

REGIONAL SOCIAL MAP (THE KOSICE SELF-GOVERNING REGION AND THE BORSOD-ABAÚJ-ZEMPLEN COUNTY) REGSOM KOŠICE – MISKOLC

The Beginning of the Project: 1st October 2012

The End of the Project: 30th September 2013

The leading partner in the project is the Institute of Social Sciences at the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Košice, and its foreign partner is the Institute of Sociology at the Faculty of Arts, the University of Miskolc. The leading partner is responsible for the project coordination and the project management, including the allocation of the funds, and for the coordination of systematic cooperation among the institutions and organizations which participate in the project. The leading partner communicates with the institutions and organizations taking part in the project, provides the exchange of information, and collects and evaluates the research outcomes achieved by the project partners. The leading partner communicates with the media, professional circles and broader public. The foreigner partner fulfils the assigned tasks in the region and gives reports to the leading partner. The foreign partner also communicates with the media and the broader public, in line with the general and specific aims of the project.

The University of Miskolc celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1999, but its history goes back as far as 268 years ago. The faculties of the University of Miskoc provide the education in three different programmes (BA, MA and PhD studies). The University has nine faculties, and one of them is the Faculty of Arts. The Institute of Sociology is directly involved in the project. The aim of the Institute of Sociology is to educate professionals acknowledged with the European and local societies. They are capable to transmit the knowledge and to conduct their own independent research activities. Three institutes at the faculty of Arts of the University of Miskolc created the Centre for Roma Studies. The centre deals with research, publications and documents connected to the Roma people.

The activities of **the Institute of Social Sciences at the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Košice** officially started on the 1st January 1975. The Institute was from its very beginning a multidisciplinary organization. From 1986, the main research problems the academic staff of the Institute deals with are the questions of the status of the Hungarian and Ukrainian nationalities after the year 1948. Concurrently, a scientific research on Roma family started. In the second half of the 1990s, the Institute was profiled as a scientific research centre,

focusing on the interdisciplinary research of ethnic relations, especially on the questions of minorities, and on sociological and psychological research on the strategies of behaving in challenging situations. This orientation is also reflected in the current scientific research activities of the Institute, which also reacts on the contemporary social problems, such as the unemployment, the ethnic identity issues, the Roma question, etc. After 1989, the possibilities for the international cooperation in direct research became better. The workers of the Institute participated in a number of international projects, which were lead by the scientific institutions in France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Poland. This trend continues up to today – the workers of the Institute take part in a significant international project called the *European Social Survey* (ESS).

The workers of the two institutions situated in the two different countries have had contacts for long time, and they have been meeting at various academic events. They are often confronted with those groups of people, who live in poor social conditions, are locally tight, have only low level of education, lack information, or are totally uninformed about the possibilities on the job market. All of the project activities are planned on the basis of mutual cooperation, and stem from the good experiences from the previous long-lasting cooperation.

The PROJECT GOALS

The general goal of the project is to highlight the particularities of the regions in focus, and to contribute to the improving of the life conditions of the inhabitants of these regions – through developing the independent activities aiming for the improvement of their competitiveness and their flexibility – by creating educational centres in Miskolc and in Košice – as well as by enlarging the network of specifically-oriented centres.

The next global goal of the joint project is to increase the social cohesion of people and communities living in the common Slovak-Hungarian cross-border region.

The project has several specific goals, such as:

1. The educational goal

- a.) To build up a partnership among the educational institutions: the exchange of knowledge, experience, and relevant information during jointly-held informative seminars and workshops.

- b.) To elaborate the methodology and to create the educational module, and to implement it in practice.
- c.) To specifically train 30 social workers, who will get ready to work in the field, on the both sides of the border, and who already currently work in the given social sphere. These specifically trained social workers will secure long-term contacts between the newly established centres and the groups of people in focus.
- d.) To apply, directly and interactively, the jointly-elaborated module in the case of 40 selected inhabitants (together with the help of the public sphere) in practice, with the possibilities of further additions. Education, that the participating people will receive this way, will create the basis for a possible future higher and professional education of this target group.
- e.) To offer the pilot module for a more extensive usage.
- f.) To soften the language barriers through the teaching of the Roma language.

2. Creation of the map of the social stratification of the inhabitants of the Košice Self-governing Region and the Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County

- a.) To emphasize the differences and the similarities.
- b.) To elaborate the methodology of the structure of the map, and to conduct the surveys.
- c.) To map and to connect the network of the institutions and the organizations dealing with the disadvantaged groups of people.
- d.) To create a tri-lingual database (Slovak, Hungarian and English), containing the articles and the empirical outcomes from the already conducted research projects which were dealing with the disadvantaged groups of people.
- e.) To evaluate the steps and efforts which have been made so far in order to solve the given problem, and jointly create a *know-how* proposal.

3. Offering the outcomes of research to the local self-governing authorities and the employment offices

The outcomes of this research will be offered to the local self-governing authorities and the employment offices, which will apply the outcomes of the project in practice, being actively and professionally helped by the established REGSOM centre in Košice REGSZOM centre in Miskolc, which will contribute to the long-term sustainability of the project outcomes. The outcomes of the project (in English language) can help improve the level of the awareness of

the institutions of the European Union (such as the Committee of the Regions, or the European Economic and Social Committee, etc.).

4. Increasing social cohesion of people and communities in the Slovak-Hungarian cross-border region and supporting the exchange of the outcomes of good practice.

