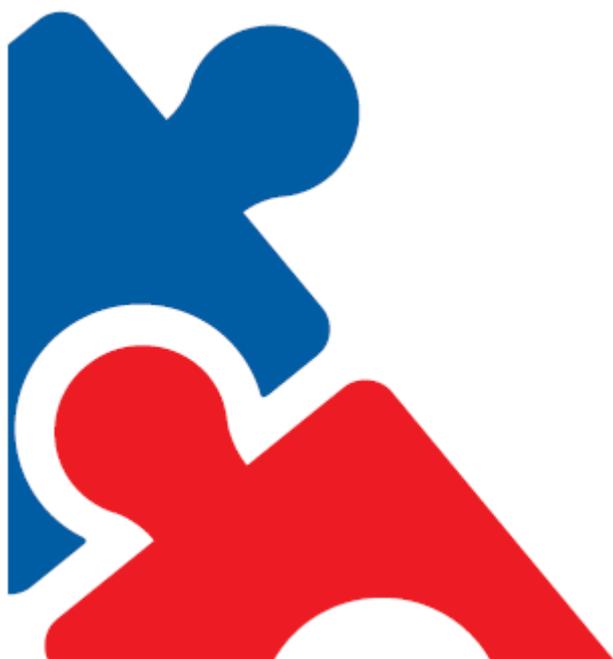# FINAL REPORT
A continuous long-term (longitudinal) study on the HRE OP impacts on its target groups

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Report intended for:

Czech Republic – Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
ESF Management Department
Na Poříčním právu 1, 128 01 Prague 2
www.esfcr.cz

Report submitted by:

Navreme Boheme, s.r.o.
U Smaltovny 25
170 00 Prague 7

and

Člověk v tísni, o. p. s.
Sokolská 1869/18
120 00 Prague 2

Document version: no. 1.4 (final version) dated 11 June 2013

Contents

1   Managerial Summary

The Final Report is the summarizing outcome of the continuous long-term (longitudinal) study on the Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme (HREOP) impacts on its target groups. Within the study, the effects of the HREOP in three priority axes were monitored, i.e. in the Priority Axis 1 (Adaptability), in the Priority Axis 2 (Active Labour Market Policy) and in the Priority Axis 3 (Social Integration and Equal Opportunities).

Surveys were carried out from December 2010 till March 2013 and their nature was that of a longitudinal study, meaning that individual respondents were asked about the same issues repeatedly in order to make it possible to monitor the development of the situation and the respondents' attitudes. The study is based on a repeated qualitative survey carried out in the form of interviews and focus groups among the members of the target groups, when 165 respondents[1] took part in two implemented waves; and on a repeated quantitative survey carried out in the form of questionnaires among 315 organizations in total, which were the beneficiaries of the financial assistance from the HREOP[2].

The most significant **general findings and recommendations** valid for the HREOP are the following:

It is appropriate to make higher investments into the creation of new vacancies, as well as into the preservation of existing vacancies. Currently, the Czech Republic is facing general lack of jobs (the consequence of economic slowdown) and also lack of part-time jobs and jobs with flexible working hours. As a result, intervention is very often ineffective. Retraining Programmes do not culminate in finding employment; employment consultancy has no effect. Support of creation of vacancies does not mean that intervention could only be realized on the level of projects targeted at creation and preservation of jobs. Unemployment and other problems of the target groups are mutually multiplied and interlinked; they cannot be understood in the sense of simple causality. This demands the preservation of a comprehensive solution focused on various problems and their combinations, i.e. it is crucial to focus on the process, not only on one related feature. However, it would be appropriate to strengthen the creation of vacancies at the present-day situation.

It is always necessary to sufficiently individualise all projects and to enable the needed flexibility within their framework. For instance, employees want to learn skills they will be able to use instantly at work for their company. Acquiring such skills is sustainable at that because thanks to the immediate use of acquired skills the learned matter does not become forgotten. For this purpose, it is necessary to tailor employee training programmes in cooperation with the management of the company.

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[1] The quoted sample of respondents cannot be labelled as representative due to the non-existence of sufficiently detailed information about the HREOP target groups. Details regarding generalization are stated in Appendix 4. Methodology (precisely Chapter 4.3.5) and details regarding individual target groups including case studies are stated in the Interim Report 5.

[2] The detailed description of the development of the study is given in Appendix 3 Development of the Longitudinal Study and in Appendix 4 Methodology of the Study.

Job seekers (or better, persons in general who are assisted under the Priority Axis 2) reach different level of knowledge, therefore, it is appropriate to offer to these people courses corresponding to their level of advancement. Besides, it is appropriate to identify in time the related risks by the means of individual consultations in order to really deal with the most urgent problem. In the opposite case, the participant may drop the project without any apparent reason.

Members of various target groups under the Priority Axis 3 should take part in the analysis of their life situation and in forming a new life strategy. Thanks to this, they will be more likely to take on responsibility for their situation, which is crucial for the project sustainability. For numerous persons from target groups, especially for those on the edge of society, it is also crucial to build trust, primarily trust in relation to the person or persons who work with them, but through these also trust in relation to the society as a whole. Therefore, not all activities are suitable for all participants of the projects. From the point of view of the organizations (beneficiaries of financial assistence), it is important to have the possibility to carry out during the course of the project justified changes reacting to the current state of the situation. This also demands individual approach.

It is necessary to stress the importance of supporting accompanying activities within the projects. If, within the projects, it is possible to expect the participation of persons caring for a dependent person, it is appropriate that the care of a dependent person be not an insurmountable obstacle for the participation in the project.

The most significant **findings and recommendations for the Priority Axis 1 – Adaptability**, focused on prevention of unemployment by means of supporting the investments into the development of human resources and modern systems of their management, are the following:

It is appropriate to base the projects on the principle of long-term existence and sustainability. Sustainability can be supported partly by educating employees in terms of the skills they can instantly use at work for their company and partly by targeting the projects at implementing sustainable processes of internal education and training in companies. In such case, training should become a part of the corporate culture and applicants asking for financial assistence from the HREOP should be able to describe the mechanisms which will lead to the sustainability of the training processes in the company. One of these mechanisms is to train internal lecturers; however, a good starting position must be at the same time created for the lecturers.

The most significant **findings and recommendations for the Priority Axis 2 – Active Labour Market Policy**, focused on the improvement of access to employment, permanent integration of people seeking employment and prevention of unemployment are the following:

It would be helpful to clarify demands regarding the ideal retraining course. Such a course should offer sufficient differentiation according to the level and it should be carefully chosen for individual participants. Certificates of quality proving the acquirement of skills are also suitable for positions on the labour market. In terms of time, retraining courses should correspond to the demands of the given

target group; for instance, it is necessary to take into consideration the need of some participants to pick their children up from kindergarten.

Nevertheless, the most important fact seems to be the interconnection of the retraining course with work experience of a short-term attachment. It is difficult, at present time, to find employment on the basis of retraining without having any professional experience. Work experience or short-term attachment should be designed not only as the source of knowledge for the participant of the project but also – from the point of view of the employer – as the opportunity to test the employee in question and to offer him or her a work contract if appropriate. In this way, beneficiaries should focus more on the contact with potential employers.

Since motivation becomes frequently higher as the result of participation in a project, it is appropriate to increase the assistance during job seeking so as to ensure continuity of project activities. This is possible by including such an intensive assistance in the project activities, as well as by taking over the increased initiative on the part of Employment Office (EO).

The most significant **findings and recommendations for the Priority Axis 3 – Social Integration and Equal Opportunities**, focused on assistance to people at risk of social exclusion, improving the quality and accessibility of social services and implementation of measures for managers in order to increase employability of these people, inclusive of pursuing equal opportunities for women and men on the labour market, are the following:

It is appropriate to increase basic competences, such as searching on the Internet, communication with authorities and offices and the like. This is important in order to increase independence and self-confidence. The beneficiary of the assistance should not perform any action instead of the participants of the project which they can easily perform by themselves. In many cases, it is also appropriate to interlink integration activities with employment projects.

We also recommend to support the cooperation of different organizations and to share the know-how. The problems which the participants of projects under the Priority Axis 3 face are often multifold and different organizations can have better capacity to deal with them in their complexity. Under the Priority Axis 3, it is not only important to deal with occurred problems but also to foresee related problems which could occur in near future and to prevent their occurrence. Projects of a too unilateral nature which are not based on a good mapping of the overall situation of the target group may fail in this regard.

The Final Report consists of Chapter 2 which summarizes the context and development of evaluation, and of Chapter 3 dedicated to the answers to given evaluation questions while the impacts on individual target groups can be found in Subchapter 3.1 and the impacts in individual priority axes in Subchapter 3.2. The entire Chapter 4 then describes the conclusions and recommendations. A part of the Final Report is also Appendix 1 Results of the Third Wave of Quantitative Survey conducted in 2013, Appendix 2 Results of Quantitative Survey for 2011-2013 (i.e. the comparison of results of individual waves in

time); Appendix 3 covers a detailed description of the development of the longitudinal study and Appendix 4 includes the Methodology of the Study. Appendix 5 contains the List of Evaluation Questions, Appendix 6 contains the List of the Target Groups, Appendix 7 introduces the trees of problems and persisting disputable themes in the field of intervention, and Appendix 8 is dedicated to the analysis itself describing the core of the problem of over-indebtedness of the target groups.

2 Introduction and Context

The submitted document is the Final Report (FR) of the commission "Continuous Long-term (Longitudinal) Study of the Effects of the Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme (HREOP) Support on Target Groups of the Programme" which was carried out from December 2010 till March 2013. The aim of the study was especially long-term research and evaluation of results and impacts of the HREOP, specifically of the Priority Axes 1 to 3[3], and the FR is its comprehensive outcome. The study is based on three waves of quantitative survey among beneficiaries of financial assistance, i.e. organizations implementing projects supported by financial resources from the HREOP, on two waves of qualitative survey among persons from the target groups of the HREOP and on the input of experts from academic, non-profit and private sectors who are engaged in the issues of the target groups.

The Final Report was preceded by the Initial Report containing the research proposal, as well as five interim reports, the first of which is based on pre-research (it included meeting of experts and analysis of secondary data), and the other four describe continuous knowledge development based on the individual waves of quantitative and qualitative surveys. The results of the third quantitative survey wave are described in detail in Appendix 1 of this FR[4] and are related to the results of the previous two quantitative survey waves (see Appendix 2). Appendix 3 also contains a concise summary of the individual interim reports, as well as the schedule of the research. Interim reports are also accessible to the (expert) public, in both, the full and shortened versions in the European Social Fund in the Czech Republic Forum (forum.esfcr.cz).

Both surveys, quantitative and qualitative, were of the nature of a longitudinal study, meaning that individual respondents were asked about the same issues repeatedly, always after a certain time interval. Thanks to this procedure, it was possible to monitor the development of the situation and attitudes of the specific entities, whether individuals from the target groups or organizations which organized activities supported by the HREOP for the target groups. The quantitative survey among organizations was carried out in the form of an online questionnaire where in the first survey wave (in 2011) all beneficiaries in the Priority Axes 1 to 3 of the HREOP were addressed and 315 respondents in total (representatives of organizations) took part in all three carried out waves. The qualitative survey was carried out in the form of "semi-structured" interviews and, so called, focus (or focal) groups and

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[3] The scope of the submitted study was limited already by the assignment of the public tender to three HREOP priority axes which are the following: Priority Axis 1 – Adaptability focused on prevention of unemployment by means of supporting the investments into the development of human resources and modern systems of their management; Priority Axis 2 – Active Labour Market Policy focused on improvement of access to employment, permanent integration of people seeking employment and prevention of unemployment of the groups at risk on the labour market; Priority Axis 3 – Social Integration and Equal Opportunities focused on assistance to people at risk of social exclusion, improving the quality and accessibility of social services and implementation of measures leading to increased employability of these people, inclusive of pursuing equal opportunities for women and men on the labour market.

[4] Appendices form an independent document.

165 respondents from the target groups took part in both carried out waves. The majority of respondents were persons who took part in project activities assisted by the HREOP; however, a part of respondents was composed of people not assisted by the HREOP, constituting a comparative group. Appendix 4 includes detailed information on the methodology of the study.

