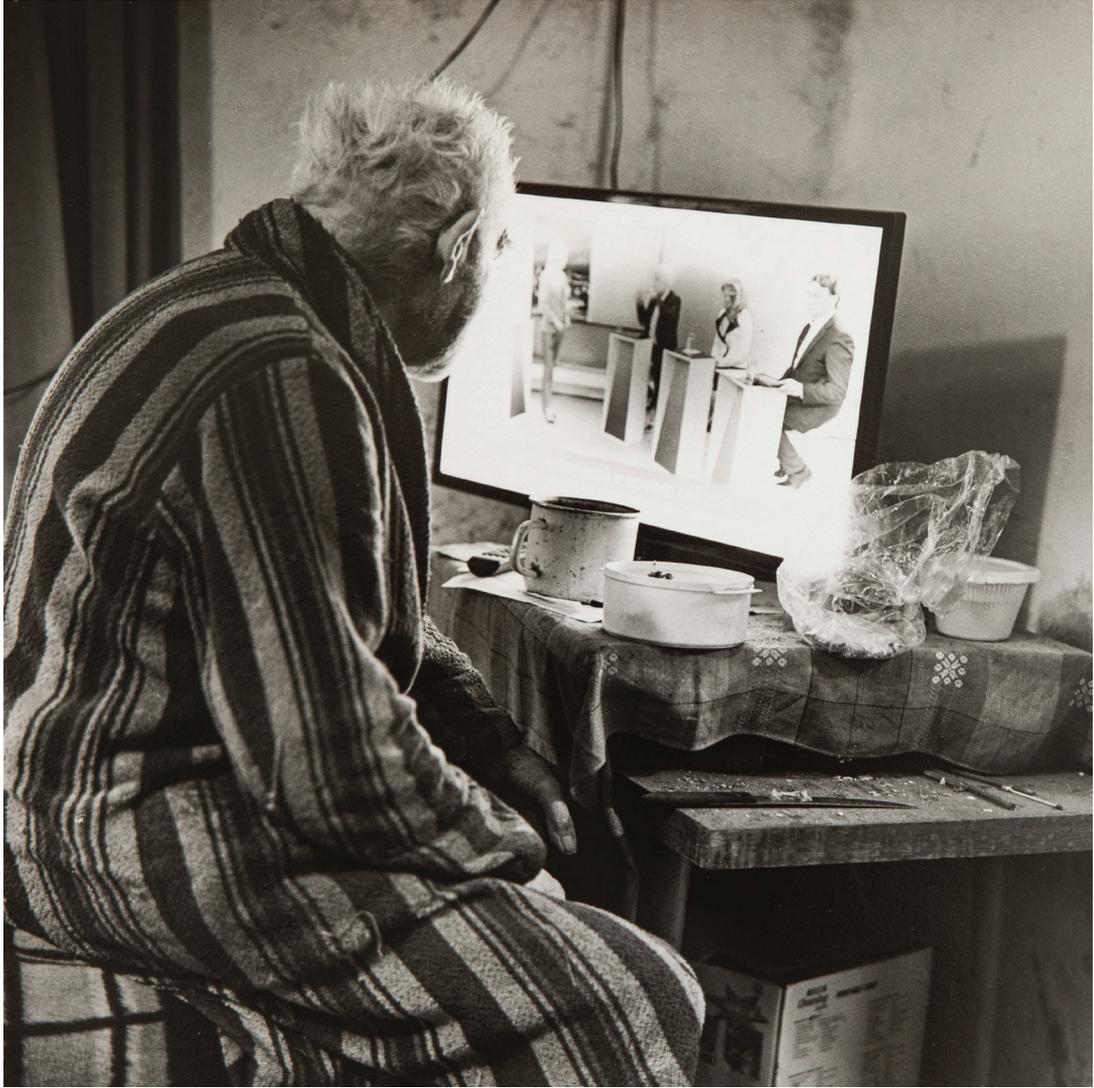
- Field social work is part of each relevant strategy or an action plan focusing on social integration of people from the marginalised Roma communities¹. Despite of declared support of the programme by all stakeholders, financing of the programme is assured only on the project level till now, what means a significant risk for the continuous and good quality implementation.
- Unique character of the field social work programme is confirmed unilaterally and repeatedly; the option to terminate the field social work programme is considered unacceptable and impossible by the professional public.
- Thanks to it orientation to the individual and family, the presence of field social work in the community is perceived as a basic condition to implement other supporting activities in the community and its role as irreplaceable.
- Although the currently valid legislation hypothetically offers to anchor the field social work programme in two acts (448/2008 on Social Services and 305/2005 Coll. on Social and Legal Protection of Children and Social Guardianship), taking wider context and substance of the field social work programme, any of above given legal regulations cannot be considered satisfactory and suitable in related to the field social work programme.
- Professional public would appreciate if a separate legislation concerning mostly excluded groups would be adopted and the implementation of which would be guaranteed by the state.
- In case the field social work programme is perceived as form of field social service crisis intervention pursuant to Section 224 of Act 448/2008 Coll. on Social Services, then it is necessary to assure, in compliance with that law, that the field social work would be part of community plans of social services approved by the community. However, shifting the responsibility of the financing and implementation of the field social work programme to communities²,

1 For example: Decade of Roma Population Inclusion 2005 – 2015, or National Strategy of Roma Integration up to 2020.

2 As it is indicated by the given legal regulation.

without strong financial and methodological and coordination support is considered not suitable, even threatening further existence of the field social work programme.

