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**The Role of Deliberation in the Success of Activation Work Programs: The
Case of Roma Employment in Slovakia**

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ABSTRACT

The marginalized Roma communities in Slovakia experience severe discrimination and multiple barriers in the process of integration in the labour market, which traps them in the circle of poverty and reinforces their social and economic exclusion. Currently, the activation work programs present one of the active employment policies targeting problems of the Roma employment, especially prevalent long-term unemployment related to poor work ethic or a lack of skills. The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate whether and how deliberation between local policy makers and the Roma in the process of policy formulation and problem identification facilitates the success of the activation work programs. A survey was conducted in 39 municipalities in order to examine the relationship between deliberation and the success of programs, as well as to explore the role of a community facilitator for deliberation. The findings show that deliberation contributes to the success of activation work programs in the form of higher rate of Roma participants who get employed after the program finishes. Additionally, community facilitators may be considered as effective tools for successful engagement of the Roma in deliberation because they assist to build trust and social networks between the Roma and non-Roma.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: THE ROMA MINORITY AND THE SLOVAK LABOUR MARKET	4
1.1 Roma Minority and Labour Market Barriers.....	4
1.2 Activation Work Programs in Slovakia.....	6
CHAPTER 2: DELIBERATION IN POLICY-MAKING	12
2.1 Deliberation and its Benefits for Policy Making	13
2.2 The Role of Community Facilitators for Deliberation	16
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND DATA	20
CHAPTER 4: THE FINDINGS ABOUT THE ROLE OF DELIBERATION IN THE SUCCESS OF PROGRAMS	24
4.1 The Relationship between the Roma Participation in Deliberation over the Program and the Success	25
4.2 How Community Facilitators Trigger the Roma Participation in Deliberation	28
4.3 Discussion	30
CONCLUSION	33
APPENDIX	35
BIBLIOGRAPHY	36

INTRODUCTION

The Roma minority throughout Central and Eastern Europe encounter social and economic exclusion which severely reduces the quality of their lives and traps them in the circle of poverty. The Roma minority, which according to Atlas of Roma communities makes up about 7,5 per cent of the entire population (UNDP, 2013), in Slovakia are no exception since they experience discrimination in a variety of fields, including education, access to healthcare services, but also employment, or access to cultural and political life. Particularly, employability of the Roma marginalized minority and access to the labour market currently presents one of the main policy challenges, not only for central decision-makers, but also for experts, community organizers and the European Union as well.

Regarding this, a set of policies, such as trainings, sheltered workshops or temporary work programs, have been implemented in Slovakia in order to primarily facilitate employability of the long-term unemployed among the most vulnerable groups and create the conditions for sustainable work positions. One of the most discussed and questionable policies are the activation work programs oriented mainly at the involvement of long-term unemployed people in the working process and restoring their work ethic and skills. Since the Roma minority is characterized by long-lasting exclusion from the labour market and low qualifications, they present the substantial part of the target group of this policy.

Currently, there are only a few evaluations and reports examining the impact of the activation work programs on the employment and employability of the Roma participants, for instance the SGI Report made up by Mýtina Kureková, Salner and Farenzenová (2013) or UNDP Report written by Hurrle, Ivanov, Grill, Škobla and Kling (2012b). The lack of information about the policy impact on the Roma community in general is caused by the

problems related to the collection of ethnic data that is actually greatly restricted due to the assumption that these data may be easily misused to the detriment of the ethnic minorities. However, since the activation works are to the great extent funded by the European Social Fund, there is a pressure to evaluate these policies to demonstrate their impact and their effectiveness.

Despite the fact that existing reports involve comprehensive analysis and evaluation of these policies and their impact on employment, there may be other unexplored factors contributing to the success of the active labour market policies. According to Fishkin, one of the factors facilitating the success of policies is the active engagement of communities, especially target groups, in deliberation in the process of policy formulation and problem identification (1997: 20). As Hogan argues, the tool through which the effective and successful community engagement may be achieved is community facilitators inducing more intensive cooperation between the ethnic communities and decision-makers from the majority population (2002:2). Therefore, the research question of the thesis is whether and how deliberation between local policy makers and the Roma in the process of policy formulation and problem identification facilitates the success of the activation work programs. The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate how the active engagement of the Roma communities in the phase of problem formulation and the design of the activation work programmes at the local level contributes to the success in the form of higher rate of employed participants. With the purpose to answer this question, local coordinators of the activation work programs and mayors in 39 municipalities located in two eastern regions in Slovakia were questioned in a survey.

The thesis is structured as follows. The first chapter deals with the general data about the Roma in the labour market in Slovakia and information about functioning of the activation work programmes is given in the broader context of the European structural funds. This

chapter presents the overall picture of Roma employment and the barriers they face in the process of entering and succeeding in the labour market as well as how the activation work programs work in practice. The third chapter is devoted to the theoretical background about the role of deliberation and community engagement, and its impact on the effective outcomes of public policies. The fourth chapter is methodological and includes more precise information about the research question, characteristics of municipalities included in the sample, research methods used in order to gather all the data and definitions of all variables. The fifth chapter deals with the empirical data that was gathered through the survey and there is identified how the link between deliberation and the success of the projects works as well as how community facilitators support deliberation between local authorities and the Roma.

CHAPTER 1: THE ROMA MINORITY AND THE SLOVAK LABOUR MARKET

As mentioned above, the Roma minority in Slovakia face discriminatory practices in the different domains, including education, housing, healthcare, employment, access to political or cultural life and others. Access to the labour market and the extremely high and long-term unemployment represent the main challenges for policy makers in this country. According to the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) Report, about 54.3 per cent of the Roma older than 15 were unemployed in 2010, while in the same year the share of employed Roma was about 10 per cent (2012a: 111). With the purpose of demonstrating the gaps between the non-Roma and Roma population in Slovakia, it is necessary to state that the overall unemployment rate, in terms of registered unemployment, according to the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, fluctuated around 12.5 per cent in 2010 (2010). It indicates that the Roma minority is much more vulnerable to poverty and unemployment than the non-Roma population in this country.