3 Findings and Answers to Evaluation Questions

This chapter contains answers to individual evaluation questions which formed the assignment of the study and which are listed in Appendix 5. Whenever the given evaluation question permitted, it is answered separately for each target group (see Chapter 3.1). Some other evaluation questions are answered separately for the individual HREOP priority axes dealt with in this study (see Chapter 3.2). Other evaluation questions are answered in the remaining part of Chapter 3.

3.1 Impacts on Individual Target Groups

This chapter gradually answers the following evaluation questions for the individual target groups: 3 (What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?), 4 (In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?), 5 (What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target groups?), 6 (What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?) and 12 (In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?). The list of all examined target groups is to be found in Appendix 6.

3.1.1 Employees of Small-sized and Medium-sized Businesses (SMB)
This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.1, page 14.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

This target group appreciates the possibility to expand its knowledge and skills, especially in the areas of computer literacy, foreign languages and the so called soft skills. These areas can be used in a wider context, not only at the current work. Generally, the potential risk of the persons of the target group becoming unemployed is thus successfully lowered.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

Members of this target group are usually under the impression that nothing would change were it not for the project activities, and that their employer, from the point of view of the long-term employee training process, does not follow up on the already launched training activities. At the same time, some members of the target group notice that they cannot really use the newly acquired knowledge and skills in their company and that by joining the project activities they have not become more useful or helpful for the company.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target groups?

The level of knowledge and skills regarding computer literacy and foreign languages, as well as the so called soft skills has been improved. In some cases, internal training processes have been successfully launched; however, it is not possible to state at present whether they will remain in the companies permanently, that is, also after the termination of the project.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

Especially computing skills (in most cases, it usually means working with office software) facilitate employees' work and this facilitation can be appreciated immediately after the end of the lesson because work using a computer belongs to the everyday routine of employees. The importance of learning such skills which can be immediately used at work becomes apparent. In some cases, it is also true for language learning. In other cases, language learning is appreciated mainly because it compensates a certain deficit felt especially by people of the middle generation and the elderly. Learning (the basics of) a foreign language increases their self-confidence also in the case when they would have to look for a new job because the knowledge of at least one foreign language is required very often. The launch of internal training processes and the training of internal lecturers are perceived positively especially by the lecturers themselves because the new task leads to the opportunity for their self-fulfilment and their feeling of responsibility. At the same time, the employer's support is important, especially in the sense that internal training and training in general should become the priority and also a part of the corporate culture that the employees understand and respect.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

Contrary to some other target groups, no distinctive change has been detected. Participation in project activities does not have the potential to change directly the lives of the employees of the small-sized and medium-sized businesses target group.

3.1.2   Job Seekers Kept on File at Employment Office and Other Job Seekers
This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.2, page 26.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

In this target group, it was possible to differentiate between short-term and long-term impacts. Short-term impacts are usually of positive nature and it is possible to generalize them for the entire target group in the following points:

1. Experience regarding a different type of cooperation from the one encountered by the individuals at Employment Office is positively appreciated.
2. Breaking from stereotypes occur partially; in some cases even from apathy.

3. Participants very often gain first experience with the fact that it is possible to formulate the type of problems that describes their specific life situation.
4. Individuals have the opportunity to discuss the entire scope of life problems, which has a positive impact on their motivation and determination for the future.

Furthermore, it was possible to identify long-term impacts where it is necessary to differentiate also sub-groups within the target group:

A. The (long-term) unemployed in combination with other manifestations of social exclusion
> In this sub-group, intervention contributes to the comprehensive solution of the life situation and to the creation of more long-term plans for the future (in contrast to the previous only short-term planning lacking clear perspective). It is possible to detect an increase of the ability to avoid crisis situations; participation in a project can serve as prevention of various risks, e.g., getting stuck in the debt trap.
B. Persons after parental leave (for more information see specific target group in Subchapter 3.1.19)
C. Unemployed persons who are kept on file at Employment Office, however, who more or less continuously work in illegal jobs ("moonlighting")
> The direct positive impacts of the projects are limited because the projects are very often unable to change the framework in which illegal employment is considered the only means of solving the employees' own situation. Illegal employment represents defensive strategy by those persons who otherwise faced frequent rejections on the labour market (e.g., the unqualified, the Roma people, persons with a criminal record, migrants) or the result is calculation according to which it is worth it (such is the case especially of the young who do not usually include the advantages of social insurance in the calculation).

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

Respondents are more frequently able to evaluate the provided assistance in terms of its short-term impact or in terms of its immediate impact; only a small number of respondents is able to create a sufficient time distance for their own, more long-term reflection. It is possible to describe the perception of the provided assistance in the following two points:

1. Respondents perceive the assistance as the current situation when they can use consultancy, acquire contacts and where they can be pleasantly taken out of the mundane course of events.
2. Respondents also make, at least partially, the distinction between this type of assistance and the common cooperation with Employment Office which is usually perceived negatively – more as a supervisory than assisting authority. On the contrary, the HREOP projects are perceived more strongly as helpful.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target groups?

Increase of communication skills, better orientation and general knowledge has occurred at the respondents. Another observed impact is the acquired experience regarding support outside the system of the centrally managed state administration. Likewise, it can be justifiably supposed that in many cases further social and personality failure of the target group is limited.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

Projects help the participants leave their common social environment, they open up new perspectives for them and offer them information which the participants are otherwise unable to obtain on their own; the projects possibly even teach the participants how to interpret such information. Such improvement of general knowledge is, of course, perceived positively because it provides the feeling of higher control over a life situation.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

From the short-term viewpoint, participants welcome the services which improve the quality of their lives or which bring them hope for its improvement. They are also successful, at least partially, in using the newly acquired potential arising from the training, new qualification or higher information awareness. This applies not only to direct job finding but also to dealing with other problems, e.g. problems regarding housing or debts. Motivation of the participants also becomes apparent, at least for a short time, the participants in projects are thus trying to improve their life situation.

From the long-term viewpoint, it is possible to speak about stabilization of the life situation and prevention of further social and personality failure. One of the specific forms of stabilization is, e.g. the arrangement of a payment schedule. At least part of the target group has changed their attitude. This is especially due to the better understanding of the current life situation. Although it is not a condition, successful problem solving regarding employment is helpful in this aspect and it is likely to influence the sustainability of the change in the participants' attitudes.

3.1.3   The Long-term Unemployed
This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.3, page 36.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

Also in this target group, it is possible to differentiate between the short-term and long-term impacts. The following can be labelled as the main short-term impacts:

1.   The respondents are taken out from passivity, their interest in life returns.

2. When at least a short-term employment is included in the project or when it is its outcome, the respondents' social habits are renewed; such habits are very often considerably weakened due to their frequently long-term absence from the labour market.
3. Self-confidence is increased.

The main long-term impacts which can occur in the target group in connection with the participation in the project activities are summed up in the following points:

1. The unemployed change their stereotypes.
2. Elderly respondents create a strategy to reach old-age (or disability) pension.
3. It is possible to observe creation of new social bonds among the course participants, but also within the subsequent subsidized position, if it is a part of the project.
4. Strategy of debt repayment or debt stabilization is created.
5. Knowledge and understanding regarding housing problems increases.
6. Respondents' own qualification improves.
7. In some cases, although they are not very frequent concerning the studied sample of respondents, a job position is found.[5]

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

First of all, the course participants are positively surprised by the unexpected attention they receive within the projects. In some cases, this arouses hope and the participants try to use the offered positives and solve the problems arising from their life situation. In other cases, the participants' attitude can be labelled rather as a routine use of the advantages without their own effort for sustainability or long-term impact.

After a time interval, a realistic evaluation of the participants' own abilities and chances on the labour market occurs more frequently, however, it is in many cases rather negative. Routine answers also occur, revealing that they were given based on the participants' supposition of what is expected from them.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

Stability can often be observed at persons who until then had been experiencing social failure (falls into debt traps, housing problems, etc.). The programmes conclusively help stabilize the participants' situation or at least slow down their failure; in some cases their situation has even been improved.

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[5] In the studied sample of respondents, 7 persons out of 93 in total found a job in between the surveys. The shifts among the target groups in between the survey waves are described in detail for each target group in the corresponding chapter of the Interim Report 5 (concerning the long-termed unemployed see Chap. 2.3).

In connection with this finding, it is also possible to identify conclusive changes regarding the participants' way of thinking – persons who due to their long-term unemployment had become passive and lost their working habits are upon the completion of some assistance programmes able to understand better their opportunities on the labour market as well as their entire life situation.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

Positive impacts can be created especially thanks to individual approach. Changes in the way of thinking take place especially when a bond between the participant and the project worker (very often a field social worker, FSW) is created and when mutual trust is successfully built. For this reason, it is suitable for the cooperation not to be only intermittent but of a continuous nature.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

From the short-term viewpoint, it is certainly possible to speak about the weakening of some stereotypes and motivation launching, although it is likely that in some cases motivation is manifested only on the outside. Specific aid to problem solving more or less connected with unemployment (debts, housing, lack of education) is also crucial.

Long-term impacts on the respondents' lives are very difficult to be supported with evidence, although their possible options were outlined within the answer to question EO3. In the case of qualitative survey, the increase in employment regarding the studied sample of respondents is not possible to be supported with evidence. With regard to the fact that the target group very often encounters reality bordering on shadow economy and other illegal activities, it can be assumed that the HREOP projects at least partially balance this type of work experience and if the participants are interested, the projects offer to change their life strategy.

3.1.4   Persons over 50 Years of Age
This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.4, page 45.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

In this target group, it is again possible to identify both short-term and (potentially) long-term impacts. Among the short-term impacts belong the following:

1. Breaking from loneliness is successful.
2. Breaking from apathy occurs as well as putting an end to personal deterioration.
3. Respondents appreciate the current opportunity to learn something; they show interest.

Long-term impacts are the following:

1. Ability to compare one's own situation with the others', as well as its realistic evaluation is improving.

2. Networking of acquaintances occurs, which may contribute to the breaking from of loneliness when ageing.
3. Ability and willingness to make use of even only occasional and short-term employment is improving.
4. Ability to create strategies for the time of retirement is improving.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

Respondents perceived the provided assistance in the first place as the opportunity to break from hopelessness and passivity, which are relatively frequent at this target group, and they also perceived it as the opportunity to newly direct their energy to certain specific, although only short-term goals.

It is evident that the assistance provided opportunities not only in the employment sphere (especially in the cases when subsidized employment was part of the project) but also regarding "self-understanding" as well as contact with others. The projects very often resulted in the fact that the people of the target group were able to think their situation over from a new perspective and after a time interval.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

An increase in activities regarding job search is evident in some cases of the respondents and at least for a certain period of time. The participants' common activities upon the termination of the project show, on the other hand, an increase in activities regarding the social area.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

Breaking from the fixed routine which regarding the target group often has the form of a passive "existence" is a common cause of the positive impacts. For instance, the respondents provided information that even though they were unemployed they were not able to do more work at home compared to when they went to work. Social contact and also the experience nature of some of the projects are also perceived positively.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

From the short-term viewpoint, the participation in a project was a welcome stimulus or a pleasant change. In many cases, it aroused the feeling of opportunity and a break from passivity, sometimes even accompanied with an excessive expectation.

From the long-term viewpoint, the awareness of lower competitive ability in relation to the young remains, which is true especially in terms of foreign language and digital technology knowledge, however, in some cases it is balanced out by the recognition that it does not have to mean that they are "fatally" left out "in the cold". Some of the respondents also recognized that they cannot depend on

experience which no one fully appreciates but that it is worthwhile to use all opportunities they encounter. In this target group, it has been very often observed that the participants are willing to accept a less qualified or appreciated employment compared to what the individual used to do in the past.