- Even though field social work may be considered consensually accepted and understood programme, more detailed analysis of the programme shows it is not clear what are the performance indicators the implementation of the field social work is focused on to be reached and through which results the programme should be characterised and communicated. The issue of performance frameworks determination and their measurement, related to the field social work programme, should be the topic of further expert discussion carried out in the future, because solution of that issue could offer explicit arguments supporting further financing, eventually enlargement of the field social work programme in the practice.
- When planning and performing the field social work, it is necessary to provide for strong methodological and coordination support from the local or national levels, because those fully decentralised models of services provision to most marginalised groups of citizens when the local municipality takes responsibility for the performance quality have not been confirmed as suitable.
- Providing the field social work performance in form of a national project brought, besides others, shared responsibility among national project beneficiary and the field social work performers (in majority of cases these are the municipalities). We may state that the shared responsibility model was verified as the most suitable from all models implemented till now, it may provide good-quality and sensitive provision of the field social work with focus on the needs of the field social work individual clients.



Miro Miklas, *From Countryside Cycle*

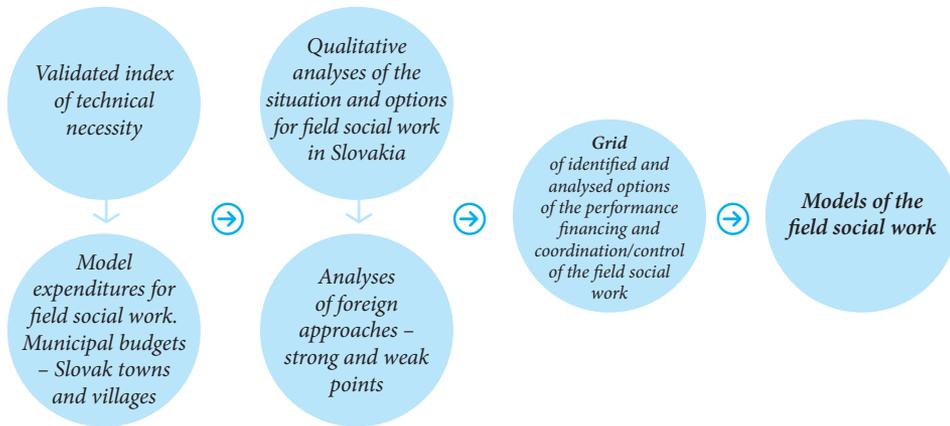
3.

Option Grid of Performance Options of Field Social Work

Output of the study is to examine realistic alternatives and approaches to different models of performance, financing, coordination and inspection of the field social work. Starting assumption is that after the current programming period (2014 – 2020, with expected termination of projects up to 2022) the continuation of field social work is not guaranteed in its present form of a national project co-financed from ESF. It cannot be ruled out that a kind of different temporary form of co-financing shall continue within the cohesion policy. From the long-term perspective a strategic consideration is however necessary, as how to go ahead continuously with the field social work also without ESF support. Based on various evaluations we refer to in our text, as well as results of the research carried out in preparation phase of this study, there is a clear consensus. Current providers of the field social work, municipalities, NGOs and other stakeholders declare the convenience of field social work and the necessity to preserve the existing results and established capacities.

Based on generated index of technical necessity of the field social work and modelling possible expenses needed to provide field social work within the context of the financial situation of towns and villages in the Slovak Republic, and quantitative analysis results focused on the position of field social work in the social services system, and experiences with similar programmes abroad, a basic scale of options and alternatives of field social work performance was elaborated (see diagram 2). It all aimed to synthesise and examine submitted proposals to search for an optimal model and a combination of proposed models to perform field social work under conditions in the Slovak Republic.

Diagrammatic scheme of the process of the context analysis and preparation of field social work models



The first step in the identification of field social work performance potential models for the future was to elaborate the so-called **option grid** of the field social work from the point of view of three basic levels/aspects of its functioning and functionality. The first is performance – it means who is (or who shall be) responsible for its organisation and management. The second level is financing – it means who and from which sources shall pay for it. The third level is the issue of performance quality assurance and control of meeting declared objectives of the field social work. Based on the option grid, the second step was to formulate 5 alternative models. Those models were analysed with the help of SWOT analysis and subsequently they were comparatively assessed according to defined criteria.

Identification of possible financing models of the field social work assumes that the main source of current financing (means from ESIF) is not long-term sustainable and in the future, it will have to be substituted by state budget sources and/or other extra-budgetary sources. Identification of possible models in coordination and performance control of the field social work (also based on experiences from the past) shows one may state, that the orientation leading to high rate of decentralisation is risky to maintain the current quality of field social work performance and it may very probably lead to significant differences in the approach and quality of provided services.