1.1 Roma Minority and Labour Market Barriers

There are three principal reasons why such a large portion of the Roma minority in Slovakia is excluded from the labour market. Firstly, the members from the marginalized Roma minority generally achieve a very low level of education. The UNDP data indicates that only about 63 per cent of Roma women and 56.2 per cent of Roma men complete elementary school (2012a: 92). Regarding secondary education, the state of affairs is even more critical. The UNDP report specifies that only 12.5 per cent of Roma women and 21 per cent of Roma men complete secondary education (2012a: 92). According to Tomatová, the Roma pupils

face discriminatory practices in very early childhood, such as segregation in the only-Roma elementary schools or special schools which eventually diminishes their educational achievements and further employability (2004: 4-5). This poor overall state of education means that the large share of the Roma can hardly be competitive in the labour market and improve the standard of their living.

Secondly, the Roma communities are to a great extent concentrated in the regions with high unemployment rates in the country. According to the Atlas of the Roma Communities in Slovakia made up by the UNDP, the majority of the Roma settlements are concentrated in the region of Prešov, Košice and Banská Bystrica with the unemployment rate fluctuating from around 16 – 18 per cent (UNDP, 2013). Additionally, the access to the labour market is restricted by frequent residential segregation of the Roma. According to the UNDP data, there is a strong correlation between the residential segregation and the high rate of unemployment (2012a: 119). Therefore, the large concentration of Roma communities in the regions with few job prospects combined with housing segregation also reduces chances of the Roma to get employed.

Thirdly, the Roma are disadvantaged in the labour market not only by the low education and qualifications, and by the structural reasons, but also by public perceptions. Vašečka states that one of the barriers worsening the employment of the marginalized Roma is the attitude of the majority population that negatively perceives this ethnic minority and considers its members as unreliable workers with poor work habits and discipline (2011: 251 - 252). This means that the public opinions significantly contribute to the failure of the Roma in the labour market.

As a result of these factors, the unemployment of the Roma minority in Slovakia is characterized by long-term unemployment. According to the UNDP Report, the Roma are unemployed for a longer time than the non-Roma geographically near population (2012a:

150-151). Particularly, the UNDP indicates that two thirds of unemployed Roma experience long-term unemployment in the duration of more than one year, while only a one third of the non-Roma unemployed experience long-term unemployment of the duration of one year and more (2012a: 151). According to Theodore, the long-lasting exclusion from the labour market not only devastates the work ethic, but also the human capital and decreases the motivations to find a job (2007:937).

Needless to say, the above mentioned factors of the very high rate of Roma unemployment are mutually intertwined. In other words, geographical segregation and the limited access to infrastructure also restrict access to education, which causes the low qualifications and low likelihood to find a job. It also means that the Roma face multiple barriers diminishing their possibilities to succeed in the labour market, get employed or get a better-paid job position. Therefore, a set of employment policies are currently being implemented in order to assist the Roma to master skills and work habits, and subsequently enter and hold on in the competitive labour market. One of the policy measures targeted at the problem of long-term unemployment of marginalized Roma communities in Slovakia is the activation work programs.

1.2 Activation Work Programs in Slovakia

In Slovakia, activation works as active labour market policies are implemented at the local level. This policy is legally embedded in Act No. 5/2004 on Employment Services which constitutes the main principles, the target group and the process of activation works. As § 52 of Act on Employment Services No. 2004/5 states, the activation work programs are organized by the municipality or other state organization established by the municipality which may decide to employ citizens in a range of activities including provision of social

services, facilitating economic, social and cultural conditions in the municipality, environmental protection, supplementary education of children and youth, community activities and others (2004). Therefore, activation works present public work and local representatives decide if the municipality implements this kind of policy or not. In practice, activation works are represented mainly by street cleaning or other types of basic maintenance work in the municipality.

The aim of this policy tool is to facilitate the employability of the long-term unemployed and maintain or restore their work habits. According to §52 of Act No. 5/2004 on Employment Services, the purpose of the activation works is to retain work habits and ethic of the unemployed participants (2004). Consequently, this policy measure is considered as a temporary action enabling participants to get skills and restore their discipline at the workplace, so they can be competitive in the open labour market in comparison with those people who were not long-term unemployed and their work habits and skills are not neglected or absent.

Additionally, Act No. 5/2004 on Employment Services establishes that the target groups of this policy are people, who are beneficiaries of social allowances or, in other words, allowances in the material need (2004). Moreover, the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic states that this policy targets people who are registered as unemployed more than one year (2014). This means that the aim of the activations work programs is to facilitate employability of the socially disadvantaged people who are usually in the material need and are less likely to succeed in the labour market and improve their social and economic status.

Furthermore, the Government Office of the Slovak Republic indicates that the purpose of the activation works programs is to support the long-term unemployed with special focus on marginalized communities which are long-lastingly disadvantaged in the labour market and

significantly vulnerable to poverty (2008:18). The Roma marginalized communities are, therefore, one of the main target groups of these policies. As a result, effectiveness and impact of the activation works is adequate to examine in the context of these communities and their exclusion.

As mentioned above, municipalities can voluntarily implement activation work programs and incentivize local residents to participate in the public works. Municipalities do not fund these policies only from their own budget, but they are eligible to apply for funds in order to implement the policy. The Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family specifies that the local labour office provides the municipality or organization established by the municipality the financial contribution for coordination and implementation of activation works (2014). The Central Office of Labour further states that this contribution may be used for several purposes, namely the overall labour cost of the activation work performed by participants, personal protective equipment, accident insurance and other necessities related to the activation work (2014). This means that municipalities are by the mean of this financial contribution incentivized to implement the policy and actively assist people to restore or maintain their skills and work discipline.