3.1.5 Young People from 15 to 25 Years of Age

This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.5, page 55.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

In this target group, the impact of the HREOP assistance can be identified only with regard to the specifics of its subgroups. Regarding students, it was connected especially with successful cases when a return to studying at a secondary school was secured; which was achieved by social-activation services for families with children; in the case of persons trying to find a job, there were cases when a job was found (three cases were recorded). On the whole, it is possible to evaluate also the acts conducted towards the target group within field (social) work; these included especially debt consultancy and assistance with sustaining or searching for a new housing, or more precisely, rental relation. Within the survey, it was only marginally successful to find individuals taking part in short-term attachments in companies who are supposed to encourage the accordance between the qualification of the young and the demands of the labour market. Thus, work experience training still remains insufficiently used.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

Clients of low-threshold facilities and street-work (social) programmes appreciated the provided assistance. Although they were not often able to determine that the subsidy was from HREOP and would associate the provided assistance especially with the specific institution or with the specific (street) social worker, their positive evaluation of the provided services was unequivocal especially in cases of debt consultancy and housing where the intervention was successful (arrangement of a payment schedule or legal assistance). Subjective evaluation of a subgroup of employees under 25 years of age was specific; they expressed their satisfaction with the practical applicability of the gained knowledge during training courses.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

Evidence/proofs of objectively positive impacts of the assistance to the target group can be found in street-work diaries and records of low-threshold facilities, or alternatively also in evaluation of activities conducted by organizations engaged with projects supported by the HREOP.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

Especially the possibility to build relations based on trust, partnership and emphasis of responsibility for one's own life within the project activities belong among the causes of positive impacts. Problems of the target group may be partially caused by the fact that young people are not given recognition from the part of society which adults experience but which young people start to claim when they reach a certain age. The very challenge to take on responsibility for one's own life and the support based on the principle of a pseudo equal partnership signify new experience for young people which is different from the school environment and can contribute to the achievement of positive changes.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

Lives of the participants of the projects were influenced (changed) especially on their social and psychological level when they experienced a comprehensive support, were given self-confidence and increase in motivation. It is possible to speak about an unequivocal positive life change in the case when the participants returned to their studies or employment.

3.1.6   People under 26 Years of Age Growing up without Families, People Leaving Facilities of Institutional or Protective Care

This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.6, page 63.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

The impacts concern search for employment, housing, and overall motivation of the project activities participants. However, especially in the field of search for employment the project success rate is rather limited and the sustainability of the effects of the projects is difficult.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

During the surveys, disappointment has very often been recorded in the cases when the completion of a retraining course did not culminate in finding employment. Subsequently, respondents expressed themselves in the sense of work preference without a legal contract ("moonlighting"). Consultancy and assistance during the search for and arrangement of housing, as well as support during the creation of household management schemes were evaluated positively.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

The time limited stabilization of clients, especially in the field of housing arrangement, serves as the evidence of the objective contribution of the provided services. The arrangement of a long-term rental relation was usually not the case, nevertheless, the arrangement was made in the so called asylum houses or halfway houses. The possibility to use these institutions is time limited, however, so the

positive effect of the project may not be sustainable if the clients are not successful in finding a different means of stabilization, e.g. employment, during the given time period.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

The causes of positive impacts are similar to those of the previous target group, i.e. to young people from 15 to 25 years of age. Persons leaving facilities of institutional care stand at an important life crossroads and a properly set-up project can help them accept the status of an adult person who is responsible for his or her own life and who must be able to handle the knowledge and understanding of life. The assistance must be, at the same time, psychologically sensitive because persons from this target group may have difficulties in coming to terms with the handicap they feel as opposed to the young people who grew up in a family environment.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

It is not clear from the conducted surveys what life change the participants eventually experience. The possibility of acquired housing is time limited and after a time interval it seems that scepticism prevails regarding the possibilities to find a decent and legal employment. Insufficient education, lack of work experience and the absence of support from the part of the family or social networks create disadvantages which the projects are not successful in compensating to the fullest, rather, only in reducing them. With regard to the current overall difficult situation on the labour market, this is not often enough. As a result of the institutional care, the target group lacks independence, therefore, the respondents would welcome practice housing and work at sheltered workshops.

3.1.7   Persons with Health Disability, Persons with Chronic Mental Illness
This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.7, page 69.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

Impacts on the target group can be derived from the attitudes of workers for organizations implementing projects within the HREOP and from the members of the target group itself. In both cases, both unequivocally positive evaluations as well as entirely sceptical evaluations occur. The common denominator is the experience that an illness or disability results in financial difficulties which are felt both in reality and in terms of worries and fear of their possible (future) impacts. The unequivocal recommendation is to invest in protected work places which are practically the only (direct and indirect) "tangible" result of the implemented projects.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

Worries about any type of change are typical for the target group. It becomes clear from the experience of the physically or mentally disabled. In recent years, financial aid has been limited while the cost of living has been increasing; therefore, all changes have been only for the worse. The fear of health

checkups and possible revocation of financial assistance has occurred in many individual cases. That is why certain distrust towards offers aimed at the improvement of their situation prevails. Especially when the assistance does not bring about clear outcomes, e.g. the possibility of being employed, it is regarded with distrust and worries.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

Projects which directly offered employment to the respondents are perceived both by their implementers and persons of the target group as the evidence of the HREOP efficiency.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

Health disability can be overcome more easily if it is not connected with social exclusion and financial problems. Employment is the very effective prevention of both.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

In two specific recorded examples of finding a job (in a sheltered restaurant and a call centre), a positive change in the lives of the persons from the target group occurred. This positive change is moreover multiplied by the continuation of the employment even after the termination of the assistance from "European money". The project supported by the HREOP was in these cases able to help stabilize the clients' lives and it gave them a new direction and sense.

3.1.8   People Leaving Prison
This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.8, page 75.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

Both short-term positive impacts of the projects and impacts with long-term potential were identified in the target group. The short-term impacts can be summed up in the following points:

1. A huge asset is the break of isolation. A "safe space" is very often created within the project; it allows for an open communication about problems and worries, as well as the possibility to acquire specific assistance which can lead to the opening of further opportunities to improve the psychical state and the overall situation of the individual (including search of employment, assistance with solving housing problems, dealing with authorities and the like).
2. Projects mean helping the participants getting used to the situation outside prison.

A number of impacts can become stabilized and be of a long-term influence. The long-term impacts are the following:

1. Knowledge and understanding of themes connected with long-term life strategies (housing, employment, family) have been improved at the respondents.
2. We observe demonstrations of the effort to socialize (e.g. certificate of a course completion and the like); this can lead to a better perception of the respondent by the potential employer.
3. Voluntariness and, at the same time, the request of regularity (commitment) in the programmes gradually lead to taking on responsibility and to the creation of social and working habits.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

The respondents themselves appreciated the opportunity they were given owing to the project. They especially appreciated the unexpected assistance in knowledge and understanding when dealing with housing issues. For some of them, it was the first experience with the fact that someone strange can help them artlessly. In some cases, the participants in project activities can use what they are offered only pragmatically.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

Steps heading to better socialization can be seen at least at a part of the respondents. These steps are connected with the reflection upon their own situation to which the project contributed. During the first phase after the return from prison, the project sometimes functions as a basic safety net providing background and hopefully also lowering the risk of recidivism, although the research could not prove it unequivocally because of the small number of respondents and the survey time limit.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

The situation of the persons leaving prison is difficult. This is, unfortunately, supported also by the legislation which enables employers to request a clear criminal record even in the cases when it has no justification and when it rather contributes to the deepening of social exclusion and when the released persons are left with illegal forms of employment. That is why some of them are able to appreciate and respect the assistance.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

So far, recidivism has not occurred at most of the persons, on the contrary, tendencies towards the creation of more long-term life schedules and a stabilized life model are apparent. It seems that the projects can have a stabilizing and a direction giving function for the lives of the participants after their return from prison, and that even in the relatively poor conditions of partial social exclusion.

3.1.9 Victims of Violence and Crime

This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.9, page 80.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

New life circumstances and the need for knowledge and understanding of situations which are legally, as well as psychologically difficult arise for the persons who have become the victims of violence or crime. The assistance is subjectively perceived with gratitude, however, the respondents' overall frame of mind and evaluation of their life situation are influenced especially by the fact how the government is able to protect the victims at least retrospectively, i.e. to protect them from the consequences of victimization. If the government fails, people are overcome by the feeling that rules are set conveniently for "the villains". In such situations, the potential of the impacts of the projects is especially psychological. At other times, the very projects can contribute to the fact that the citizen's claim for justice is satisfied.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

People appreciate the manifested sympathy or interest and assistance regarding knowledge and understanding in an unclear situation that very often means the need for psychological recovery in combination with the need to communicate with authorities.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

A positive impact is the improvement of their psychological state and the facilitation of the communication with authorities.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

Dealing with the situation is difficult for the target group not only because of the fact itself that they have become the victims of a criminal or violent offence, which very often results in the decrease of trust towards other people, but also for the reason that they have to contend with authorities, which is for them very often a new and not quite clear situation. The assistance from the part of the projects restores their trust in society and provides strength to actively handle the impacts of victimization.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

Answering this question is difficult. The change of the participants' lives depends especially on the impacts of the criminal or violent offence of which they have become the victims. The extent to which the projects are successful in turning or easing this negative change can be judged only on the basis of the participants' statements about their psychological relief or relief when dealing with authorities. Based on the statements, it is possible to conclude that a certain limited compensation of the negative

changes caused by a criminal or violent offence comes about as a result of the projects. Nevertheless, it is not possible to differentiate between the impact of the project and the impact of time.

3.1.10 Addicted Persons (to drugs and the like) and Persons at Risk of Addiction

This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.10, page 85.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

Also in the case of this target group, it is self-suggestive to apply the time criterion to the possible impacts of the projects and to differentiate between the short-term and long-term impacts. The short-term impacts involve the immediate danger of the drug addiction in itself; that is especially the provision of a basic safety net and reduction of withdrawal states which represent the risk of returning to the usage of toxic substances. From the long-term viewpoint, the projects can help with the creation of a realistic idea regarding everyday life. This is connected with the significance of the assistance while seeking employment.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceived the provided assistance?

Respondents perceived the provided assistance as something unexpected, as something they cannot claim automatically but rather perceive it as a gift. The projects provided them with background to overcome inner doubts and social rooting-out. Since the individuals from the target group are recommended to avoid the "old" social ties connected to drug use, the building of a new social net has especially a considerable importance.

From a time interval, respondents then perceive the assistance as a commitment towards themselves and those who helped them. Chance for a new beginning is very often connected with gratitude.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

Despite the small size of the studied sample, cases of successful socialization have occurred among the respondents, which would not have been possible without the help of the projects.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

Persons from the target group are usually conscious of their own fault leading to the addiction, so they gratefully accept any type of assistance as something which is not obvious.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

Impacts on the lives of the participants of the projects were manifested immediately together with the participants' awareness of being given a new chance and with the opportunity to share their problems with other people. From the long-term viewpoint, it is necessary to work with the fact that within the

project, a strong and potentially long-term bond arises; such bond is fixed on the entities who at the beginning gave the person in question the support he or she needed. The participants' motivation for sustainability of the impacts of the project and for further development of their partial success is strong. They are aware that possible recidivism causes a personality fall into antisocial behaviour which is incomparable with other types of social exclusion. For the participants, there is thus no "middle way" between success and failure. They know that they cannot rely on some "middle" trajectory of progress. The target group clearly shows positive features of taking on responsibility in connection with a new beginning.

3.1.11 <u>Persons without Home</u>

This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.11, page 90.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

A long-time steady growth of people without home is recorded in the Czech Republic. As a consequence of the HREOP projects, however, it is possible to identify only limited and partial positive changes or impacts on the target group. These impacts are connected especially with projects supporting night shelter (or more precisely accommodation) and the provision of food, clothes, hygiene supplies and the possibility to do basic personal hygiene. In theory, it is possible in such cases to express in numbers the acts which otherwise would have highly unlikely been done. With regard to the complexity of the problems of the target group, it is very difficult to evaluate other forms of support, such as psychological, consultancy and personality support (very often provided under the form of field social work). Actually, a very good result can be very often only the stabilization of the situation that is both for the target person and the evaluator very inconspicuous.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

It is clear from the statements of the persons of the target group that they appreciate direct material (tangible) assistance; indirect assistance is accepted with more difficulties. In connection with the experienced crisis situation, which homelessness represents, conditions for understanding the concept and the effectiveness of the assistance, such as, e. g. CV writing courses, are disrupted.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

The contribution of the impacts lies in the prevention against the worst consequences of homelessness, which is the aggravation of physical, as well as psychological state of health, and that primarily during the winter months. It is prevention or alleviation of, literally, the existential crisis that can be a beneficial impact of the HREOP projects. Projects limited by time are expected to bring about a limited alleviation of some problems, however, these projects are significant for sustaining motivation and the renewal of trust in the possibility to change the situation, especially concerning the persons who have not yet accepted homelessness as a way of life (life strategy).