The given option grid creates a list and combinations of different public, non-governmental, private and self-governing entities which today provide, or hypothetically could provide in the future, for the performance of field social work. It similarly defines the space in which different alternative models combining

different options of management, financing and control are considered. At the same time, the option grid has been mapping the subjects which more or less, play or could play a certain role in considerations on the future of field social work.

Grid of identified and analysed options of the performance, financing and coordination/control of the field social work

<i>Performance</i>	<i>Financing</i>	<i>Coord./Control</i>
↓	↓	↓
<i>State/Existing Entity</i>	<i>State Budget/Mandatory</i>	<i>Ministry of Labour</i>
<i>State/New Entity</i>	<i>State Budget/Allocation</i>	<i>National Project/IA</i>
<i>Self-Gov. Regions</i>	<i>ESIF/national project</i>	<i>Umbrella entity</i>
<i>Reg. Agency</i>	<i>ESIF/DOP</i>	<i>Self-Gov. Region</i>
<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Self-Gov. Region Budget</i>	<i>Reg. agency</i>
<i>NGO</i>	<i>Budget Municipality</i>	<i>Selected NGO</i>
<i>Municipality/NGO</i>	<i>Donors</i>	<i>External firm</i>
<i>External Firm</i>	<i>Tax Assignment</i>	<i>No Control./Coord.</i>



Miro Miklas, *From Countryside Cycle*

4. Identified Models

<i>Basic characteristics</i>	<i>Management/ performance</i>	<i>Financing</i>	<i>Quality and control</i>
M1: Combined model / current situation	<i>Central management/ existing state institutions</i>	<i>External/ESIF</i>	<i>Central quality and control assurance</i>
M2: Centrally managed and implemented model	<i>Central management /existing or newly established institutions</i>	<i>State budget with temporary co-financing through national project/ projects</i>	<i>Central quality and control assurance</i>
M3: decentralized model administrated on the local level”	<i>Local municipalities management (towns and villages) and/or NGOs in more or less formal coordination with municipalities</i>	<i>Combination of internal (state budget/subsidy schemes, eventually local taxes) and external sources (ESIF, donors)</i>	<i>Decentralisation/control performed by donors</i>
M4: Model of regional approach	<i>Regional level/newly established institutions</i>	<i>Combination of internal (state budget) and external sources (ESIF, donors, assignments)</i>	<i>Central and/or regional quality and control assurance</i>
M5: Centrally managed programme model completed by the alternative performance	<i>Central management/existing or newly established institutions together with the local level of municipalities and/ or NGOs</i>	<i>Combination of internal (state budget) and external sources (ESIF, donors, assignments)</i>	<i>Central quality and control assurance and control performed by donors</i>

Model situation 1:

Combined model/current situation

Basic characteristics: Field social work programme is currently performed through 2 national projects. Financing is assured from ESF, whereas the designated existing organisation is the beneficiary. At present it is the Implementation Agency with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, and the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities. Both projects run with similar financing and management principles applied, on the central level in Bratislava the communication takes place and significant elements of the system are mutually discussed and influenced, but from the point of view of the formal management and implementation, these are parallel structures.

The programme is performed by the local municipality (or NGO) and it is assured due to direct financial transfers. The programme is carried out in form of shared responsibility among the national project beneficiary and municipalities (NGOs). Municipalities (NGOs) act as direct employers of field social work workers, i.e. they are programme performers (see Chapter 2 to anchor the field social work programme in wider context). Selection of involved towns and villages is based, in both national projects, on different approaches to identify the localities where the field social work is mostly needed, combined with the principle of voluntary participation. Analysis results presented in Chapter 1 hereof show large overlapping of localities involved in the NP carried out by the Implementation Agency and localities that were identified using the constructed Index of field social work technical necessity.

Management/Performance: Cooperation between the ESF financial assistance beneficiary (hereinafter as grant beneficiary) and the provider of field social work is organised based on a Contract on Cooperation concluded between the grant beneficiary (Implementation Agency or the Office of the Plenipotentiary) and the community (or NGO). The community performs subsequently the field social work in compliance with terms and conditions stipulated in the Contract and in accordance with methodological directives. The grant beneficiary provides the municipality (or NGO) with financial means needed to perform field social work via transfers each month. The amount of transfers is determined according to a standard scale of unit costs. The grant beneficiary makes all administrative work related to the application for payment, monitoring of the project, IT administration of the project and other duties related to the implementation of the national, large-scale project co-financed from ESF. An important factor is that, the field social work performer (in absolute majority of cases it is the local municipality) does not have an unlimited control over

filling the positions of field social worker and field worker. The grant beneficiary himself is engaged in that process, i.e. the Implementation Agency or the Office of the Plenipotentiary.

Financing: Performance of the field social work is carried out through national projects (or a programme of this kind with different name). It is financed from ESF. The grant beneficiary oversees the correctness of financial means absorption and is responsible for the administrative and content correctness in performing the field social work programme. Field social workers are employees of individual communities (NGOs) carrying the field social work out. In case the external financial support would be suspended, the situation of field social workers is very vulnerable, as the interest of communities to finance the field social work programme at the time when the access to external sources (especially ESF) would be stopped, has not been confirmed till now. Based on experiences from the field, as well as other findings of witty character, we may expect that the ability and interest of communities to finance the field social work programme in such interim period is low. It is empirically confirmed fact which repeated in periods in between individual projects.