Additionally, Act No. 5 /2004 states that local labour offices cooperate with the municipalities with the identification of the long-term unemployed and all the information related to their eligibility to participate in the activation work programs (2004). This indicates that the long-term unemployment, particularly unemployment of socially excluded communities, currently presents a serious issue for the central government which financially contributes to solving this severe situation.

The Slovak national institutions are not the only actors concerned with employment of the Roma socially disadvantaged communities. The extremely poor economic and social status of the Roma minority in Slovakia was one of the main issues already in the pre-accession

negotiations between Slovakia and the European Union (EU). Slovakia as a candidate state was strongly encouraged to adopt and implement inclusion policies aimed at marginalized Roma communities mainly through the PHARE programs related mainly to education policies. The pressure to effectively deal with the economic and social difficulties of the Roma minority did not stop after Slovakia joined the EU. It can be stated that the EU does not influence domestic employment policies directly, but particularly the European Commission is able to indirectly influence the domestic employment policies and motivate the member state to implement inclusive employment policies.

One of these indirect tools influencing domestic employment policies is the European Social Fund. According to the European Commission, the European Social Fund represents a financial tool of the European Union targeting issues such as support of employment through enhancement of human capital and ensuring fair opportunities in the labour market (2013). The inclusion of the marginalized Roma communities is prioritized in the European Social Fund explicitly. As the European Commission states, member states should specifically focus in their education and labour market policies on the communities that are discriminated against and face multiple disadvantages (2014). Consequently, also the activation work programs are financially supported by the European Social Fund.

The European Social Fund provides funds for two main operational programs in Slovakia, namely Employment and Social Inclusion, and Education. Just the Employment and Social Inclusion program deals with the activation work projects. As the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic states, the purpose of the operational program Employment and Social Inclusion is to invest in the workforce in order to facilitate employability of the long-term unemployed, especially those groups of society that are discriminated against in the labour market and, thus, remarkably vulnerable to social exclusion and poverty (2007). It means that the projects included in the operational program

Employment and Social Inclusion is a policy tool explicitly aimed at the support of the Roma communities in Slovakia.

There is a pressure to use the structural funds effectively and responsively to the needs of the local communities. Because of this, there currently have been several reports and evaluations of the projects funded by the European Social Fund as mentioned in the introduction. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the factors that contribute to the success of the projects. Particularly, these current evaluation and reports do not examine the role of other factors that may influence the outcome of the assessed projects. In general, the role of communities and particularly the impact of their active involvement in the phase of policy formulation and problem identification are to some extent disregarded and not taken into account in the process of policy evaluation.

However, it is important to take into consideration that the impact of activation work program is quite limited. According to Mýtna Kureková, Salner and Farenzenová, activation work programmes have very restricted impact on employment of not only of Roma, but also non-Roma participants and their success in the competitive labour market after the program ends (2013:46). These authors further claim that financial contribution for the activation works presents often the only formal income of Roma participants besides social allowances, but actually do not facilitate employability as such, which is demonstrated by only the small amount of Roma participants who were included in the open labour market after the program finished(Mýtna Kureková, Salner & Farenzenová, 2013:46). This means that the activation work program may be viewed rather as a social policy tool because it enables participants to increase their family budget. But regarding reintegration the Roma in the open labour market, effectiveness of activation works is eventually very poor.

However, the activation work programs might be considered as important active labour market policies, because as Messing states, the activation work programs represent a crucial

inclusive policy because it is estimated that the majority of activation work participants are of Roma origin (2013: 21). Consequently, it is necessary to recognize the factors that may contribute to their success and positive impact on employability and employment of particularly marginalized communities.

CHAPTER 2: DELIBERATION IN POLICY-MAKING

Traditionally, policy making process with all its phases including agenda setting, decision making, policy formulation, implementation or evaluation, was perceived as a set of activities requiring either political representatives possessing mandate to make decisions and dealing with the societal problems or experts and professionals trained and qualified to provide with advice and assistance in all of the processes of policy making. According to Gilens and Murakawa, citizens conventionally relied on the elites having the same interests and political preferences or knowledgeable professionals, especially in the technical issues requiring specific skills and abilities (2002: 19). This means that public policy making was commonly considered as a domain where the average citizen was not expected to powerfully participate and meaningfully contribute.

However, there have been significant changes in the perception of who should take an active part in policy making within the last decades. As Rosenberg states, Western societies are gradually changing and getting better-informed and acknowledged due to the overall increasing level of education and the faster distribution of information (2007:1). Consequently, the role of citizens has changed in the domain of public policy making and these are no longer perceived as passive actors expressing their political preferences only through elections.

This change of attitudes towards the question of who should be an active actor in policy making processes was caused not only by the improving education achievements of citizens and more open access to information. The shift in expectations about who should be involved in governance is present also because of declining trust in traditional forms of politics. Regarding this, Rosenberg argues that in the last decades there has been a trend that citizens have been losing interest in politics because of the perception that today's politics is a domain

which does not reflect the preferences and interests of voters, which is clearly shown in the case of decreasing turnout in elections across Western countries (2007: 1). In other words, it seems that citizens notice the deficiencies of representative democracy that is no longer viewed as the only appropriate means of representing their needs and preferences.

Additionally, this declining trust of citizens in traditional political actors and institutions is also associated with challenging legitimacy and accountability of governance. As Rosenberg states, the lower electoral turnout logically leads to rising concerns about whether the policy making is democratic and if it reflects the real public problems and needs of citizens (2007: 1). This means that policy making traditionally led by representatives and professionals is currently being challenged. As a result, traditional citizens' involvement in politics in terms of participation in the elections is currently viewed as inadequate in terms of ensuring democratic decision and policy making.