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

Considering the mostly one-time impacts which are of a crisis solving nature, it is not possible to look for deeper causes behind them. Therefore, it is possible to ask about the causes; why the impacts are not of a long-term character. It is given by the fact that the HREOP projects are time limited which can in some cases pose a hindrance to long-term duration of intervention. Long-term impacts, on the other hand, are limited by the extent of social rooting-out and cut off from the majority society. The gap between society and persons without home is very often too deep.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

The projects can stabilize the situation and thus make the return to "normal" life easier in the case when the individuals succeed in securing a more long-term employment that helps them pay for a leased accommodation. The HREOP funding beneficiaries' representatives, i.e. organizations supported by projects, expressed themselves in the sense that the way the HREOP is set does not allow for a long-term work with their clients, which is what this target group requires. As a result, critical assistance is more likely to be provided. Long-term social work, which would lead to rehabilitation, does not have too strong a support in the HREOP.

Remark: According to the last census (2011, published by the Czech Statistical Office in February 2013), about eleven thousand people without home live (or, more precisely move) in the Czech Republic. In their strategic documents, municipalities (e.g. the city of Prague) count on a steady rise of the number of the homeless. In the sample of respondents, there were recorded even cases testifying to the fact that homelessness has for some persons become a life strategy that they do not intend to change, however, the people for whom the loss of home is a negatively perceived consequence of a number of problems and risks prevail; public and social policies should concentrate on the latter. In the case of homelessness, prevention actually seems to be a much more effective tool than "post-hoc" programmes that solve only with difficulties the complex "entanglement" of the mutually strengthening problems. That is to say, persons without home end up in a situation when it is not quite well possible to make a difference between causes and consequences because unemployment and inability to find employment, missing background, neglected appearance, lack of financial means, absence of motivation and trust and life apathy mutually support and amplify each other.

3.1.12 Immigrants, Refugees, Foreigners and Ethnic Minorities (except the Roma People)
This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.12, page 97.

As it was stated in the Interim Report 3 (p. 60), it has not been successful to address a refugee within the target group. This limiting factor of the research was compensated by consultations with experts and by the study of expert documents, see the Interim report 3, ibid. Nevertheless, answers to evaluation questions below are based on interviews with immigrants who are not refugees. It follows that there are some labour-law restrictions concerning the group.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

Regarding this target group, the impact of the assistance is unequivocal: language courses and aid in dealing with authorities are an evident positive of the projects and help the clients move up in terms of social (and legal) issues. Employment counselling is more difficult. Involvement in the labour market is, in fact, limited by restrictions resulting from the law, so that the possibility of a legal employment of foreigners outside the EU is conditioned by the willingness of the employer to handle formal requirements. Therefore, it is possible to consider supporting employers to deal with formal requirements as a tool for making immigrants employed more easily.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

Members of the target group positively appreciate the provided assistance, also even in the cases when it cannot influence their decision whether to remain in the territory of the Czech Republic or whether to leave it.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

Such evidence is undoubtedly the strengthening of negotiation and language skills of the target group members whose primary problem is exactly language barrier. It leads to alleviating or removing helplessness when communicating with authorities and the respondents evaluate it as an unequivocal asset.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

Similarly to the target group of persons addicted to drugs or at risk of addiction, the impacts of the projects are perceived positively because the participants feel gratitude that is strengthened by the fact that the assistance is not perceived as something granted, as something the participants of the projects could naturally claim. The assistance is not accepted in those cases when the individuals feel that they cannot lose time on the project because they have to work in order to feed their families. In such cases, they prefer to choose an illegal "moonlighting" employment rather than the project.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

Successful assistance when dealing with authorities, as well as legal counselling had a fundamental influence on the members of the projects. If dealing with authorities is successful, such activities can really bring about a life change for the participants of the target group.

3.1.13 The Roma People and Persons from a Different Sociocultural Environment
This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.14, page 102.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

The principal impact of the assistance is the possibility to identify the individuals and families at risk and to try to stabilize their situation. Due to the complex nature of the dealt-with problems, the support of the target group must also be multilateral. On that account, there is not much point in quantifying the implemented acts. Of more importance is to find the clients through field (social) work, as well as the joint finding of a possible appropriate (achievable) way of solving the complexity of problems that are very similar to the target group of the long-term unemployed. (Unmanageable) indebtedness occurs, loss of housing is imminent, as well as other critical factors including discrimination of the target group.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

Members of the target group are mostly not able to differentiate between the assistance from the projects subsidized by the HREOP and the complexity of activities of especially field (social) workers who have already been providing services to the major part of the affected clients for a long time (i.e. prior to the launch of the HREOP). From the part of the target group, the assistance is appreciated especially in the cases when it results in securing material help (e.g. material need benefits), finding employment, stabilization of debt problems, prevention of distrainment or representation in the court (assistance during legal proceedings). With regard to a considerable intersection of this target group with the target group of the long-term unemployed (see Chap. 3.1.3.), it is here also possible in some cases to describe the participants' attitude rather as routine, or more precisely as continuous advantage-taking of the offered services.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

A conclusive and beneficial impact of the project is finding (or more precisely securing) employment for a number of clients as well as, in many other cases, arranging access to performing public service. Another positive contribution is the stabilization of the clients and their families at least for the duration of the assistance subsidized by HREOP with a potential more long-term effect. The stabilization typically involves the sustainability of rental relations (housing), stabilization of debt problems and stabilization of neighbourly coexistence.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

It is possible to see the causes in the long-term cooperation, which often preceded even the projects themselves and which is likely to continue also after their termination. The assistance is mostly of a stabilizing character; meaning that it seldom results in a considerable improvement of the situation.

Investment in education and motivation of the Roma children can be considered an effective strategy with long-term impacts on alleviation of social exclusion of the Roma people. It is possible to expect the impacts of such strategies only within a long-term period.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

The lives of the participants of the projects have been influenced over a long period and they have been formed by a long-standing (and the HREOP preceding) cooperation with the providers of social and consulting services. Therefore, it is difficult to speak about a clearly defined change which would occur in their lives (or which would be possible to observe) exactly only during the time of the assistance of projects subsidized by the HREOP. A considerable impact of the long-term cooperation with the target group is also the prevention of aggravation which is with regard to the dynamics of the studied problems in effect imminent; unsolved debts lead to distrainment which leads to the loss of housing and taking the children to institutional care.

Note: The target group consists of so many intersections of other target groups that the characteristics of its state is rather a summary of the characteristics of persons unemployed for a long time, over-indebted persons, persons insufficiently qualified, without housing security etc. However, the fact that these risks occur so often especially in this target group clearly points to the persisting exclusion of the Roma people from the majority of society. That is why it is appropriate to support this target group with complex programmes that will take into consideration not only the partial problems but that will also target the overall improvement of the position of the target group in the Czech society. In opposite case, it is almost clear that the apparent problems regarding unemployment, housing, debts and the like will pass from one generation to another.

3.1.14 Persons Caring for a Relative or for Dependent Family Members Including Children up to 15 Years of Age

This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.14, page 108.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

Impacts on the target group can be of a diverse nature because the projects have not always been focused on finding employment and at the same time the respondents have often fallen under more target groups, so that more unfavourable factors were connected with the need of care, e.g. unemployment, the Roma ethnicity, insufficient qualification, indebtedness, health disability etc. The number of the critical factors then influences the scope of the impacts of the projects. Among the short-term impacts, it is possible to classify alleviation, e.g. in the form of kick-off seminars for parents with disabled children, as well as sharing of experience, next is also prevention of the burn-out syndrome. From the long-term impacts viewpoint, soft skills have been acquired, specifically e.g. learning of effective ways of relaxation. On other occasions, it was the case of e.g. assistance with the situation of indebtedness, writing down a CV when finding a job post or arrangement of temporary jobs

or jobs for a definite period of time. Overall, it is possible to evaluate the impacts as positive, even though they often do not solve the main existential problems of the target group.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

On the whole, the members of the target group perceived the assistance positively, however, the evaluation of the female respondents differs in specific points according to other characteristics of their situation. They evaluate positively especially the psychological support, break from isolation, break from the stereotype of care taking, then the high level of expertise and individual approach of the lecturers and assistant staff; apart from that also the possibility to share their own experience with others who are in a similar situation, and based on the experience of others come to terms with their own problems in a better way.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

The improvement of the psychological state of the caring persons occurs; it is important as prevention of the burn-out syndrome. In other cases, motivation when finding employment increases which is connected with the acquirement of new skills, e.g. behaviour at job interviews or writing CVs as well as with a better general knowledge regarding information technology (information literacy). In some cases, starting a job occurs shortly after the termination of the project; in other cases, it was successful to stabilize or at least start to solve problems regarding debts.

The social scope is also important, i.e. social contact within the project itself as well as acquirement of contacts which can lead to their continuation also after the termination of the project. Overall, the increase of self-confidence is evident in some persons.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

The already manifested interest in the target group and its problems definitely plays a certain role in the positive impacts of the projects. Members of this target group in general suffer from insufficient recognition from the part of the society regarding the work connected with the care of children, elderly people and other dependent persons. A positively evaluated project is guided by the attempt to compensate this and also to function as a certain appraisal towards the caring persons as well.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

As a consequence of the project, several women found a paid employment, even though it was very often employment of a short-term nature that does not solve their financial and housing situation from the long-term standpoint; despite this fact they still evaluated this change positively. Also the other impacts described above can be considered a life change for a number of participants (especially female participants) of the projects.

3.1.15 **Teaching Assistants**

This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.18, page 133.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

From the comparison of the situation of respondents assisted and not assisted by HREOP[6], it follows that even respondents not assisted by the HREOP usually took part in trainings subsidized by other resources. As a result, the identification of impacts on the target group is a little more difficult; on the other hand, it follows that the offer regarding trainings for the target group is likely to be rather favourable. Training completion, whether subsidized by the HREOP or by other resources, contributes to the stabilization of job placement of teaching assistants. By contract, a serious problem regarding the stability of job posts of teaching assistants is the lack of financial means for their salaries.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

The subjective perception of the provided assistance was influenced by the fact that the participants in training activities often evaluated their attendance only as fulfilment of their work duty. This is connected with a rather negative evaluation of the projects from their part: they would prefer the aid rather in the form of a salary increase. The allocation of larger funds to salaries would moreover secure other work posts for teaching assistants.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

With regard to the educational character of the areas of the assistance, the contribution (impact) can be found especially in terms of acquirement of new knowledge and skills by the target group, as well as their implementation in practice when working with children. Part of the trained teaching assistants is exposed to the risks of social exclusion (the excluded), especially if it is the case of the Roma people or of persons from "low-income" or the long-term unemployed groups (families, communities). Therefore, their participation in educational activities means also the stabilization of their work post.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

It was not successful to identify other than the quite evident causes of the positive impacts. In contrast to the target group of field social workers, it does not seem that the offer of trainings would effectively function as non-financial remuneration that could in the respondents' eyes at least partially compensate

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[6] Respondents assisted by HREOP are those respondents who took part in the project activities financed by HREOP. By contrast, not assisted respondents did not take part in such activities, which, however, does not mean that they did not take part in projects not assisted by HREOP.

financial remuneration. However, it is possible that this difference is caused rather by individual differences among the respondents in both target groups.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

It was not successful to identify unequivocal changes in the lives of all participants. From the point of view of their life trajectories, the courses were more of a stabilizing character. Nevertheless, in the last decade, the target group has been the target of trainings of many non-state non-profit organizations and the area of aid limited to educational activities is not perceived by the training assistants as sufficiently beneficial.

3.1.16 <u>Field Social Workers</u>
This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.18, page 133.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

Considering the educational character of the areas of the assistance, its impact lies especially in the acquirement of new knowledge and skills by the target group and their implementation in practice when working with clients. Similarly to the target group of training assistants, part of the trained field (social) workers is also exposed to the risks of social "exclusion", and that again especially if it is the case of members of various critical groups. That is why their participation in the training activities also meant the stabilization of their job post.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

The trained field (social) workers perceived the provided assistance as a tool for stabilization of their job post that is often under the form of a work contract for a definite period of time. The contracts are at the same time actually linked to the funds acquired by the organization where the field social worker works. From this viewpoint, not even an increase of qualification can be a guarantee for sustaining the job position. It is also necessary to take into consideration the fact that some field social workers contemplate a change of career due to the insufficient financial remuneration and the high physical demands of the work.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

The improved starting position of field (social) workers towards their employers has become one aspect of the contribution of the educational activities; and last but not least also the expanded ability in communication and other skills connected with the performance of this profession. The increased ability to react to clients' needs is of course one of the aspects of the indirect contribution.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

The project activities offered to the target group may serve as a certain non-financial remuneration of their work because they indirectly confirm that the work is of a qualified nature that requires continuous learning.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

The work of field social workers is characterized especially by insufficient financial remuneration due to the way of financing social services provided by non-state non-profit organizations. In this respect, the completion of a certified training is an unequivocal asset for achieving even greater stability of placing the participants in employment, however, it is more the case of stabilization rather than of change.