Quality and control: Despite that the performance of field social work is decentralised on the level of concrete municipality (NGO), the municipality (NGO) gains strong coordination, methodological and supervision support by being involved in field social work programme. It is a model of kind of shared responsibility, but its implementation brings some difficulties. One of them is an ambiguous position of field social workers and field workers. Sometimes they feel as between two fires. It means between the ideas and requirements of the municipality as their direct employer, and the requirements of NP performer as a supervisor over their activities and the guarantor of quality of field social work performance. On the other hand, the presence of significant coordination and methodological support may, in case the municipality is interested in good performance of the field social work, positively influence the sensitivity of the municipality towards problems of the target group, as well as contribute to more effective structure of the municipal office.

Model situation 2: Centrally managed and implemented model

Basic characteristics: Field social work performance in form of a centralised programme financed within mandatory state budget expenses. The Implementation Agency with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family or the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities is the programme coordinator for these purposes, eventually a newly established subsidised state organisation (hereinafter referred to as “designated organisation”). Alternatively, it is possible to consider supporting this kind of solution by a special law and/or by establishing a specialized organisation which would perform also other similar programmes. Field social work is implemented in partnership with municipalities which show their interest to perform it in their locality. They shall commit themselves to provide premises, as well as basic material equipment for the work (for example in the extent as at present). Field social work is implemented in form of shared responsibility between an entity designated by the state and municipalities based upon a contract on cooperation, whereas field social workers and field workers are employees of the state (a ministry or another designated organisation). The model is built on a situation where the state overtakes the whole responsibility for the field social work and field social workers and field workers. It may be financed from the state budget, ESIF or their combination. Decisions on number, extent and involvement of concrete localities in the future programme of field social work may result from current situation assessment, whereas optimisation of number of localities depends both on voluntariness of municipalities, as well as the political decision (volume of total funds allocated for the programme). Decision on localities and extent may be made by using the Index of field social work technical necessity and it should optimally result from the consensus related to use of various approaches to identification of field social work necessity in respective localities.

Management/Performance: Project is managed by the state (via designated organisation) and it is implemented in cooperation with municipalities and NGOs. Cooperation is taking place based on the Contract on cooperation concluded between the designated organisation and the community, whereas the community determines and co-finances the field social work in compliance with terms and conditions stipulated in the contract. Designated organisation provides field social workers and field workers, who are their employees, both methodological and organisational support. Administrative work, project monitoring and other duties toward the state budget is performed by the designated organisation. municipalities

(NGOs) have limited control over filling the position of the field social worker and they have only advisory voter in hiring that person.

Financing: Field social works financed from the state budget and field social workers are employees of the organisation designated by the state. Designated organisation supervises the correctness of expenses in relation to the state budget and it has got full administrative and methodological control over the programme performance. The municipality (NGO) provides premises to perform the field social work and office equipment, it eventually provides for expenses needed to establish material conditions for the work, e.g. telephone costs and travel costs of the workers (in the extent as in case of Model 1).

Quality and control: The municipality involved in the programme gets field social work provision on its territory (which the municipality is not able to organise on its own). By centralising the model and the fact that the field social workers are employees of the state, the position of field social worker and field worker becomes clear and they may fully meet requirements to be methodologically managed by the designated organisation and they may act for the benefit of their clients also in cases when out of accord with the municipality. The position and role of Regional coordinators and supervisors keeps being maintained as in Model 1. They methodologically guide field social workers, supervise administrative issues (reporting) and if necessary, they coordinate the performance with the municipalities.

Model situation 3: Decentralized model administrated on the local level

Basic characteristics: The performance of field social work is fully in competence and responsibility of local municipalities. The local municipality performs it either directly, or it alternatively outsources the performance from an NGO or any other non-profit social services provider. In the best case, they cooperate and mutually integrate their capacities and sources. It is an approach when the municipality is responsible for the field social work provision, but the performance itself may be organised by special NGOs. Performance of services is purchased by the municipality from a NGO. Pursuant to Act 448/2006 on Social Services, as amended by later legal regulations, the amendment effective from 1 January 2018 stipulates that the local municipality is responsible for the provision and assurance of crises intervention