Consequently, some supplementary forms of political participation and citizen involvement have been perceived as important to introduce with the aim of achieving well-functioning, responsive and democratic policy making. According to Mendelberg, recently there is an increasing demand for greater citizen engagement in the political discourse about public issues as well as for giving them power and mandate to decide about important public problems in the more direct manner (2002: 151-152). Moreover, Mendelberg claims that deliberation is gradually becoming an essential part of policy making and, therefore, a widespread supplement to the representative democracy (2002: 152). Therefore, it is necessary to examine the role, impact and benefits and strengths of deliberation, especially in respect to the policies targeted at marginalised communities.

2.1 Deliberation and its Benefits for Policy Making

As mentioned above, deliberation may be viewed as supplementary to representative democracy since it enables citizens and particular interest groups to raise their voices and actively promote preferences in the policy making process. Therefore, deliberation has a special meaning for marginalized communities. They may often be underrepresented in the politics and so their particular needs are likely to be overlooked and not taken into account in the process of problem identification, policy formulation, implementation and other phases of policy making.

Deliberation in policy making is crucial for the reason that the social context of the problem, which is intended to be solved, is taken into account in the process of making decisions and considering policy options. Fishkin argues that deliberation between citizens and policy makers, especially face-to-face, enables to more properly embed the problem in the concrete social context than anonymous voting in elections (1997: 20). This also means that policy makers could discuss the problem with the target group and see in practice under what social and economic conditions the issue they want to target exists.

Therefore, and very importantly, one of the benefits of deliberation is that it ensures greater responsiveness of the selected policies to the public problems and local needs. Fishkin argues that due to deliberation people can raise their voice and participate in the problem identification and policy formulation (1997: 34). In other words, they are a part of the process and not only passive receivers of public services or goods.

Moreover, deliberation not only reflects the social and economic background of the problem, but also the cultural one. According to Haney, Borgida and Farr, the effectiveness of policies is largely dependent also on the culture and particular values of the target group and, therefore, deliberation is necessary because it provides policy makers with the cultural and community-specific information to enable them to comprehend the problem and the context in which it exists (2002: 233). Thus, the cultural aspect is significantly relevant for adequately

tailoring policies to the needs of ethnic, cultural and other minorities which may have different habits, attitudes and perceptions of problems that may be distinct from the perception of mainstream society. In other words, in order to design culturally sensitive policies, it is necessary to develop intensive and long-term cooperation between the majority population and minority target group.

Regarding this, Fishkin claims that just deliberation creates conditions for easier and prompt exchange of information between influenced parties and local representatives and, therefore, they may prepare their objections and counterarguments (1997: 20-21). Moreover, it may be claimed that since citizens more directly interact with decision makers, reactions are immediate which encourages them to discuss the public problems which leads to active citizenship. This also indicates that deliberation is more appropriate for the local level of governance and smaller groups of participants.

The benefits of deliberation are also associated with the motivation of participants to engage in public issues and to express their preferences at the local level. According to Fishkin, if there is an option to individually or collectively deliberate issues with representatives, citizens are more likely to pursue the agenda they are personally interested in and take action to achieve their goals (1997: 22). Additionally, Fishkin argues that merely voting in elections as a political engagement is not that motivational because people often do not see the link between the references they expressed in the process of voting and the real actions of elected representatives (1997: 22). This indicates that people are more likely to engage in dealing with public affairs if they have an opportunity to participate in deliberation because in this way that can better see the relationship between their political engagement and policy outcomes.

There are also other gains of the fact that citizens are actively engaged in policy making besides motivating participants to be actively involved in public affairs and contributing to

responsiveness of policies. As Haney, Borgida and Farr argue, civic engagement in public problem-solving enables also less-educated and less-informed people to get information and learn about the social problem of the community (2002: 225). This may be especially crucial for marginalized communities that are often excluded and segregated and, thus, they experience restricted access to information. Regarding this, members of marginalized communities may through deliberation feel more responsible for the problems occurring around them and it may trigger them to participate in the process of problem solving.

There may be some doubts related to the ability of marginalized communities to engage in policy making process. However, Krishna argues that poverty and the low societal status does not inevitably lead to the rejection of participation in deliberation, and also the poorer people may contribute to the problem-solving because they enjoy different skills and knowledge about the social environment of the existing problem (2008: 9).

2.2 The Role of Community Facilitators for Deliberation

One of the means to ensure the greater participation of marginalized and socially disadvantaged communities in policy making is a community facilitator or mediator. A community facilitator can be, according to Hogan, defined as an actor mediating communication and cooperation between particular community and the majority population (2002:51). In other words, the role of a community facilitator consists of bridging the community and actors from outside the community, including policy or decision makers.

In general, community facilitators are important for inclusion policies and their successful formulation and implementation for several reasons. There may be recognized five principal benefits of community facilitation. Firstly, a facilitator plays the key role of an informant in

the communities. As Hunter states, a facilitator not only provides and shares information but also interprets them so communities are able to understand them (2009: 30). This means that a facilitator may ensure that members of communities are informed and, thus, are more likely to play an active role in communication with the local representatives and participate in policy making. It may be also stated that a facilitator, who takes into account cultural differences between the majority and minority, could more properly formulate and interpret information so members of communities understand them better.

It may be also claimed that this fact is specifically important for communities experiencing residential segregation because they lack the access to media and information in general. For instance, the Roma minority in Slovakia face the barriers in getting information primarily because of their material deprivation and the fact that the settlements they live in are separated from the towns and villages. According to the UNDP Report, the majority of the Roma living in the segregated and socially excluded settlements often do not possess the access to the Internet or television (2012: 73). In combination with the low level of education of the Roma mentioned in the previous chapter, there is a low likelihood that these Roma or any other ethnic minority in the same situation would be able to engage in any discussion with representatives and participate in the process of solving problems of their social exclusion and discrimination. Facilitating, therefore, is likely to contribute to easier access to information for marginalized groups which founds the platform for further cooperation.