Reasoning:

This particular cross-border region is characteristic by intra-regional disparities. The cities of Košice and Miskolc do not have, despite their potential, sufficient strength for balancing the differences within the region. The most backward are the economies of the marginal rural regions, which is multiplied by an undeveloped traffic network, different conditions for creating enterprises, different life standard, depopulation of the villages and towns, and the growing the number of the population in the post-productive age in the countryside.

Motivation:

Both institutions working in the region meet in their research and educational activities. They are often confronted with those groups of people, who live in poor social conditions, are locally tight, have low education, lack information, or are totally uninformed about the possibilities on the job market. Both of the institutions have the potential to transmit their analytical and empirical knowledge and experience to the joint forms of education and the joint informational databases – the so-called Social Map.

Particular problems of the region:

- a.) The region lacks a well-constructed social network, and that is the reason why there is missing long term cooperation among the institutions, organizations and local self-governing authorities, which do not have information about the outcomes of the work of other organizations, and therefore, they are not able to use this knowledge in their own work.
- b.) There is no connection between various social agents and there is no coordination of professional consulting activities among the social agents.
- c.) The suggested goals of the project aim for changing of the above-mentioned problems through the cooperation of the two significant institutions, which are particularly focused on education and social research.

The project provides a possibility for the education of people from the disadvantaged groups by the means of specifically trained counsellors.

d.) There is no complex social map, which would include the experience and knowledge of particular institutions and organizations working with people living in social exclusion, and which could provide help in establishing new contacts, and making their work more effective.

TARGET GROUPS

The target groups of the project are:

1. Social workers, who focus on the marginalized groups of people living in the region.
2. The employees of the employment offices, local self-governing offices of the towns and villages, as well as other workers in the state administration.

A jointly-elaborated Social Map will be useful for them as the basic source of information.

These target groups will provide information, knowledge, experience and data from their field of expertise, which will be one of the important parts of the Social Map. Apart from that, they will be able to interactively co-work on the actualization and further development of the Social Map. They will apply the gained knowledge in the practice in the given micro-region.

3. The marginalized groups of the inhabitants from the Košice Self-governing Region and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, who will wish to use their newly-acquired skills and education in the job market and to increase their own level of competitiveness and flexibility. The selected target group has the least possibilities to access the useful information and the process of education. This target group will be involved in the project through education, professional consultations, and it will participate in the final 5-day training.

4. Professionals from research institutes, universities and other academic institutions focusing on the social and developmental activities in the region. They will apply broader social experience on a high professional level in the process of the creation of the educational model, and will mutually exchange their experience in the process of the creation of a unified methodology for the construction of the Social Map. Their knowledge will be used in the elaboration of the module of the good practice outcomes.

ACTIVITIES

The information about the project was provided on the 29th November 2012, during the **Information Day**. The invited guests (including the representatives of the media) and scholars could meet the project partners during this meeting (both the leading partner and the partner from abroad). The presentation was lead by the project manager, who introduced the team members and the project activities.

The Information Day - pictures

In the first phase of the project, the two working places were established - one in Košice, in the building of the Institute of Social Sciences of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (**REGSOM**), and one in Miskolc, at the Institute of Sociology at the Faculty of Arts, the University of Miskolc (**REGSZOM**). The role of these two working places is to establish the contacts with the local self-governments, offices, research institutes of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, with the universities and the third sector. Secondly, these working places will also exchange the gathered information between the project partners, organize conferences, seminars and round-tables, secure the continuation and the professional background of the educational process, and systematically monitor the project work.

The next activity within the project was the organization of a **scientific conference and discussion panels**, which took place in Miskolc. The theme of the event was: *Social Problems in the Košice Self-governing Region and the Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County*.

[Download the Programme of the Conference here](#)

The outcome was the publication of a Brochure in two languages.

[Download the content of the Brochure here](#)

The two working places also participated in the elaboration of such **new educational modules**, which can be used in practice. The educational modules are composed from the following thematic areas:

- 1.) Social problems and their solutions
- 2.) Psychology
- 3.) Selected chapters from legal system
- 4.) Active citizenship and inter-sector cooperation

Jointly-elaborated educational modules were used as the basis for creating the Manual for the course participants: *Manuál pre účastníkov vzdelávacieho kurzu k projektu REGSOM I. a II.*

[Download the content of the Manual here](#)

70 participants were selected, 30 participants (15 of them from KSK and 15 from BAZ county) were employees in the social sphere (based on the suggestion from the employment

office, local self-governments and NGOs), and 40 participants (20 of them from KSK and 20 from BAZ county) were from the disadvantaged groups of citizens (based on the suggestion from the employment office, social workers, local self-governments and NGOs), who will take part in the educational process. The main educational tool for the participants of the course is the jointly-produced *Manuál pre účastníkov vzdelávacieho kurzu k projektu REGSOM I. a II.* [Schedule of the courses is under Education](#)

The main idea of the applicants for the financial contribution was **the creation of the webpage in three languages.**

The educational process will be completed with a **5-day long joint bilingual training** for 70 participants (from Slovakia and Hungary).

The date of the final bilingual training: **26th – 30th August 2013**

[The programme of the final training is in the section Education](#)

Since the 5th February, a Roma language course is being held on the both sides of the border. The course will last for four months, i.e. 64 classes.

[Course details are in the section Education](#)

Continuously, the final analysis is being conducted: the **Regional Social Map** (social conditions in the regions, joint searching for the solutions and summarizing of the outcomes of good practice). The elaborated dossier will be used as a complex material on social conditions in the two regions in focus for the employees of the local self-governments, employment offices, for people working in the NGOs, as well as for professional circles and broader public. The final map will be available in the printed form in three languages (Hungarian, Slovak and English), and will help raise general awareness about the problem.