services. In this case, the responsibility is perceived also as financing of the service. Based on the given, one may state that if the field social work is understood as part of the Act 448/2006 on Social Services, it has to be fully financed from the budgets of respective municipalities. The analysis shows that such transfer of competencies without an adequate financial support would in principle mean, that for lot of municipalities it would be impossible to provide for field social work. Functionality of the model would necessarily depend on the fact, whether the state would be able, for example by adopting a conception or another programme document, to create better conditions to an alternative financing through subsidy/grant schemes, either by temporary absorption of ESIF or by supporting local donors, eventually by other mechanisms. Even though the absence of functional coordination and methodological support may be considered an extreme risk to the quality of field social work performance, the presence of strong methodological and control-coordination mechanism is highly improbable in such an arrangement. One may assume that the quality control and methodological support could be provided by field social work inspection body established for that purpose, or another entity designated or established by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR (like the national school inspection). If an inspection body established by the state would be missing, there is an alternative that the quality control would be carried out by a selected professional organisation, or another organisation established with the use of bottom-up approach. In such case, when comparing possible control/inspection activities carried out by a state organisation, one may assume less competencies and lower acceptance from field social work providers, as well as low enforceability of individual correction measures. The model assumes that the municipality and/or NGO implement field social work in the form of full responsibility for the performance of field social work. Decisions on the number, extent and involvement of concrete localities in such decentralised programme would be fully dependent on the will and motivation of municipalities and/or NGOs to finance and perform field social work in the given locality. There is a strong expectation, based on previous evaluations and studies, that in such case the number of localities with some form of field social work would at least significantly, if not radically decrease.

Management/Performance: The municipality provides field social work according its concept and needs. Administrative work related with employing field social workers is fully governed by the Act on Municipal Administration, or other relevant acts if necessary. Field social work implementor, pursuant to valid laws, has got full control over filling the position of the field social worker. No other organisation is involved in the hiring process. Proposed model is implemented in compliance with valid Act on Social Services and it fully respects the subsidiarity and self-governance principles.

On one hand, it provides the municipality a chance to adopt independent decisions on the extent and standards of provided service, on the other hand, therefore it is inclinable to local deviations, which do not necessarily be for the benefit of the client.

Financing: The performance of field social work is fully financed by the local municipality budget. All field workers and field social workers are employees of respective municipality office. The position of field social workers and field workers is relatively stabilised, as the municipality is interested in field social work performance, what is expressed also by the will to finance the programme. Methodological support may be provided by a professional organisation or any other organisation focused on quality of field social work performance, the establishment of which could be a response to current absence of such organisation. If the field social work would be performed in cooperation with NGO or any other subject, the performance may be completed by other activities on a project basis and co-financed by external donors. In this case it would be more a supplement to the existing service.

Quality and control: Quality and control is fully in hands of local municipalities. The local municipality office, in case of being interested, may ask the Agency/professional organisation for assistance in methodological management of field social work performance and the supervision, eventually the programme evaluation. Field social workers and field workers have no more the dilemma of having “two bosses”, because they fully respect tasks and instructions of the mayor/city manager or the municipality office. Organisation of the quality assurance may vary in each locality, but one may expect little interest of municipalities in internal quality control of field social work performance and to provide for it from their own means. There is a high risk related to the political cycle that could significantly change the attitude and approach of the municipality management towards field social work.

Model situation 4: **Model of regional approach**

Basic characteristics: Field social work is implemented on a regional level, either by self-governing regions authorities or by regional agencies. The role of regional agencies may be played by organisations established and controlled by self-governing regions authorities, or by NGO. Legal form of a regional agency and its interconnection to self-governing regions authorities may differ in respective regions due to specific local situation. Implementation of the proposed model offers an opportunity to

strengthen NGOs being able to get involved in field social work performance (either as a coordinator or a provider), at least in those regions where such organisations have been present (Košice or Prešov regions). It is NGO with significant experiences gained in this field of services. The position of field social work programme in individual regions is defined in regional concepts of social services development, which define the range and focus of field social work performance in individual regions based on specific local needs. It is necessary to provide that the designing process and the content of the social services development concept are consensually agreed and binding. The performance itself may use the experiences with the currently applied model of field social work, whereas an involvement of NGO could be welcomed in case of NGOs having enough experiences and capacities in this area. When setting the performance of field social work, one may get inspiration from the Czech Republic where so-called regional networks of social services providers are established and depending how necessary the given social service is necessary, its performance is distributed among registered social services providers. This approach allows a flexible response to current needs and to cross over the borders of the specific local municipality when specifying the necessity of a concrete service, what is possible only to limited extent in case of other models (Models 1, 2 and 3), if it is possible at all. In relation to this proposed model, there is an opportunity of regional differentiation of field social work programme according to needs of the region. The readiness and will of respective self-governing regions to cope with such role is a challenge. Implementation of the proposed model would possibly require also amendments of the Act on Social Services which would then impose the coordination and control of field social work as a duty on self-governing regions authorities.

Management/Performance: Despite possible involvement of regional agencies, the key role in the proposed model plays the self-governing region. It makes possible that financial flows from the state budget go to given providers and there is also a guarantee of the quality of control and coordination mechanisms of field social work programme in the region. This model allows to overtake/use already existing and currently used managing documents and management models, and to modify them for the needs on the regional level of field social work programme management. Similarly, as in case of currently implemented model summarised within Model 1, the core of administrative tasks related to programme implementation is made by self-governing region or the regional agency, so that field social work providers could fully dedicate to the performance of field social work of good quality. Field social work is performed by organisations registered in newly established networks of field social work providers, the management of which is the responsibility of self-governing region. One may state that among providers there shall be NGOs,

church organisation or also organisations established by municipalities. Field social workers and field workers are employees of these organisations, neither self-governing region, nor regional agency is involved in their selection. There are specific cases when the regional agency may, through its employees, also perform field social work. Applying that model in its whole range is necessarily dependent from the presence of NGO, or an organisation of another legal form, having enough capacity – although it is not an obligatory condition.