Regarding this, it is important to highlight the neutral position of facilitators. Hunter claims that even though facilitation provides with information, communities are expected to make free-choice decisions based on all information they received and not by personal values of a facilitator (2009: 30). It means that facilitation is considered only as assistance and the voices of communities are not dependent on facilitator's personal opinions and values.

Secondly, community facilitators are considered as an effective mean in order to mediate the substantial cooperation between the community and the outsiders. One of the forms of the cooperation may be the identification of needs and goals of community. According to Hogan, community facilitators are rarely directly involved in activities of communities, but they rather assist people to participate and they also help them to formulate the preferences (2002:1-2). Needless to say, precise problem formulation is greatly important for policy making process. Hogan adds that a facilitator enables people to take a part in the process of planning and discussing about the issues that are very actual in the communities (2002:2). In other words, a facilitator gives a voice to communities so they can express their preferences more or less directly to the local decision makers. This is especially crucial for socially excluded communities because their internal life is often inaccessible for outsiders who then lack precise information about the social context and particular problems. Regarding this and very importantly, giving voice in the process of policy formulation and problem identification is greatly important in case of minorities which are underrepresented in politics at the central but also at the regional or local level.

Thirdly, a community facilitator is important in building the trust between the ethnic communities and the majority population. Hunter argues that facilitation includes also strengthening good relationships between all the involved parties and, therefore, reduces past emotions related to exclusion or antipathy (2009:151). Regarding this, Ringold, Orenstein and Wilkens state that there is often a great mistrust between formal institutions and the Roma community which impedes potential cooperation but intercultural mediators may have capacities to overcome this difficulty (2005:167). It may be claimed that building trust is a precondition for successful deliberation and cooperation between parties.

It seems that the trust between all the parties is crucial for successful cooperation and building the stable relationships. Therefore, the fourth benefit of facilitating is related to the long-lasting relationships between the community and deeply rooted traditions of cooperation.

Fifthly, a facilitator often acts as a motivator in the marginalized communities. Hogan argues that a facilitator usually plays a role of a team leader encouraging people to be active and to become gradually independent in identifying, solving and seeking their problems (2002:51). Hunter adds that a facilitator helps to build and empower a team within community and then this team is more likely to cooperate with outsiders and participate on internally and externally triggered initiatives (2009:35). In other words, a facilitator is expected to invoke interest in community members and lead them to active citizenship.

Importantly, the function of encouragement is especially crucial for working with ethnically or culturally different groups. Hogan further claims that it is important that a facilitator is able to handle with emotions and internal aspirations of people, especially when their cultural understanding of the world around them is different from the understanding of the policy makers (2002: 51). Kaner argues that one of the processes of facilitation is to create a framework of understandings (2007: xx). Therefore, a facilitator as an actor working with or directly inside communities can better understand their needs and the way how they understand and perceive particular problems. In this way, it is then easier to formulate concerns to the majority population.

Needless to say, a community facilitator does not inevitable has to be legally established by state authority but there can be also actors living or working in communities and mediating communication between ethnic community and the majority population informally.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND DATA

As mentioned above, the purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate how the active involvement of the Roma communities in the phase of problem identification and policy formulation facilitates the success of the activation work programs in the form of the higher rate of participants employed in the open labour market. Therefore, the research question is whether and how deliberation between local policy makers and the Roma in the process of policy formulation and problem identification facilitates the success of the activation work programs. One of the main factors that may contribute to the greater participation is considered a community facilitator. As a result, its role in the higher participation and higher success of policies is examined in this study.

The impact of community facilitators on the greater Roma engagement is in this study explored at the level of municipalities since they are responsible for implementation of the activation work programs. The questionnaire with a set of questions (see Appendix) were sent by e-mail to 39 municipalities and filled out by the local officials responsible for the project, concretely by coordinators of the activation work projects (public servants) or mayors. Since the majority of respondents did not reply by e-mail, it was necessary to make phone calls and fill out questionnaire in this way. Many respondents wanted to remain anonymous and they asked not to state their names or names of the municipalities they work for. So the municipalities are not labelled by the name.

All the municipalities in the sample are located in the eastern part of Slovakia, concretely in the region of Košice and Prešov. This selection ensures that there are similar social and economic conditions. The sample includes four categories considering the success of implemented activation work programs and the presence of facilitators during the year 2013. The sample precisely consists of three categories of municipalities:

Category 1: 10 municipalities with successful outcome of the project where facilitators were present

Category 2: 10 municipalities with successful outcome of the project where facilitators were not present

Category 3: 9 municipalities with unsuccessful outcome of the project where facilitators were present

Category 4: 10 municipalities with unsuccessful outcome of the project where facilitators were not present

The successful outcome of the activation work programs means that more than 5 per cent of participants found a short-term or long-term job within 6 months after their participation in the program finished. It might seem that five per cent is quite a low level. However, as was mentioned in the first chapter, the impact of the activation work programs on employment and employability of Roma or non-Roma participants is very limited. The level of five per cent was determined according to the findings of the SGI report “Implementation of Activation Works in Slovakia” evaluating the impact of the activation work programs. This SGI report made up by Mýtna Kureková, Salner and Farenzenová indicates that only about 3.46 to 4.36 per cent of the activation work participants in the region of Košice and Prešov found a job in the open labour market within six months after their participation in the program finished (2013: 30). Under these circumstances, five per cent of participant reintegrated in the labour market may be considered as the success.

Importantly, the majority of participants (more than 80 per cent) involved the activation works were of Roma origin. Since the collection of ethnic data is problematic in Slovakia, respondents, namely program coordinators or mayors, from the municipalities only estimated the portion of the Roma and non-Roma participating in the program.

