

## EDITORIAL

The aim of the European Union's Lisbon process is that the European Union should become the world's most competitive and dynamically developing, knowledge-based economy by 2001 while maintaining sustainable economic development creating more and better work opportunities as well as higher social cohesion. Decreasing unemployment and increasing employment rates within the Union are equally necessary from a political, social and economic point of view.

The Hungarian employment rate is one of the lowest in Europe: the number of employment has fallen by 26% compared to the period before the political system change, especially among the undereducated and older job seekers. The high unemployment mostly affects the Roma population living in the eastern part of the country.

Unemployment has become a serious problem since the beginning of the political system change in the county of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén compared to the country's average level. The proportion of the dependant population is high as well; 84% of the Roma population aged between 19 and 34 is inactive. According to scientific papers, the number of the Hungarian Roma population is around 650 thousand and almost half of them live in the eastern region of the country, mainly in the territory of Zemplén (Zempléni Kistérség).

Following the political system change, several macro- and micro-social research in Eastern Europe has dealt with the life-prospects of the Roma population and the economic, political and legal causes and consequences of the division within the Hungarian society. Although problems are well determined and numerous suggestions have been made, there is no systematic solution yet for the reintegration of the Roma population into the labour market in order to avoid marginalization.

This edition is the final report of the „Hungarian-Slovakian comparative complex training programme for the reintegration of the Romas” project supported by the Hungarian National Research and Development Programme (NKFP 5/035/04).

The main purpose of the project is to help Romas to find jobs easier by trainings and providing information, thus improving their quality of life as well as easing social tensions in the region.

This meant working out and pretesting an exemplary complex system in the counties of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg in Hungary and in Tóketerebesi Járás in Slovakia inhabited by Hungarians, which is one of the most underdeveloped macro-regions of East-Slovakia having serious economic and social problems.

- Within the boundaries of fundamental research, based on the results of previous Hungarian and Slovakian research projects, the Hungarian and Slovakian comparative survey of the Roma population has to be completed and the culture of poverty as well as the accompanying social effects and the possibilities to change them has to be analyzed.
- Within the framework of applied research those trades and professions will have to be found that provide the Romas with long-term life-possibilities.
- Within experimental research a competence-based special training and support system have to be worked out, considering the knowledge level and the life-style of the Romas.

The program, by its complex activities (surveying, training, employment, mentoring) is aimed at:

- the social intergration of the Roma population, struggle against poverty and segregation, increasing employment possibilities, encouraging mobility and improving social and cultural conditions;
- training the Roma population in order to prepare them for the adaptation of the fast social and labour market changes and help their reintegration and taking part in life-long learning;
- the more effective representation of the interest and protection of the Roma population;
- the acceptance and embrace of Hungarian and European communal and individual values, adjusting their life-style to that of the majority while preserving their identity at the same time.

The chapters of the book are written by experts who led the sub-projects, based on the documentation of the team-work carried out during the 3 year-long project.

In the first chapter, Tímea Tibori, the leader of the project [scientific deputy director, Institute of Sociology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA SZKI)] summarizes the priorities and the background of the project, introducing the demographic and geographical situation and the family-structure and educational level of the Roma population. After presenting the tendencies of the labour market, she presents research methods and draws hypotheses and possible results.

In the second chapter, Katalin Tardos (senior scientific fellow, MTA SZKI) on the one hand presents the labour market situation of the Sátoraljaújhely territory (Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county) from the political system change to nowadays. On the other hand, she analyses the effectivity and redistribution of active employment-political implements that are aimed at improving manpower chances (support to become self employed and the communal work programme) at a national, county or smaller territory levels.

In the third section, Mária Kraiciné Szokoly [senior lecturer at Eötvös Lorand University (ELTE)] introduces the reader to the complex programme worked out specifically for the project that tries to reintegrate deprived social groups with surveying, training, employment and mentoring systems simultaneously.

In the next chapter, Tímea Tibori introduces the project's 'state of the art' 'learning map'. The „learning map” is created to measure abilities, resources, attitudes and energy-resources and efforts. It is suited for the analysis of multiple variables in a unique evaluational system. It shows the improvable values of the individual, his or her process of attending school and finding a job, and gives a carrier-prognosis after the project is finished.

This is followed by a section describing the work of the local mentors which was one of the innovations of the project. The authors, Andrea Heves (psychologist, ELTE) and Mária Kraiciné Szokoly then describe the mentor programme. Mentors, after having completed their mentor-courses, served as a positive example to the target persons and helped them with continued advisory in the fields of learning, employment and life-style based on the individual needs during the course of the project.

Another goal of the project, declared by the leaders of the project, was that during the three- year- long project the adoption of a healthier life-style should effect the immediate surrounding of the target person and his or her

family, as well. In the sixth chapter, Marianna Bognárné Várfalvi (junior lecturer, University of Miskolc) describes how they surveyed the financial, housing and employment situation of the families and how they used these results.

The social and economic marginalization of the examined area and the decreasing of individual life-opportunities have served the reason for studying the reactions of especially disadvantaged individuals to different social situations, whether their reactions are more negative than the average and what effects past and present have in their future. Based on the results of interviews and questionnaires, Tímea Tibori describes the values and attitudes of the examined group in two chapters.

Zemplén territory (Zempléni Kistérség) has kept its relatively homogeneous socio-economic and settlement structure despite the previous artificial borders. The educational program thus became a programme 'without borders': 15 persons from Töketerébesi Járás voluntarily participated in the programme which they saw as an opportunity to excel. This was supported scientifically and logistically by our Slovakian partners. In the ninth chapter, Tímea Tibori introduces this Slovakian group.

In the last chapter, István Márton Kraici (CEO, Studiare Kft.), Mária Kraiciné Szokoly, Tímea Tibori and Károly Tóth (director, Forum Social-research, Slovakia) summarize the results of the project.

Only the most important documents concerning trainings and research are collected in the appendix. The complete documentation of the project is available at the Institute of Sociology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

*September, 2007, Budapest*