Financing: Although the model may, in compliance with the example of the Czech Republic, apply the principle of multi-source financing, in case when the state budget does not overtake the role of the main donor of field social work programme, the performance of such programme shall be extremely threatened. Financial means from the state budget, ESIF, or their combination may be allocated to self-governing regions annually as an earmarked subsidy. Volume of allocated financial means may differ year-to-year dependent on state budget volume allocated to the performance of field social work for the given year, but the formula to calculate the amount of subsidy for the given region should remain the same and it should be a result of consent and variables set in a generally accepted way, variables on the basis of which the amount of subsidy was specified (this step would require an introductory study and agreement of professional community). Subsequently, the given region re-allocates financial means among individual providers of field social work. Subsidy beneficiaries could be organisations maintained in the register of field social work providers, or entities verified in some other way which are able to provide the service in requested quality. Even though the contribution allocated through state budget subsidy planned for field social work should cover significant part of costs related with this work, the contribution should for sure not cover 100 % of total costs. Certain part of the costs should be provided from other sources, as e.g. contribution of regional or local municipalities, or other sources of grant organisations. It may be assumed that the co-participation of local and regional municipalities in the programme financing (even if the shares would be minimal) can increase the feeling of a “co-ownership” of the programme with regional or local municipalities.

Quality and control: Self-governing region, or an authorised regional agency provide field social work in its region through other organisations and in the extent that reflects best the needs of the given region. Since only an organisation registered as field social work provider may do so, we may assume that involved organisations are competent and of good quality. The proposed model does not deal very much with the issues of significant performance of other supporting activities (as e.g. the supervision of field social workers or their education and training) provided on a national

level. It is probable that these activities shall be provided by each provider to his own employees, so the methodological and coordination support shall be provided on the regional level. The best would be to combine this proposed model with the activities of a professional organisation (see the option grid in the previous chapter), which could be a source of the methodological support and setting minimal quality standards of field social work performance also for those regions not having enough capacities to support quality in field social work performance. One of the most remarkable challenges of this proposed model are the capacities of respective regions, which do not necessarily have to correspond with the needs of field social work, and this represents direct risks to the performance and maintenance of field social work. Respective self-governing regions may establish special inspection bodies devoted to the quality control, or to delegate quality control to other organisations.

Model situation 5:

Centrally managed programme model completed by the alternative performance

Model 5 is based on two factors resulting from an analysis of situation assessment in municipalities with marginalised Roma communities, and from the assessment and analyses presented in Chapters 1 a 2 hereof. The first factor is the role of state as a guarantor of providing field social work in most problematic localities, the role that is hardly replaceable. Especially in localities, where unfavourable financial situation overlaps with an antagonistic attitude of the majority towards marginalised Roma communities. The second factor is a problematic motivation, financial and capacity situation of stakeholders. Here we encounter limited capacities of NGOs (staff and finances) and weak motivation and opportunities for private donors.

This model proposes a hybrid approach which would combine the central role of the state with supplementary alternative performance of field social work. Based on an agreement a “core” of field social work localities would be created, focusing on most problematic and at the same time the poorest municipalities (system of management, financing and control is described in Model 2). Professional assessment and the possibility to apply validated index of technical necessity would result in a consent on list of localities, where the performance of field social work would be guaranteed by the state. Reference to a complex list of 578 municipalities with marginalised Roma community (according Atlas of Roma Communities, 2014) and ordered by the results according to the Index of field social work necessity validated by the unemployment coefficient is presented at the end of this text. The assessment results

show that in first 3 most problematic categories there are in total 201 municipalities (32 settlements in Category 1, 47 in Category 2 and 122 in Category 3). In Category 4 there are 185 municipalities and in Category 5 there are 188 localities. At present, field social work is provided, or planned in a short time, through 2 national programmes on territories of 386 local municipalities (Implementation Agency has been managing 233 localities and the Office of the Plenipotentiary 134 localities, 9 with an agreement signed and in 10 there are negotiations going on).³ Localities involved in both national programmes do significantly overlap with localities identified with the help of the Index of field social work technical necessity. At the end of the day, the situation is unique in each locality and it would not be suitable to select localities only based on technical assessment with no qualitative analysis in situ. According to report quantitative and qualitative assessments, some type of field social work would probably be needed in almost each locality classified in first 3 categories. In 2 following categories there are lot of localities showing slightly better indicators (e.g. because of close growth poles and therefore better opportunities to get a job), but also among them there are large internal differences. From the perspective of field social work performance, especially in cases of larger towns, also the issue of focusing field social work to other target groups, as to homeless people, may be important.

What is, or what shall be, the number of communities involved in field social work guaranteed by the state is first a **political decision** closely related to the volume of **allocated money**. Taking results on localities assessed by the Index of field social work necessity, the **current number of localities involved seems to be optimal**.