The data derived from the questionnaires are analysed mainly qualitatively since the purpose of this thesis is to primarily find out whether and how deliberation may influence the success of policies and how community facilitators contribute to this deliberation.

In Slovakia, there is no legally established institution of a community facilitator which would be materially or financially supported by the state. However, we may recognize the several actors working the Roma communities that play a role of a community facilitator. Principally, the teaching assistants, social workers, health care assistants, and natural leaders living in or having close links with the local Roma communities may be considered as the main facilitators operating with the Roma in Slovakia. According to *Methodological Guidelines for Introduction of the Teaching Assistant Profession* made up by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, teaching assistants are considered not only to provide non-Roma and Roma disadvantaged pupils with additional support in educational services in elementary schools, but also to ensure communication between the school authorities and the Roma family and community (2003: 1-2). Very importantly, teaching assistants today in practice play a broader role of a facilitator between the Roma and the majority population, not only school representatives but a more extensive variety of actors. The health care assistants and social workers also can be considered as community facilitators. As the Roma Institute mentions, the role of these terrain assistants is not only to provide social and minor health care services but they in practice also act as mediators between the representatives of municipalities (2013). Besides teaching and terrain social and health care assistants, there may be also some recognized other actors playing a role of facilitators, for instance natural leaders

in communities having links with the majority population or also other actors living outside the community. Therefore, in this research all the above mentioned actors who work with the Roma communities are taken into account.

There can be recognized two main limitations of the research. Firstly, it can be claimed that the ability and success at the labour market may depend to some extent also on personal motivations of participants involved in the activation work programs. In other words, some participants may come from more inspirational and supportive environment and therefore, are more willing or encouraged to actively seek a job and improve their social and economic situation in general. In other words, the support from the family of participants or internal ambitions may play a crucial role for reintegration in the labour market. This may influence the employment rate and, therefore, the success of the activation work programs or any other active labour market policies.

Secondly, this study does not examine municipality that do not implement any activation work programs. According to Mýtina Kureková, Salner and Farenzenová, it is questionable if the participation of the Roma but also non-Roma in the activation work program does not restrict them in finding the job in the open labour market (2013: 20). In other words, there is a question if intervention as such may paradoxically decrease the overall employment rate of participants and their integration in the competitive labour market. This means that this research does not include the municipalities without the intervention, so no counter-factual scenario is employed.

CHAPTER 4: THE FINDINGS ABOUT THE ROLE OF DELIBERATION IN THE SUCCESS OF PROGRAMS

As mentioned in the previous chapter, coordinators and mayors responsible for the implementation of activation works in the examined municipalities provided data through the questionnaires consisting of the questions related to the success of the activation work programs, deliberation and the role of a community facilitator in the process of cooperation between the Roma and non-Roma actors. In general, the data derived from the filled questionnaires revealed that the Roma participation in the deliberation over the policies contributes to the success and it seems that the community facilitators play a crucial role in this fact. In other words, in the municipalities where the facilitators work with communities and mediate cooperation and communication between the majority and minority population, the participation of the Roma in policy formulation and problem of identification related to the programs is higher, and also the success of the programs is also greater. Concretely in the municipalities (Category 1) with the presence of facilitator, the rate of the Roma participants who got employed within six month after the project ended is 7-8 per cent in 2013 according to respondents of the examined municipalities (Respondents, 2014).

Conversely, in examined municipalities (Category 4) without the presence of any facilitator, the participation of the Roma in deliberation was low and finally also the success of the program was poorer in comparison with municipalities (Category 1) with the presence of facilitators. Precisely, the number of employed participants was 2-3 per cent in 2013 (Respondents, 2014).

However, there are also municipalities (Category 3) with the presence of facilitator but the outcomes of the implemented activation work program are not positive, concretely the amount of employed participants was only about 2-3 per cent in the same year, as respondents

claimed in the questionnaires (Respondents, 2014). It seems that the key role of this failure was caused by the several factors, such as only short-term or discontinuous presence of community facilitators, but also higher degree of residential segregation of the participants. These factors are more precisely analyzed below.

Last but not least, some municipalities (Category 2) experience the success of the project (6-8 per cent of employed Roma participants in 2013) despite the absence of facilitator (Respondents, 2014). However, in these municipalities the long-term and good relations exist between the Roma and non-Roma, and the degree of residential segregation is low.

In general, there is a positive relationship between deliberation and the success of the project, and it may be also concluded that community facilitators contribute to the greater deliberation between the Roma and non-Roma.

4.1 The Relationship between the Roma Participation in Deliberation over the Program and the Success

Since the number of the examined municipalities and activation work programs involved in the sample of this survey is very small, it is necessary to analyze the data mostly qualitatively. As mentioned above, the Roma participation in deliberation over the activation work program contributes to the success, in other words, to the higher number of participants who are reintegrated in the open labour market after the program finished. Therefore, it is important to highlight how the Roma participation in deliberation over the program is beneficial for the final Roma employment. Importantly, all these mentioned data were derived from the filled questionnaires that were distributed to the municipalities in the sample.

The respondents from municipalities with the successful outcomes and the presence of facilitator (Category 1) stated that the Roma deliberated with the coordinators mostly about

the nature of their participation of the program. Nine out of ten municipalities with the successful outcomes and presence of facilitator claimed that the deliberation was related to the time schedule and the characteristic of the work or, in other words the activities participants were required to do. In that case, Roma participants could negotiate when they would arrive at their workplace and start working, and what activities they prefer if it was possible to choose (Respondents, 2014).