3.1.17 Volunteers

This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.5, page 55 (within TG young people from 15 to 25 years of age).

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

Volunteers, mostly to be found among young people, are possible to be divided into two categories. Regarding the first category, voluntarism is especially an alternative to employment which the individuals are unsuccessful in finding. Volunteering programmes were supposed to serve as a means of acquiring work habits, as well as the possibility to prove oneself at least with some work experience to the potential employer. This model, at the times of economic crisis when the unemployment rate is relatively high even among people having work experience, does not prove very effective.

Regarding the second group of volunteers, idealism and the desire to help are possible to be seen behind volunteering. This is especially the case of secondary and university students who are e.g. in their free time willing to help with giving remedial classes in families at risk of social exclusion where the children cannot turn to their parents with the request of help regarding their management of school duties. In this group, we encounter satisfaction with the work done which leads to the improvement of school results. Impacts of the assistance of such activities can partially compensate the educational gap that otherwise occurs already from the kindergarten age between children from a disadvantaged social background and children from middle social classes; children from a disadvantaged social background usually do not attend a kindergarten; and such gap increases further during the attendance of a primary school.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

The assistance is perceived primarily as a framework enabling the volunteers to join in, or possibly as a factor enabling them to join in the partial affiliated activities of supervisors in order to gain new knowledge and skills. Nevertheless, volunteers are motivated to the activities especially by

self-motivation (whether the reason is the need to acquire work experience or whether they want and are willing to help selflessly). Satisfaction from the work done occurs especially with volunteers who give remedial classes; they would be likely to operate in this way even without the implementation of the project.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

Evidence of the objectively positive impacts occurs especially with volunteers who are devoted to giving remedial classes and are evident from the volunteers' statements who express happiness about the improvement of the school results of their students.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

Similarly to the target group of the young people under 25 years of age, the main cause of the positive evaluation of the impacts of the project can be the fact that thanks to the involvement, the target group of (young) volunteers experiences the forming of the status of an "adult" person who can help and contribute to some change for the better. Granting the status of an adult can lead to more mature and more responsible behaviour of an individual.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

It was not successful to show that volunteering would directly influence finding employment thanks to the acquired work experience. The potential life change rather concerns a new look at oneself as somebody who can be useful.

3.1.18 Start-up Entrepreneurs
This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.17, page 127.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

There is a number of impacts on this target group. In some cases, the projects lead to the setting up an enterprise which perhaps can be taken as their main goal. Besides, the participants are trained further, they learn new skills and acquire basic knowledge and understanding in matters necessary for a successful running of an enterprise, such as accounting and law. A very important activity is business plan consultancy which enables a more realistic assessment of their plans. Work experience in companies is evaluated positively by the participants if it really enables them to acquire knowledge and understanding of the company activity and its duties. Moreover, impacts of social and personal characteristics occur as well. Female participants (the programmes are usually attended by women) are taken out of a stereotype, or social isolation which some of them had experienced as the result of child-caring. Overall, motivation and self-confidence is increased. On the other hand, a significant fact is that the female participants within the project activities find out (or become to realize better) that as

entrepreneurs they have no rightful claim to holiday if they do not pay insurance, that they do not even have rightful claim to sick leave, child-care and the like. For some it means unexpected demands regarding the change of their life style. In confrontation of these demands, some female participants hesitate whether to postpone their business ambitions.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

The subjective perception of the assistance was unequivocally positive at the target group. The female participants welcomed the fact that all costs were paid for; for example, they realized that legal consultancy they received is otherwise very expensive.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

Objective impact is the acquirement of new skills needed for business activities and in some cases especially the start-up of an enterprise.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

The impacts are evaluated positively especially when they are connected with a demonstration in practice and when they offer not only the theory but also an overall clear idea based on life experience regarding what running an enterprise involves.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

The greatest change has obviously occurred in the cases when setting up an enterprise really followed the project activities. Increased motivation is also a change with which the female participants plan to start an enterprise when they return from a parental leave.

3.1.19 Parents Returning from Parental Leave to Labour Market
This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.15, page 115.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

The impacts on the target group can be divided into skill-based and social. Concerning the skill-based, there are various skills useful when finding a job, such as writing CVs and cover letters, handling job interviews and the like. Social impacts involve the increase of self-confidence, acquirement of social contacts or re-engagement with life outside the family (some participants have experienced even ten years spending on parental leave).

The positive impacts are not always of a long-term nature. The acquired job is very often for a definite period of time or in the form of an agreement which means a considerable insecurity for the future

regarding the situation of the subsidized persons – this insecurity involves not only employment but also financial means the family needs to cover their life needs.

The impacts differ according to education. For instance, for a woman who graduated from university, the acquirement of the so called soft skills, re-gaining self-confidence and the like are more important. For women of insufficient qualification, the involvement in the project can mean a "break through" in the sense of acquiring (or increasing) specialized education under the form of a retraining course and finding employment. Finding employment is on the other hand difficult even after the completion of a retraining course and it does not definitely occur automatically in connection with the participation in the project. The lack of work experience is very often a hindrance that employers require along with retraining. The impacts are then rather partial; they do not solve the main problems of the target group, e.g. inaccessibility of child-care services, discrimination of mothers of young children and the lack of shortened and flexible work contracts on the labour market.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

From the subjective point of view, the assistance is perceived positively. In some cases the participants (or more precisely, more frequently female participants) stay in contact with the organization through which they joined the project even when the project has terminated. The change of environment and the opportunity to perceive one's situation from a new angle, the opportunity to make a new career decision and to draw inspiration from others who have experienced a similar situation are appreciated. Shortages are sometimes perceived in the composition of the programme: some courses or lectures are perceived as needless or redundant (e.g. regarding the environment), others are missing (e.g. financial literacy). Evaluations differ also according to the education (e.g. basic computer courses were not of use for a woman who graduated from university; she probably did not have the opportunity to acquire a more advanced training within the project which would correspond to her needs).

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

Self-confidence and qualification are increased, sometimes even employment is found, even though most often only for a definite period of time without any guarantee to prolong the work contract, which causes insecurity. In general, the projects lead to a higher activity when finding employment or increasing qualification.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

The involvement in the project is very often perceived as a significant milestone in the life of the participant, symbolically as a transfer from parental leave towards the labour market. Especially in the cases when a previous career had been interrupted and there is what to follow up on, strong motivation

to re-starting the previous activities and performance is connected with the change. The project is then the more successful, the better it can work with this motivation.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

A positive change occurs in the lives of the participants: increase of qualification, acquirement of employment, improvement the financial situation, acquirement of soft skills or expansion of knowledge and understanding.

3.1.20 Lone Parents

This target group is described in detail in the Interim Report 5, Chap. 2.16, page 121.

EO3. What impact of the selected assistance areas can be identified on target groups?

The answer to this question is very similar to the one in the case of the target groups of persons caring for a relative and parents returning from parental leave. The impacts are various, in fact positive; if more disadvantageous factors occur together, the assistance should be more complex to achieve more distinct results.

EO4. In what ways did the target groups themselves subjectively perceive the provided assistance?

Also regarding the subjective perception of the assistance, there is a number of similarities concerning this target group with the two previous target groups. The assistance is perceived positively; the course participants (or again more precisely female participants) appreciate the support when acquiring employment, in some cases also the child-care service during the activities. Child-care is in the case of this target group entirely up to them and so even finding employment and solving of other problems, e.g. even arranging the benefits at authorities when the children are not in the kindergarten or when the participants have no help with the care, is made more difficult.

The respondents appreciated that somebody else helped them solve problems ("they are not stuck without help") and even that they acquire new social contacts. Should they again find themselves without employment in the future, they express their trust in the fact that they could return to ask for help to the organizers of the project who had helped them.

EO5. What evidence / proofs can be found regarding the objectively positive and useful impacts on the target group?

Among such impacts belong the increase of education, improvement of psychological state, increase of motivation and self-confidence; in some cases employment is found, although it is not possible to state to what extent it is due to the programme they were involved in.

EO6. What are the causes of these impacts and what are the causes of their positive perception, or, more precisely, who and under what conditions perceives them positively?

The causes of the positive impacts are a combination of reasons that we observe at the target groups of parents returning from parental leave and persons caring for a relative or dependent family members. A certain role plays also the manifested interest connected with recognition, while the project is often perceived as a possible turn in the participant's life enabling implementation of the activities that were until then unthinkable (mainly for time and financial reasons). These activities include for example also investment into self-education or solving long-term postponed problems.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

The changes in the participants' lives depend directly on the financial situation of the family. Since they are the sole breadwinners in the family, the acquirement of employment and a steady income from work – in combination with the possibility to place the child into a daily care facility – are the fundamental condition for a decent survival of the family as unit (keeping housing included).

In some cases, the situation is more complicated because of the combination of more various disadvantageous characteristics (e.g. poor state of health, the Roma ethnicity). Regarding a job post, specific requirements arising from the need to care of children can also be a hindrance. Such case is for example the requirement for a part-time job, work location close to home, work without shifts and the like.

3.2 Impacts on Individual Priority Axes

3.2.1 Priority Axis 1

EO7. What negative impacts of individual assistance areas can be identified?

Negative impacts are rather partial and most often result from the project management. In some cases, the implementation time of projects was not conveniently chosen, such as a project launch falling, e.g. on holidays when employees were substituting their colleagues on leave and their participation in the projects made their situation even more complicated. However, in every company the inconvenient time is different. The projects could have also had negative impact on employees who did not join the projects directly but who had to substitute for the participants absent due to the project activities.

Disappointed expectations can be another negative impact. When the project ends, an opinion may occur after a certain time interval among the employees that the project has not brought any changes and has not especially helped them in their work. Such an attitude may decrease employees' willingness to participate in the educational activities in the future (whether related to a project or within an internal training of employees).

EO8. What are reasons of such impacts and what are reasons for their negative perception, or who and on what conditions perceives them in a negative way?

If the training activities are not a usual and regular part of the employees' job description, they are often perceived as useless, especially in the case of trainings that do not create an instant added value and cannot be instantly used at work. Most of the time, one-time trainings within the projects thus cause pressure on untrained employees who are not meant to be trained at all (they do not join the project) and are not necessarily acquainted with the projects' objectives. Therefore, the option of training internal lecturers may prove to be functional, because such lecturers are able to coordinate training activities in a complex way, knowing company's procedures and current educational needs.

EO9. What unintended impacts of individual assistance areas can be identified?

Apart from the above negative impacts, the research has not identified unintended impacts in a definite way. It is possible that employees may start thinking more about their role in the company thanks to the projects, and would become loyal. Companies, as beneficiaries of financial assistance, have often complained about too big administrative burden related to the project, which could have been shifted to employees. One of the unintended results of the administrative burden could be worse evaluation of the project activities after some time when the negative perception of the project spreading "from on high" prevails. This is, however, rather an assumption which has not been formulated by any respondent. Moreover, as results from the quantitative research among the beneficiaries, the projects are generally perceived in a positive way; the administrative burden which is evaluated by the organizations relatively critically is rather an exception among the evaluated items.

EO10. How can such unintended impacts be evaluated, what were their reasons and what conclusions can be made for the future programming of such public assistance?

Reduction of administrative burden would probably be welcome on the part of the companies and could increase positive evaluation of the projects. On the part of the training activities providers such an attitude should be supported, which would, apart from developing employees' skills, concentrate on the employees' way of thinking and their motivation. Such projects may only be prepared in close cooperation with the company's management which has the vision of the company's performance and understands its corporate culture. On the ground of this statement, such projects may be recommended which are based on introduction of the internal procedures and preparation of the internal lecturers.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

As a result, lives of the projects participants in the Priority Axis 1 have not changed in a dramatic way, usually only a partial change occurred resulting from improving their position on the labour market. Some participants showed satisfaction with being awarded a certificate which could help them in case that they have to or want to find a new job. From the point of view of procedures applied in the workplace nothing much usually changed for regular project participants; only trainings in computing skills facilitated work to some of the participants and improved their performance. Another case is trainings for internal lecturers. Here, job description of some employees was modified as a result of projects focused on creation of new internal lecturer capacities (the employees became internal lecturers), and their career orientation changed.