Based on the results according to the Index of field social work necessity, for the needs of Model 5 one may think about minimal extent of field social work guaranteed by the state in approximately 200 localities. These are localities indicating the worst economic and social situations and a strong spacial exclusion. In case of other localities, it would be necessary to consider options to implement the programme through alternative field social work providers, or from own sources of the municipality. As described in Chapter 3.2.3 of the Final Report, functionality of this model would necessarily depend on the ability of the state to create larger space for alternative financing through subsidy/grant schemes, either by temporary absorption of ESIF and/or by supporting local donors.

3 Exact numbers has been changing, as not always it is possible to launch field social work in the locality exactly in clopmiance with the plan. Situation as of 1 March 2018, including the field social work in city districts of Bratislava and Košice.

Performance in localities reaching the score of the Index of field social work necessity below 10 points is fully in the competence and responsibility of communities and NGOs, which in best case cooperate and mutually complement their capacities and sources. Depending on how the state would support these alternative forms, the system of cooperation, control and quality assurance of the performance may be modelled. In this combined system, the possibility to create multi-source financing and higher flexibility of the system, where the “core” of field social work performance could be completed by the municipalities and NGOs would be the main advantage. The main weakness is the financing. In the current situation, when social services are under-financed by the state, the number of donors is low, and the private sponsoring system is not sufficiently developed, the localities out of the core would be significantly dependent on options of financing from ESIF. The quality assurance seems to be also problematic, where the part guaranteed by the state would possibly have strong mechanisms of monitoring and capacity development. In case of alternative providers, it would be necessary to establish a mechanism either to include them into that system or a parallel system.

It is highly probable, that implementation of such multi-source model would require a wider consent among the state administration and municipalities. Selection of localities for the financing of the “core” of the programme would be relatively intricate problem. There are communities which would welcome if they would be included in the group for which the field social work would be provided by the state. There are others, which even today do not want to participate in the system. Those could be motivated for example by giving them advantage in ESIF projects assessment, where the field social work implementation could a condition, or it could bring positive points.

5. Comparative Assessment of Models

In the first step, we have defined 4 basic criteria of comparative assessment. They assume that the Slovak Republic needs, and it shall need extensive assistance programmes also in the future, focused on social inclusion support to people living in the environment of marginalised Roma communities, whereas field social work plays a key role in this context. The four selected criteria concentrate on options of individual models to provide for field social work in an optimal range and coverage, in a situation of sustainable, system and satisfactory financing, quality assurance of field social work, and finally the acceptability of selected solutions by stakeholders.

Criterion 1/ Provision of field social work in optimal range and coverage: Experiences with field social work implementation in the Slovak Republic and also comparisons with other countries show that to provide universal coverage of services in that volume as needed for a group of people from marginalised Roma communities large in number of its members and localised in huge area, **requires strong interest of the state declared not only in form of the political will (e.g. laws, politicians and attitudes), but also administratively and financially.** It is clear, that the current model based on implementation of 2 national projects and the support from ESIF (Model 1) has got its positives and benefits, and it may be modified, for example leading to its unification. The problem is its sustainability, as it is subject to changes and cycles of programming periods. It results from financial situation analysis, experiences gathered in past periods and conclusions of assessments that at least the group of localities with worst indicators according to the Index of field social work necessity and bad socio-economic situation, it will be necessary that the state continues the support of field social work performance both financially and with coordination. At the same time there is chance to develop also decentralised approaches, as mentioned within Model 4, or in combination of approaches using Model 5. Results of the analysis indicate the need to strengthen multi-source financing.

Criterion 2/ Sustainable, system and satisfactory financing: Current model designed for ESF cannot be considered system and sustainable model. In the time when this report was under preparation, it is not clear what shall be the cohesion policy like in 2020 and what shall be the subject of future document playing the role

of a Partnership agreement between the European Commission and the Slovak Republic. It is however clear that after Brexit the EU budget will decrease and, in some form, it will also influence the cohesion policy financing. At the same time there is pressure to re-formulate cohesion policy objectives leading to other priorities. The future of field social work needs to be understood within the context of other social and support services. These are long-term underfinanced, and the worst scenario would be creating a competition fight for financial sources among them, when except of strategic planning an ad-hoc financing would be supported based on momentary preferences. The analyses in Chapter 1 show that only a small number of local municipalities can theoretically takeover the burden of financing field social work from their own financial means. In most localities in all 5 categories, according to the Index of field social work necessity, the financing would mean an unbearable burden in the context of total revenues and current costs related to social area. An optimal solution would be to design a sustainable financing model to perform any kind of social services, as well as explicit and enforceable distribution of competencies in financing among respective levels of state and public administrations by creating a system financing of field social work. **If the Slovak Republic wants to deal with the issue of marginalised Roma communities in a serious way, it may hardly give up financing field social work from the state budget.** It may be a direct form of central financing (Model 2), establishing a subsidy scheme or transfer of competencies to regions (Model 4), eventually financing the “core” of the programme through the state budget with giving opportunities to other subjects to get involved (Model 5). A functional system shall be conditioned by fair and accepted financing of both public and non-public providers. The best is to create a multi-source financing, whereas the exact scope must be defined of what is supported by the state and in which way different subjects shall be motivated (as in case of Models 3, 4 and 5) if they invest in field social work.