As a result, these participants, who were allowed to deliberate with authorities over the way how actually the policy is implemented, were also more successful in the labour market after the program finished. This was explained by respondents in a way that since these participants were allowed to choose what activities they would perform and when to come to work, they were also more motivated to go to work and open to other communication and further cooperation with the program coordinator but also other interested actors . As a result, respondents claim that there was built some trust between the municipal authorities and the Roma participants who then were more motivated to be active and seek a job (Respondents, 2014). It means that good relationship and friendly atmosphere contributed to the overall motivation of workers. Regarding this, respondents claimed that, therefore, these participants were more interested in other possibilities how to get employed in the municipality, concretely not only in the form of voluntary work, but also in some full-time short-term or long-term work (Respondents, 2014).

Moreover, the respondents claimed that if they were approachable and open to discussion with the participants even before the activation works started, the cooperation between both parties was easier. They claimed that the reason was that the Roma could formulate specific problems they faced or would face during their participation in the action works (Respondents, 2014). As respondents further indicated, these problems were related mainly to time schedule, the way of commuting from the Roma settlements or more remote districts

or type of activities. This was mainly important for female participants, who were, according to respondents, likely to deliberate over the flexible work time schedule in order to combine the activation work activities and family life, especially taking care of children and their household. According to respondents, due to flexible implementation of the activation work program, which reflected the specific concerns of its participants, atmosphere in the municipality and relationships between the Roma participants and the coordinators of programs, but also other authorities was positive. Consequently, the Roma could make better connections to the majority population and, therefore, could find at least a temporary short-term work more easily (Respondents, 2014). It means that if the deliberation over the program and its implementation was possible, the Roma participants were more likely to participate and build relations with the majority population which increases their chances to get employed, although only as short-term and part-time workers.

On the other hand, in municipalities with unsuccessful outcomes (Category 3 and Category 4), the Roma did not take an active part in negotiations over the nature of their participation in the program, even in the case of the presence of the community facilitators. Respondents from these municipalities claimed that there were several difficulties in the phase of implementation, such as low attendance and different expectations of the Roma participants from the program. Respondents, coordinators of programs and mayors, said that they did not consult the nature of the program, such as time schedule or the type of activities, with the Roma and non-Roma participants. Respondents claimed that after the activation work program finished, they did not maintain almost any communication with the Roma participants regarding employment issues (Respondents, 2014).

Additionally, in case of these municipalities with unsuccessful policy outcomes, it seems that the local representatives have not developed closer relationships with the local Roma communities at all. It was revealed that the cooperation with between the Roma marginalized

groups was only associated with the activation work programs and partially in the programs in the local elementary schools with the purpose to introduce the parental involvement in education of Roma children (Respondents, 2014). In other words, there was not any long-lasting collaboration between the majority population and the local Roma minority.

4.2 How Community Facilitators Trigger the Roma Participation in Deliberation

Most of the facilitators working in the examined municipalities were represented by social workers and teaching assistants. It seems that the presence of facilitators in the municipalities positively influenced the deliberation between the Roma participants and the local authorities and, thus, the successful outcome of the activation work programs. Therefore, it is necessary to identify how concretely community facilitators are useful for positive outcomes of the activation work programs.

It may be concluded that one of the most significant contributions of a community facilitator is increasing motivation of participants to engage process of deliberation over the program. Ten municipalities with the successful outcome of the project and the presence of a facilitator (Category 1) stated that the facilitator helped to persuade the Roma to participate in the program and provided with the initial information (Respondents, 2014). It means that the facilitator in practice acted like an informant and mediator of the very first contact between the municipality and the local Roma community.

However, the coordinators of successful programs claimed that the facilitator was beneficial not only in the process of convincing the Roma to participate in the activation work program, but also facilitated the participation in the deliberation over program and, therefore, formulation of problems and personal concerns about the activities, work time schedule and

so forth. Respondents said that a facilitator often accompanied the Roma and took part in discussion between the coordinators and participants (Respondents, 2014).

Respondents also stated that the facilitator assisted in further cooperation after the program finished (Respondents, 2014). In other words, it seems that a community facilitator helped to maintain the cooperation with the Roma even later which helped them to stay in contact with people outside their community. It is not clear if they found a job only due to this fact, but at least this long-lasting relationship and cooperation between the Roma and the representatives of municipality a good platform for potential further cooperation and inclusion.

8 out of 10 municipalities with successful outcome of the project and with the presence of a community facilitator (Category 1) or even multiple facilitators stated in the questionnaire that the facilitators helped to overcome the cultural barriers and initial mistrust between the Roma participants and the coordinators of the project, but also other representatives who were related to the program. The same respondents also claimed that the very important factor in overcoming the barriers was the long-term presence of facilitator who is working in the Roma community in the longer period of time (Respondents, 2014). Interestingly, it seems that the Roma origin does not play a crucial role and even non-Roma facilitators were successful in the process of building trust and good relationships between the majority and minority.

However, as mentioned above, some municipalities with the presence of facilitators did not experience the higher participation in deliberation and the success of the program (Category 3). It seems that there were two main factors impeding the contribution of facilitators, namely the higher degree of residential segregation and the short-term or discontinuous presence of Roma facilitator. According to Atlas of Roma communities in Slovakia which maps the degree of isolation of Roma settlements, the Roma settlements in these municipalities were more isolated and often located outside the village (UNDP, 2013). It means that the extent of segregation and, therefore, for instance access to infrastructure may

be important for the effectiveness of community facilitators and, logically, the success in the labour market.

Additionally, it is also questionable to what extent the attitudes of the local representatives and the whole majority population play a role in the participation of the Roma in deliberation and cooperation in general. As mentioned above, it seems that friendly atmosphere may motivate the Roma to maintain the relationships with the municipality and it may trigger them to actively seek the job. However, if there are deeply rooted problems and unsolved past conflicts between the majority and minority, it may be difficult to fully enjoy the role of a facilitator whose power may be limited due to a hostile environment and unwillingness of parties to collaborate together.