3.2.2   Priority Axis 2
EO7. What negative impacts of individual assistance areas can be identified?

Negative impacts may be observed with some beneficiaries (such as retrainees) in the sense that when the instruments of the active labour policy do not culminate in employment, such people in the short term lose hope and motivation to actively seek their jobs (deepening frustration).

EO8. What are reasons of such impacts and what are reasons for their negative perception, or who and on what conditions perceives them in a negative way?

The project may cause positive expectations in the participants. This should actually be one of its objectives since it is difficult to work with motivation without expecting success. Disappointed expectations, which occur quite frequently, are thus not an issue of the project itself but rather of the situation on the labour market where it can be very difficult to find a job.

EO9. What unintended impacts of individual assistance areas can be identified?

With regards to the aftermath of the economic crisis over the last years (during HREOP 2007–2013), the total number of the unemployed people is on the rise. Effort, time and finance invested in the active labour policy – aid to concrete people – unfortunately does not bring the expected results of finding new

jobs. Joining the retraining course does not automatically mean certain or, at least, a very probable chance of finding a vacancy.

EO10. How can such unintended impacts be evaluated, what were their reasons and what conclusions can be made for the future programming of such public assistance?

Certain delay in reaction of public policies to the real economic situation is a natural effect of the planning periods. Such a limitation then makes it difficult to draw all conclusions for the future programming of the public assistance. The recommendations formulated above (EO7) to focus public support on winning work experience and creating new job opportunities thus work on the assumption that the economic situation in the next programming period will be similar.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

A part of the participants have experienced a positive change (finding jobs) but for persons who have failed to find their employment even if they joined the projects, the situation in the short term is rather more negative in the sense of a higher risk of their indebtedness, housing problems and, especially, worsening of their psychological state as a result of disappointed expectations caused by involving in the project.

3.2.3   Priority Axis 3

EO7. What negative impacts of individual assistance areas can be identified?

As another negative impact may be considered deeper mistrust in Employment Office, which sometimes mediates participation in the projects but, most of the times, without providing sufficient information, forces respondents to decide about their participation hurriedly etc. In most cases Employment Office was not able to inform about existence of other organizations (including PO3 beneficiaries) and refer to their services.

EO8. What are reasons of such impacts and what are reasons for their negative perception, or who and on what conditions perceives them in a negative way?

A number of respondents still experience rather formalistic and not always friendly attitude of Employment Office, which is then compared with mostly individual attitude and services provided by the beneficiaries (organizations) within the project. We cannot draw too general conclusions since the respondents from the target groups were often quite satisfied but it seems that there is still space for improvement in this area, at least in the mutual communication between these entities.

EO9. What unintended impacts of individual assistance areas can be identified?

Strong focus of aid on increasing qualification and skills in the target group persons who often suffer from low self-confidence due to the fact that they were staying outside the labour market for a long time, may, in the beginning, have a motivational effect but it sometimes causes unrealistic expectations.

When the persons are unsuccessful, they again feel hopeless or "convince" themselves that they are to be blamed for everything. There is a lack of focus on structural problems of the labour market or removing deficiencies with the employers (such as retraining courses in the labour-law legislation, namely, i.e. how to lead the job interview without discriminating the applicants).

In connection with the projects positive support is often received in the areas that are not their primary target. It is, for example, a psychological support thanks to the contact with the project researchers or informal consultancy in the financial matters. Similarly, the respondents often appreciate the possibility of exchanging experience with people finding themselves in a similar situation.

EO10. How can such unintended impacts be evaluated, what were their reasons and what conclusions can be made for the future programming of such public assistance?

The above mentioned negative unintended impacts may only be avoided with difficulties. Managing lack of success may be mitigated by not causing unrealistic expectations in the project. On the other hand, the project should be motivating, so certain portion of optimism is relevant. Identified positive unintended impacts may be programmed by the Managing Authority only partially. Psychic support or informal consultancy beyond the scope of the project often depends rather on the personality of the lecturer or a social worker. In any case, it is appropriate to support individual approach.

EO12. In what ways did the lives of the participants in the projects change as a result?

It is difficult to answer this evaluation question for the Priority Axis 3 as a whole because there were individuals for whom projects meant different changes in their lives[7] even in the individual target groups. A common problem which the individuals in the Priority Axis 3 often face is unemployment. Despite project activities persons in most of the target groups face substantial problems when looking for a job, whether due to their advanced age, lack of experience, responsibility to take care of a dependant person, long-term absence on the labour market, insufficient qualification, bad health condition or discrimination due to belonging to ethnic minority. Unemployment is connected with housing problems, debts, family life issues etc. We cannot speak about a causal relation but rather about a concurrence of problems when one arising problem leads to another.

In many cases, projects bring a positive change only thanks to the fact that the individual problems start to be solved, in some cases with a relatively complex approach. The priority is to find at least some income and at least some experience so that the situation starts improving. If no employment is available, stabilization of the situation is often the best possible result, whereas it is not clear to what extent the situation can be sustained. Fundamental change of life may occur specifically when a

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[7] The case studies for individual target groups of the Priority Axis 3 are a part of the Interim Report 5 (Chap. 2). To see amendments to answers to this evaluation question, please go to the Appendix 7 that in the form of a list of issues summarizes topics resulting from diagrams of problems identified already in the Interim Report 1 and that remain topical even now when the study has been finalized.

permanent employment has been found, which means at least some certainty. Unfortunately, this is relatively very infrequent.

In some individuals from the Priority Axis 3 target groups the projects, in fact, compensate disadvantages that are results of long-term reasons, such as neglected school attendance, inappropriate upbringing etc. It is important to provide direct help to such persons but, on the other hand, we should not disregard the possibility of prevention focused on children and minors, i.e. in the form of remedial lessons, education of parents in educational competences and extension of the option of the institutional care to a substitute family care instead. Since the attendants may be endangered in some of these activities with adverse stigmatization, such activities would have to be thoroughly prepared under the supervision of professionals.

Indebtedness is a substantial problem, or over-indebtedness (overburden with debt), as a consequence of which interventions tend to be inefficient, such persons give up finding legal jobs and their motivation generally declines. We consider this problem among socially disadvantaged families so serious that we have dedicated the whole Appendix 8 to system reasons which cause it. We believe that apart from an intensive solution of indebtedness within the project activities a system change must be pursued.

3.3 Results and Impacts of the Programme

EO11. What concrete change did the Programme bring? (What concrete results did the Programme bring?[8])

Concrete results and changes that the programme brought, derived from impacts on target groups and individual programme participants, are, above all, following:

- Knowledge and skills of a substantial part of assisted persons were enhanced; both in the form of targeted trainings and courses[9], and in the form of targeted consultations and counselling provided (incl. debt) leading to increase of general knowledge[10]; in more than 60 % organizations the options of training for organization employees[11] grew. Application in the field and sustainability is, however, different, reflecting appropriateness of the chosen content, such as the current work position in the company, [12] or changeability of life situations of people and their environment (e.g. legislative). For some participants (especially the elderly[13]) i.e. soft skills course was their first training or course they had ever attended other than related to their profession.

- For most participants joining the project was a strong impetus, which, at least in the short-term period, led to breaking from stereotype and passiveness[14], or from loneliness, frustration and apathy[15], and helped their motivation and creation of informal groups, including sharing experience with common problem solving[16]. The participants thus found time for themselves and thinking about new viewpoints of their situation, which may be considered of a key importance especially in persons caring for a relative (incl. children)[17].

- That is closely connected with providing help to target groups which need, apart from psychological support, i.e., (temporary) housing assistance[18] or intervention in terms of the field

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[8] The original question was extended with regards to its direct connection to the following: EO1. In what way and to what extent is the Programme responsible for (or is a reason of) observed (observable) results? and EO2. To what extent do the observed results correspond with the expected results?

[9] See especially TG employees (Chap. 3.1.1), applicants (Chap. 3.1.2) or specific TG, such as parents returning after parental holiday (Chap. 3.1.19) and start-up entrepreneurs (Chap. 3.1.18)

[10] It is especially TG in the Priority Axis 3 (see impacts in Chap. 3.2.3)

[11] See Appendix 2 (Chap. 2.1 Development of evaluation of changes as a result of project implementation, page 26)

[12] See e.g. TG Employees (Chap. 3.1.1 and Interim Report 5 (Chap. 2.1.2.2))

[13] See e.g. TG People over 50 years of age (Chap. 3.1.4 a Interim Report 5 (Chap. 2.4.2.2))

[14] See e.g. TG The long-term unemployed (Chap. 3.1.2)

[15] See e.g. TG The long-term unemployed (Chap. 3.1.2), People over 50 years of age (3.1.4), Lone Parents (Chap. 3.1.20)

[16] See e.g. TG Persons caring for a family relative (Chap. 3.1.14)

[17] See e.g. TG Lone parents (Chap. 3.1.20) and Parents returning from parental leave (Chap. 3.1.19)

[18] See e.g. TG Young people from 15 to 25 years of age (kap. 3.1.5), growing up without families (3.1.6) and People leaving prison (3.1.8), or, as the case may be, Persons without home (Chap. 3.1.11)

social work. Issues connected with poverty or financial problems leading to fall into debts, distraint, successive housing issues, family and psychological issues were solved repeatedly[19].

- In some participants[20] joining the project led to their unrealistic ideas about their future career and unrealistic general expectations, which, when the project ended and no job was found, caused at least a short-term frustration.

- Experience with the project and project organizer different from the Employment Office (in the job seekers or long-term unemployed[21]) enabled often more individual attitude leading to a solution of urgent issues (especially financial) or, at least, stopping such persons' failure and increase of their ability to avoid crisis situations. At the same time, cooperation among the beneficiaries (organizations) became more intensive, with regards to the necessity of solving complex problems in the given locality or region.

- Only exceptionally (within the intervention PO1[22]) the internal training processes were launched, however, most organizations stated that implementation of projects meant a positive change in their operation (about 60 to 65 % organizations depending on the survey waves[23]).

- Services were developed, especially in relation to social services in PO3. With about 55 % the number of offered services increased as a result of implementation of the projects.[24] Furthermore, around 75 to 80 % organizations stated that, as a result of implementation of the HREOP projects, it was possible to influence more individuals, and about 40 % organizations thanks to the HREOP focused on new target groups.

- About one third of organizations state that the number of employees[25] increased as a result of organizing the project. That is directly connected with positions that were created within the implementation of the project and project agenda, while about 60 % organizations state that, as a result of implementation of the HREOP projects, a substantial or almost excessive growth of administration burden occurred. Nevertheless, only in a few cases[26] within the target groups jobs were found, out of which some were only short-term jobs or short-term attachments (though projects often focused on the increase of employability, not on finding employment).

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[19] See especially impacts in the Priority Axis 3 (Chap.3.2.3)
[20] See especially impacts on target groups of the Priority Axis 2 (Chap. 3.2.2) and TG The long-term unemployed (Chap. 3.1.2 and Interim Report 5 (Chap. 2.3.2.2)
[21] See Chap. 3.1.2 and 3.1.3
[22] ditto
[23] See Appendix 2 (Chap. 2.1 Development of evaluation of changes as a result of implementation of the projects)
[24] ditto
[25] ditto, page 23
[26] See TG The long-term unemployed (Chap. 3.1.2)

EO1. In what way and to what extent is the Programme responsible for (or is a reason of) observed (observable) results?

In relation to the above results (EO11) the results of the observed Programme may be best summarized according to the categories of individual Priority Axis. The intervention in the **Priority Axis 1,** at least in the mid-term period, led to improvement of qualification of employees and training activities within organizations involved in the projects, above all beyond the area of obligatory certifications and trainings in professional fields. The Programme also enabled more blanket improvement of qualification thanks to the possibility of training provided to the whole groups of employees, not only selected individuals.

At the same time, the Programme enabled the organization to respond to decline of further professional training which occurred after finalization of the intervention (project) and to take into account educational needs in the future, which may have positive impacts in the sense of pressure applied on the company management and on allocation of appropriate long-term expenses into this area.