Criterion 3/ Quality assurance of field social work: Models elaborated in this study work with system centralization/decentralization of field social work to different extent. Models 1 and 2 are based on central management supported by a verified managerial system and related to building capacities and control and quality assurance of the performance, in case of Models 3 and 4 it would be necessary to think either about modification of the current situation – for example by leaving the support and control functions to a newly established roof/professional organisation, creating a register of providers, establishing field social work inspection, eventually transferring this role to a selected NGO, or an external company. Experiences with field social work implementation in Slovakia till now clearly **show the need of strong coordination and methodological support of field social work performance, no matter which one from proposed models would be implemented.**

Criterion 4/ Acceptability and feasibility of selected solutions: Model solution 1 and 2 are based on a central support of the state (either directly from the state budget, or temporarily from ESIF), Models 3, 4 and 5 require an active participation of municipalities, NGOs and other stakeholders. The least suitable and the riskiest clearly seems to be Model 3. Qualitative research results confirm quantitative analyses in fact that there is a great pressure on budgets, especially in smaller municipalities. Increase of expenses is at the same time an issue of a decision, what means that it is subject to local policy and opinions of a mayor, municipality deputies and citizens. Only a small number of municipalities have a more long-term strategic idea about option to integrate people from the environment of marginalised Roma communities, as well as people from the environment of other vulnerable groups. Additionally, the attitude to this issue may radically change in each electoral period. Model 3 would require a political decision to be adopted (so that villages and town would be obliged by law to perform field social work) and to set-up a very sensitive limit determining which municipality may afford such performance and which would have to be supported centrally. Model 4 represents a possible alternative in this context, which could be based on knowledge transfer from the Czech Republic where a similar system has been working. Such a change would at the same time require detailed planning, anchoring in Slovak conditions and finally, winning the interest of regions, what may not be a simple goal to reach.



Miro Miklas, *From Gypsies Cycle*

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

As it was emphasised in the awarded specification and directly in the text of this report as well, the result of this study should not be to recommend one concrete model of further performance of field social work, but to provide data, information and systematic assessment of various alternatives which could become subject of searching support and finding solution in the future.

Based on the analysis of models and the comparative assessment, we may formulate some conclusions/recommendations useful for further considerations on field social work performance:

- *In the future, the role of the state as the financial guarantor of the field social work shall be of a key character. Without financing a minimal “core” of localities, the future of field social work after the support from ESIF terminates is not realistic and the programme in its current extent shall very probably extinct, or the field social work shall be performed only in few financially strong towns/villages and its quality shall differ.*
- *The analysis shows that Model 2 (guaranteed by the state), Model 4 (field social work based on regional approach) and Model 5 (a combination of central programme completed by an alternative performance) are the most perspective.*
- *From the technical point of view Model 2 would be easier to implement, as it was based on existing structures and capacities.*
- *In case of Model 4 it is necessary to consider whether in relation to further externalities (e.g. strengthening non-profit sector and regional interventions planning, etc.) it would be more suitable at the end of the day as Model 2, and which of them would offer preferable solution, should the range of performance be defined.*

- *The future and sustainability of the field social work requires its anchoring in national strategies and policies. It is necessary to consider options how to stabilize this successful programme by elaborating/adopting a conception or another programming document following the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Inclusion of Roma up to 2020 and interconnected with the context of social services financing. The key task is to assure its long-term financial stability by combining state budget sources, temporary absorption of ESIF and creating conditions for alternative financing through subsidy/grant schemes and supporting local donors.*

Based on the field social work context assessment, the report comes to conclusions it is necessary to take use of the bridging period, offering the financing from ESIF with the option to enforce the field social work as one of priorities also for the future period 2021 – 2027 to establish a complex and sustainable model of financing all social services performance, and the field social work as its part, too.

It is evident, that with the economic strength of municipalities, regional disparities, growing irregularities, difficult access to the labour market and other structural barriers in Roma minority integration, the state cannot give up the provision of field social work without far reaching consequences – at least in most problematic localities. At the same time, it is also necessary to create conditions to diversification of approaches in its performance by clearly defined and enforceable competencies and establishing transparent financing among respective levels of public administration and municipalities, and by supporting fair and accepted financing of both public and non-public providers.

More information

Full version of the report is available at: www.tsp.gov.sk

Results of the index of validated technical necessity of field social work may be downloaded at: <http://www.prog.sav.sk/sites/default/files/2018-07/TSPindex-1.pdf>

Mapping the presence of different types of interventions according to assessment categories in the index of field social work is available at: <http://www.prog.sav.sk/sites/default/files/2018-07/Formy%20podpory-1.pdf>

In collaboration with the Center of Social and Psychological Sciences of the Slovak Academy of Science and Institute for Forecasting

Field Social Work Context Evaluation /

Final Report Summary

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Graphic design & Layout © Stano Masár, 2019

Photographs: Miro Miklas

Translation: PhDr. Milica Hrebičková

Language proofreading: ELFI, s. r. o.

Print: Bittner print, s. r. o.

Number of copies: 500 pcs

ISBN 978-80-89837-47-2



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