There were also municipalities with successful outcomes but without the presence of a facilitator (Category 2). However, it seems that in these municipalities there are already well-developed relationships and there is a long-lasting tradition of cooperation between the Roma and non-Roma population. Moreover, the Roma minority does not live separately from the majority according to data from the Atlas of Roma communities mapping the level of residential segregation (UNDP: 2013). It may be concluded that also this fact contributes to the greater deliberation and, thus, the success of integration programs such as activation works in this case.

4.3 Discussion

As the findings from a survey conducted in thirty-nine municipalities located in the eastern part of Slovakia reveal, if the Roma participants of activation works deliberate over the nature of the program and their participation in it, it contributes to their higher employment rate after the program finishes. There are two main reasons for this phenomenon.

Firstly, if the Roma are allowed to consult their specific needs and problems related to policy implementation, they are motivated to participate more and engage in further cooperation between municipal authorities. Also, if municipal authorities consider the social context of the problem and cultural problem of Roma exclusion, it may to create responsive policies and incentives to cooperate. It means that it is the matter of motivation which is very crucial especially for marginalized minorities which often face exclusion and rejection of the majority of population.

Regarding this, also long-lasting relationship between the majority population and minority is very important for the success of the inclusion projects. Consequently, even in the category of municipalities without any community facilitators, the activation work programs bring the positive outcomes because of overall good and long-lasting relations between the Roma and non-Roma.

Secondly, since the socially disadvantaged Roma face exclusion in a variety of domains, including housing or education, it may be claimed that they lack social capital, in terms of contacts from the majority population who would help them to get employed at least temporarily. The survey reveals that when local authorities engage in deliberation with the Roma and these Roma were open to further cooperation, they could also make relationships with other members of majority which helped to find a job, even though only temporary and part-time.

The findings from survey also show that community facilitators are a crucial mean to ensure deliberation between parties. Community facilitators are useful not only for the very first contact between parties and for convincing the Roma to take a part in the activation work programs, but also for maintaining the cooperation after the program finishes and assistance in deliberation processes. Therefore, their main benefit is bridging the majority and minority population.

However, also community facilitation has some limitations. One limitation is the residential segregation of the Roma or, in other words, the distance between the Roma settlements and the village. Therefore, even if a facilitator operates in the municipality, the policy outcomes of activation work programs may be negative. It may be assumed that in the case of residential segregation there are different barriers reducing chances to succeed in the labour market, such as the access to infrastructure etc. The second limitation of community facilitation is deeply rooted conflicts between the majority and the Roma minority, and overall hostile environment. It may be argued that the role of facilitation is to overcome these problems, but it is necessary to reiterate that there is no officially established institution of mediator or facilitators and so their role are supplemented by social workers or teaching assistant who do not have capacities to fully employed in facilitation and, therefore, devote more time and efforts to overcome hostility and long-standing disputes.

CONCLUSION

Successful outcomes of inclusion policies aimed at marginalized ethnic communities depend on a variety of factors. One of the main factors is also the active engagement of communities in the processes of policy making, primarily in problem identification and policy formulation. The way how to achieve this community engagement is to ensure deliberation between the local or regional actors and members of excluded communities. Only if communities are involved in these phases of policy making, they might express their preferences and specific problems, so policy makers can tailor responsive and empowering policies.

Deliberation between policy makers and marginalized minorities has several benefits for reaching goals of implemented policies besides formulating needs of its members. Deliberation also enables to build long-lasting relationships between the majority and minority and helps to understand concerns of both parties. Likewise, it makes minority members able to create social networks outside the community, which is particularly important for success in the open labour market. Furthermore, all these factors, such as trust and new social networks, have obviously the positive impact on motivations of community members to seek a job. The matter of motivation is important especially for socially and economically excluded minorities just like the Roma, who in their everyday lives experience rejection from the majority population and, therefore, are not encouraged and willing to get reintegrated in the labour market.

One of the effective tools to employ deliberation in policy making process is a community facilitator. A community facilitator has an ability not only to convince the excluded groups to engage in policies, but also to bridge the parties and build the trust between them, to help to

overcome cultural barriers and to lead the communication and cooperation. A community facilitator may be an effective tool for maintaining long-lasting relationships between the majority and minority which is crucial particularly for inclusion policies requiring the change of attitudes and mutual respect. Therefore, a community facilitator is beneficial mean for successful implementation of inclusive policies because she gives excluded individuals opportunity to raise their voices and be actively engaged in seeking solutions of their own problems.

APPENDIX

This questionnaire (translated from Slovak to English) was sent to coordinators of the activation work programs (public servants) or mayors of municipalities. Questions were adapted to the category of municipality (according to the presence or absence of facilitator in the questioned municipality).

Questionnaire:

- What was the share of the Roma in the overall amount of the activation work program participants in 2013? How many of them got employed (short-term or long-term employment, part-time or full-time job positions) within six months after the program finished?
- Do you or other local authorities cooperate with the local Roma community for a longer period of time and besides the activation work programs? If yes, how do you cooperate?
- How would you assess the overall relationships between the majority and Roma minority? Have you experienced any deeply-rooted conflicts and problems, or are there any long-standing projects with the Roma?
- Do you maintain any cooperation or contact with the Roma participants after the end of the program?
- Did you deliberate with the Roma participants over the activation work programs?
- Did you ask Roma participants what were their specific problems and complaints related to their participation in the activation work programs?
- Do any community facilitators (e.g. teaching assistants, social workers, health care assistants, Roma leaders or others) work with Roma communities and mediate cooperation or any communication between the Roma and non-Roma authorities? How long do they work with them?
- If there were any facilitators, what was their role? Did/do they cooperate with the Roma participants and you in relation to the activation work programs?
- If you deliberate with the Roma over issues related to activation work programs, what is the role of a community facilitator there?
- Could you identify any benefits of this deliberation on the Roma employment?

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