From the long-term point of view results (and impacts) of the Programme depend on sustainability of the training system and processes within companies. As an ideal state may be considered situation when project activities lead to creating professional experienced, within the company, appreciated and regularly used team of internal lecturers. However, project sustainability is often limited by being a (one-time) supply of external services for a fee when no internal training team is created (or, as the case may be, it was not the project's objective to create one). Repetition of such projects, if any, then depends on availability of financial sources and the obtained added value is fixed "only" to the trained employees. Looking at the labour market in the Czech Republic generally, even this can be considered as a positive result of the Programme. However, looking from the perspective of a concrete company, an employee who undergoes one-time tailored training and decides to leave may cause a serious issue because if this company fails to find a job applicant in the labour market with a similar profile, it will be forced to invest its financial means into a new training or cancel the position.

Interventions in the **Priority Axis 2 and 3** are significantly different as for the target groups and supported activities. Thanks to the Programme this area was significantly developed, especially as for number, type and extent of services offered by beneficiaries in the concrete local or regional context. At the same time, networks of organizations and services are created which may achieve both, more effective involvement of target groups, and ability to provide qualified information service when complex help is needed. At present time, there is, in fact, no other tool than the HREOP projects which would intervene in this way, apart from social services by law and purely commercial services oriented mostly on other target groups. Despite such interventions may be perceived as "saving", as an extended portfolio of services. A long-term local application of the Programme through the beneficiaries thus leads to a higher visibility (as well as accessibility) of activities and services.

The identified problem is the fact that work opportunities for the target groups in the Priority Axis 2 and Priority Axis 3 (with regards to slowing down of economics and increased stress on qualification and

performance) are not created on the labour market. Also, the Programme intervention focused mostly on reinforcing of employability rather than employment. The declared willingness of the unemployed persons involved in the projects not only to seek jobs but, mainly, find it (and to work) is an essential finding; on one side, that means, there is willingness to participate in the project promising finding a job and, on the other side, there are expectations of target groups that employment respecting concrete limitations of individuals (from health to time limitations) would lead to solving their problems[27].

In this connection there is another important finding that winning even a short-term job leads to (with only minor exceptions) significant strengthening of an employed person's position in all respects – from the psychological part, through the motivational part to, of course, the financial situation. As opposed to that, retraining and training supported within the Programme, especially the repeated ones and not reflecting the real condition of the labour market in the concrete region or locality, bring only limited results. It is only the work process where people learn to maintain or reinforce their work habits, obtain work experience, acquire necessary (self) organizing and time management skills. At the same time, it is a way of creating social relations and freeing oneself from social isolation.

In this respect the projects can be considered as instruments suitable for implementation on the labour market, even at the price of creating short-term jobs and short-term attachment positions (including flexible workloads) and, of course, with support of social enterprise. Furthermore, it is necessary to consider the fact that long-term use (making use) of only supportive tools – such as help with finding a job – may lead on the part of target groups to growing passivity and/or gratuitous and excessive retraining; this hypothesis is supported[28] by views of beneficiaries and subsidized persons.

External influence beyond the reach of the Programme is particularly a total change of the socioeconomic environment caused by economic slowdown and legislative changes, especially within the force of the Employment Act, Social Services Act, Act on the Employment Office of the Czech Republic etc., i.e., general setting of the social system in the Czech Republic[29]. Despite these are external influences, for individual target groups, and especially for the unemployed persons or persons at risk of unemployment, every similar change is connected with uncertainty and necessity to (pro)actively find out effects of such changes on individuals and, ideally, to understand the character of such changes. Excessive number of changes (or failure to notice or understand such changes) thus has a negative impact on motivation of target groups and their ability to avoid crisis situations. From the point of view of the implementation of projects and Programme as a whole, any such change of conditions causes necessity to solve similar crisis situations repeatedly, even with the same assisted persons.

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[27] This fact has been confirmed by beneficiaries when only approx. one quarter of respondents mention a problem of involving target groups into the project activities (see Appendix 2, Chap. 2.2., Development of opinions on HREOP).

[28] See again Appendix 2, Chap. 2.2.

[29] In the poll survey, most organizations marked the legislative conditions as a factor preventing efficient implementation of projects (34% organizations in 2011, 39 % in 2013). On the contrary, only much smaller part of respondents (up to 20 %) thought that legislative conditions were beneficial for projects' implementation.

Relatively many organizations (about 30 %) describe the HREOP setting (and potential of projects to bring effective intervention) as a negative factor, however organizations that perceived the HREOP setting as positive prevailed here (about 45 %)[30]. Apart from the HREOP funding, also motivation and attitudes of the target groups may be described as definitely positive factors from the point of view of projects' implementation.

Adverse financial situation of some social services providers and of non-profit organizations providing similar services may be presented as another external factor. The results of quantitative survey show a direct decline of a number of employees or their redundancies[31] in organizations which have not received any assistance and which may be used as a comparative group in 2012, or as an indicator of the condition in the social services and human resources in the HREOP area in question. Gainful employment (labelled as the main income) probably does not cover the costs. There were fewer of assisted organizations who used HREOP funds exclusively and, on the contrary, there were more of those who covered from HREOP less than 5 % of their total expenses on work with the target groups[32]. However, it was not sufficiently proven whether these organizations also achieved a better position in the market and more quality background and whether they increased quality of human resources. As results from the open answers, a number of beneficiaries face financial problems due to implementation of the projects. Long delays between expected due dates and real payment dates cause serious problems with cash flow of these organizations, project bearers, which, de facto, cannot be operatively solved (especially considering the status of bank sector and difficulties with obtaining loans or finding a different solution). Such problems then directly reflect in functioning of organizations and projects' implementation and, in fact, have a direct influence on observable results of the Programme.

EO2. To what extent do the observed results correspond with the expected results?

When comparing Programme objectives or objectives of individual surveyed Priority Axes, several essential facts were found out in the observed results, which may be described as not corresponding to the expected results.

In relation to the Priority Axis 1 – Adaptability[33] it seems that some companies repeatedly draw funding from projects (including HREOP projects) for the human resource development and such funding represents prevailing part of costs on education[34]. Apart from one-time trainings by external firms, internal capacities of lecturers and human resource management generally were created or reinforced

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[30] For more details see Appendix 2 (Chap. 2.2 Development of opinions on HREOP)

[31] For details see Interim Report 4, Chap. 3.2.3

[32] For details see Appendix 2 (Chap. 2.3 Development of HREOP funds share in financing)

[33] The global objective of the Priority Axis is "Increase of adaptability of employees and employers". Specific objectives are: increase in level of professional knowledge, skills and competences of employees and employers; Increase in adaptability of employees at risk of unemployment and employers of retructured companies (Programming Document)

[34] For details see Appendix 2, Chap. 2.3 Development of HREOP funds share in financing (for PO1 especially the graph P.49)

less often. With regards to time limitations of the project, to keep such activities, it is either necessary to obtain another project or directly earmark enough funds by the firm management with a clear purpose of investing into human resources. In other case the sustainability of such activities (especially in their extent) is disputable. Based on the analysis of the obtained quantitative data, it is not evident that there are essential impacts resulting in a better strategic approach towards human resource development management in companies (especially in small and medium-sized companies), i.e., reduction of financial dependence on projects. It also seems that the rank-and-file employees were trained more often than the companies' management[35], which may result (and results) to inefficiency of newly acquired knowledge of trained persons and, in the long-term period, deficit on the part of the employer, or management structures within organizations.

Intervention in the Priority Axis 2 – Active Labour Market Policy[36] was significantly influenced by changes on the labour market caused by the economic slump, especially by no existing vacancies in professions targeted by retraining courses. Retraining courses realized within the Programme were not linked to the requirement (necessity) to mediate, even short-term, subsequent work positions. At the same time, mass training implementation was enabled without ensuring sufficient quality, which led, among other, to considerable worsening of public opinion about retraining (and about quality of retrainees' knowledge). The result is a considerable number of retrainees whose situation did not improve and, in some cases, their psychological condition in a short term even worsened. In the area of employment it was evidenced that the change of work position ("transition") on the labour market requires significant motivation and demanding work with information, in whatever form (electronically, over the telephone, personally); with the system being complicated and complex, it rather causes contrary tendencies, i.e., it has the effect of demotivation when people become passive if not provided complex individual help. Issues of the target groups thus accumulate very fast, especially in relation to increasing financial problems (including debt traps) and also associated psychological and family issues.

Generally, the question of poverty was not solved strategically within the Programme, or of mechanisms leading to decline in living standard below its border and, consequently, to social exclusion. Intervention in the Priority Axis 3 – Social Integration and Equal Opportunities[37] included rather development and providing of services and support of mechanisms that were to solve partial crisis life situations of the Programme's target groups. With regards to the intervention nature (especially its non-investment nature and time of the projects stretching to several years), the result is only "safety" activities and certain protective action. Similarly as the above mentioned interventions of the Priority Axis 2, the

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[35] See e.g. TG Employees (Chap. 3.1.1) and Interim Report 5 (Chap. 2.1.2.2)

[36] The global objective of the Priority Axes is "Improvement of attitude towards employment and prevention of unemployment". Specific objectives: Increase in employability of the unemployed persons or persons endangered on the labour market through an effective and targeted use of instruments and measures of the active labour policy, Increase in capacity, complexity and quality of services provided by institutions for employment services. (Programming Document)

[37] The global objective of this Priority Axis is "Reinforcing of integration of persons at risk of social exclusion or socially excluded". (Programming Document)

Programme's result is rather temporary reinforcement of employability of target groups (in this respect due to the target groups' sub-characteristics or their combinations endangering their employment on the labour market). With regards to no existing relation to vacancies and sufficient financial aid it is only a matter of time when the situation of the assisted persons becomes again critical.

3.4 Efficiency of Intervention

EO13. How efficient were the results achieved?

Beneficiaries (organizations) evaluate the HREOP as a meaningful instrument of solving target groups' situations, the existence of which prevents deteriorating their situation. However, it is evidenced that this evaluation by organizations slightly worsens in time. While in 2011 it was 33 % of respondents who absolutely agreed and 60 % who rather agreed that "the HREOP means a meaningful way of solving situation of the Programme's target groups", in 2013 "only" 25 % of respondents absolutely agreed with this statement. At the same time, the percentage of those who rather agreed grew slightly to 64 %. There are no differences between individual waves in evaluating whether the situation of respondents would worsen if it were not for the HREOP, when approximately 75 % of representatives of organizations agree steadily with the statement. For more information see Chapter 2.2, Appendix 2, graphs P.35 to P.37 and the accompanying text. The meaningfulness of the HREOP is more or less confirmed by concrete case studies of assisted persons (see Interim Report 5).

The mechanisms of allocating funds through the calls focused on target groups and evaluation on the national level without considering regional needs proves to be questionable (as well as support of project interventions). In their applications, applicants were obliged to substantiate why their projects were needed, including relations to the needs of the target groups in the concrete geographic area, however, the subsequent selection procedure a priori worked neither with national strategic needs nor the regional context. That necessarily leads to increase of competition among applicants (competition is nationwide) and decreases probability of implementation of projects in the regions where intervention could be classified as of a high priority (such a project has no advantage).

Mechanisms of bonuses related to Integrated Urban Development Plans (IUDP) cannot be considered effective because different quality (or even existence) of such plans within Czech cities and towns was not taken into consideration at all. Projects with a regional focus where funds were distributed by regional authorities within selection procedures can hardly be labelled projects defined as "activities leading to change". In most cases such projects were only a mechanism of administering current social services by current providers under the same conditions.

At the same time, administrative burden of organizations (beneficiaries) could be reduced, though even by optimizing procedures of mutual communication when implementing projects, i.e. optimization and systemization of management of changes in projects and approval procedure of monitoring news. Both procedures were managed with inappropriate instruments (e.g. communication through repeated email exchanges), which must have burdened both sides and had provable negative impacts on

implementation of some projects. But in fact, more efficient methods are known and are used as a standard means of communication in project management (or project management systems)[38].

The setting of the implementation structure to process a relatively high number of applications responding to the call announced seems also questionable. Again, optimization in this area would contribute to higher efficiency and, as the case may be, better focus on interim quality checks of the implementation procedure (in the sense of interim evaluation of real status of the implementation, not only of formalities).

EO14. What sustainability of these results can be estimated and under what conditions will such results be sustainable? Can sustainability of results be increased? In what way?

The answer to this question depends on individual target groups or, at least, on individual priority axes. Within the **Priority Axis 1** we may successfully talk about sustainability of concrete skills which employees acquire and are able to instantly use. For instance, enhanced computing skills for use of office software are maintained by using the software. The issue is sustaining educational procedures as such. If the intervention aims to be more than one-time event and strives to apply continuous and sustainable educational procedures reaching beyond the period of the project, it is appropriate that training becomes a part of the corporate culture. Of course, this may be achieved only in cooperation with the company's managers who must be interested in it. This may not be realistically expected in all companies but where the management is supportive, it is appropriate to aim such a project support (call) at the organizational change. It is potential synergy effect with support of social innovations that is closely connected with the change of the corporate culture, or, at least, support of social responsibility of companies and social enterprise. In other cases, acquiring of skills that may be used instantly at work may be considered as a sufficient proof of sustainability.

In the **Priority Axis 2** the sustainability of results is generally more difficult. Projects increase motivation when looking for work but any motivation increase has always its time limitations. It largely depends on whether a job is found in a reasonable period of time after attending the project. Certain level of project results sustainability may be ensured by awarding a quality certificate on acquired skills. Another option is to renew (update) such a certificate in regular intervals by passing a renewal examination.

Sustainability of intervention in the **Priority Axis 3** is the most complex issue. Partly the point is acquiring motivation as in the Priority Axis 2, partly it is stabilizing a crisis life situation when such a person faces, e.g. distraint or loss of housing, partly the point is changing view of life and way of thinking towards greater responsibility, and partly it is a better way of dealing with difficult life situations and higher independence. Increasing responsibility, improving orientation and reinforcing independence are qualities whose acquiring promises a certain level of intervention sustainability. To acquire them, a long-

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[38] In the area of project management there are standards (i.e. ISO 10006, ISO 21500, ISO 31000), as well as a number of certificates, related methodologies of project management and software instruments ensuring adherence to binding procedures. These can be adapted for the needs of the HREOP.

term cooperation is needed when such a participant needs to create relationship with a lecturer or a social worker based on trust. From this point of view, it is appropriate to enable long-term activities that lead to building trust.

EO15. Would it be possible to achieve results more efficiently with different means?

In relation to the above EO14. we may say that higher efficiency could be achieved by increasing stress on strategic national priorities and regional needs when selecting projects, as well as by optimizing procedures, especially those related to the implementation of projects (it is, above all, the monitoring procedure which is closely connected to projects' funding). This can be accomplished by improving the current means, no other means need to be implemented.

In relation to the general lack of vacancies (as a result of economic slowdown) and also lack of part-time jobs or jobs with flexible working hours, it is appropriate to focus more on support of creation of new jobs (or maintaining the current ones), as well as on more frequent availability of short-term attachments and work experience within projects. This, however, does not mean that intervention could only be realized on the level of projects focused on creating and maintaining jobs. Unemployment is a frequent issue of the observed target groups but we cannot say it is the only reason for all other difficulties. Many a time it is rather their consequence. Therefore, it is more appropriate to speak about mutual influence of various problems on one another in the target groups. This also requires maintaining complex solutions focused on different issues and their combinations. To sum it up, it is necessary to focus on the procedure, not only on one of its symptoms.

EO16. What would happen had the intervention not been implemented?

From the point of view of representatives of organizations, the HREOP projects are of a vital importance, if the situation of the target groups is not to keep worsening. Both, assisted and unassisted organizations agree on this. Impacts on organizations may be estimated especially from the percentage the HREOP funding represents in the total volume of sources allocated for solution of the target groups' situation. With regards to a generally very high share of the HREOP sources[39], it is obvious that in case the intervention had not been implemented, quality and ability to compete of the Czech workforce would drop (in relation to no performance of activities focused on enhancing qualification and skills' development of employees and the unemployed) and there could be a significant growth in number of individuals (or households) who would reach the poverty line and, consequently, their social status would significantly drop.

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[39] In the survey questionnaire most of the unassisted organizations responded that they used especially their own sources from gainful activities (62 % of answers), further donations, various subsidies from other sources, sponsorhip and other sources. 75 % of unassisted organizations use a maximum of two sources (one source of funding is used by 54 % of organizations, two sources by 21 % of organizations). It is therefore probable that the organizations would be able to provide for their (partial) funding.

In the target group of the employed persons, project's implementation is often perceived rather as nice-to-have, and absence of a project does not mean an instant redundancy or a fundamental life change for these persons. However, from the viewpoint of the company's management, the role of development of human resources considering rank and file employees is perceived more intensively and the role of the project as more important, especially with regard to the need of investing in human resource development, even though in a minimum rate.[40]

On the part of job seekers it is possible to find a certain "mental linkage" to the package of services for the unemployed guaranteed by the government, i.e. in case the projects were not implemented, there would be different instruments ensuring similar services, even though in a different scope and quality. Attitudes of target groups in the Priority Axis 3 can be perceived in a completely different way – possible lack of the HREOP funding could lead to the abovementioned serious socio-cultural impacts. This fact has also been articulated by respondents from these target groups, in relation to practical life situations and projects' impacts or interventions reacting on them.

Remark: When considering results of surveys among the projects unassisted under HREOP, we must stress that especially in the groups with a specific problem (such as the long-term unemployed, persons without home, drug addicts etc.) when such a problem is not solved, it always deteriorates. The reason has been repeatedly mentioned: it is mainly accumulation of problems, especially gradual running into debts, related issues with housing, often followed by breakage of family background, worsening of health condition, including psychological condition and motivation. Any intervention may be perceived as a step taken in a positive direction or, at least, a postponement (if not a final solution) of a critical life situation of the given person. Even a short-term improvement may be evaluated as successful intervention.

The secondary impact would be a significant fall in a number of jobs for project managers positions, their assistants and specialized positions related to supported activities (such as, i.e. lecturers, field workers etc.) In this case, the extent of the HREOP based intervention could not be replaced from any other source, especially due to continuing recession and related unwillingness (or impossibility) of the private sector to invest in human resource development and/or support of public beneficial activities responding to the HREOP intervention focus. However, it may be assumed that the use of the existing mechanisms would rise of active labour policy with impact on the state budget and of activation of the civil sector. We cannot say that if no interventions were implemented, no activities would be put into practice, but it is probable that their creation would be much more closely connected with limited local and regional needs and they would definitely be implemented to a limited extent.

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[40] However, the company managers tend to join the implemented projects to a limited extent, therefore, if no intervention occurs, it would probably have no essential influence on the way of management of their organizations and on their corporate culture.

3.5 System of Target Groups

EO17. Are all target groups represented in the Programme?

The Programme enables focusing on any assisted person; however, the current system of target groups shows significant problems. The reason is the fact that neither the programming nor implementing documents represent a comprehensive system of target groups, only categories are provided (without definitions) and indicative lists of groups falling into this classification according to various characteristics and types of problems[41]. The target groups are then defined to reflect the requirements of concrete calls. Relations, dependencies and overlapping among target groups are not subject to a systematic examination, definition and focus. Our survey evidences that it is the current classification when certain respondents can concurrently fall into more target groups (especially in case of accumulation of their problems that represent the criteria of classification in some target groups) which significantly influences complete responses of respondents and, as a result, efficiency of a concrete intervention, as well. Generally, the target group should only serve as an additional tool, e.g. for monitoring reasons but not as the main definition criterion of the call (the concrete issue should always play that role). This is connected with the issue of changing the status (or classification into target groups) of concrete projects' participants in time. In the current setting the solution is that such applicants must wait to be included in the project's activities when the project has already started or, on the contrary, they can be suddenly eliminated from the aided target group even if their life situation has, de facto, not changed[42].

Furthermore, some concrete groups were identified which have not been sufficiently addressed by calls, especially from the point of view of HREOP funding beneficiaries representatives: seniors, various specific groups of employees (such as employees of micro and small businesses, employees of large corporations) or self-employed persons, children and youth under 15 years of age (who are directly addressed only through a direct support of their parents and care persons), persons with alternative punishments imposed by Czech courts, surrogate families, university graduates, middle-age persons until 40 years of age, the short-term unemployed etc. Chronically indebted (over-indebted) persons and persons living under the poverty line may also fall into the above spectrum.

EO18. Are there groups excluded from HREOP? If yes, how can they be included in HREOP?

In the Interim Report 3 and 4 the hypothesis of existence of target groups not covered or ignored by HREOP was evidenced. They were identified by organizations representatives and also interviewers referred about them in their consultations to surveys. It is an <u>intersection of target groups</u>, e.g. in categorization by age and specification according to issues, or with accumulation of issues (persons with

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[41] Moreover, in the Programming Document quotation marks are used in some places (such as: "The target group for activities focused on creation of complex programmes, such as "way to employment"…)

[42] An example may be a transition of the age line (waiting to be ranked into the target group minors or seniors) or changes in the target groups employees (at risk of unemployment), applicants, the long-term unemployed etc.

alternative punishments imposed by Czech courts or persons leaving prison intersect with the short-term and long-term unemployed, people under 26 years of age growing up without families who leave facilities of institutional care (institutional or protective education), persons with a health disadvantage intersect with persons with chronic mental disabilities, persons addicted and persons at risk of addiction intersect with persons without home and the like). Qualitative surveys confirmed missing explicit recognition of partial life situations and their classification to target groups within the HREOP, which causes difficulty with their support within the current system of call announcing.

However, contact with interviewers shows that with a precise assignment of the demand (call) it is a relatively easy matter to find people from most target groups environment that are currently beyond the HREOP reach, especially in bigger agglomerations. For instance, target groups (or intersection of target groups) of the long-term and short-term unemployed at risk of homelessness and using services of lodging houses and night shelters include numerous examples of people, in whose stories there is not a mention about any support whatsoever from the side of the possible HREOP programmes' organizers. Moreover, in their stressful situation caused by an acute threat of homelessness, their willingness and ability is minimal to provide information in, at least, essentially coherent form so that it could be captured in the assigned questionnaire form. Another possible location aggregating persons not "affected" by the HREOP are residents of houses and shelters situated in the existing (functional) or even cancelled allotments in suburban areas. Interviewers describe citizens of such colonies as people living "outside the system" who fully adapted to economics of illegal "moonlighting", mostly accepted their destiny as permanent and have the least possible interest to change it. It is especially people "hiding" from distraint proceedings and debt collectors, and/or in the long term avoiding serving the term of imprisonment (even more years!) in the correctional institution of the prison service. Another specific group are the Roma people who adapt to permanent life "outside the system" in their inhabited space and with their accepted (or adopted) and further developing life strategies; the Roma groups are mostly organized on kinship principles. In the last few years (when the study was being prepared) new dwelling aggregates of pauperized foreigners were formed, especially of Vietnamese citizenship, who were identified by interviewers as people who probably found themselves in necessitous circumstances but who are (among other due to a language barrier) very hardly accessible for the purposes of a qualitative survey.

It is the adaptation of socially excluded groups (families and individuals) to life conditions without perspectives of improvement of their economic and social situation that has the highest potential of destabilization of social cohesion and production of social (or even ethnical) clash. Such an adaptation leads to creating patterns of behaviour characterized by short-term life strategies, immediate consumption, aggression towards the environment and a high rate of social pathology. The HREOP has not created adequate attitudes and instruments to record this adaptation to grey economics and life lived "outside the system". Among others, it does not take into consideration a low threshold of acceptability (understanding) of work and social (professional) consultancy with the groups adapted to the conditions of social exclusion, especially in case of a multigenerational adaptation. In such case, the

upbringing leads to short-term strategic approach to the gainful employment, lack of trust to authorities and to economic networks of the world of "system", and a resulting tendency to do "moonlighting".

EO19. What are the reasons of the fact that some groups do not join the HREOP at all or they join but quit soon? On what conditions would these two groups stay engaged in the HREOP and what benefit could HREOP bring them compared to other groups of the HREOP assistance beneficiaries?

Reasons for joining or not joining are different and such cases appear throughout the target groups. It is often a problem to engage employees on managerial posts due to their demanding workload. Such people may only be addressed in the form of intensive trainings that are not time consuming and bring a clear added value. Generally, there are persons among employees who are not interested in their education and personal development, and others who are difficult to be engaged due to their non-flexible working hours (especially employees in the production sector). In this case only training outside the working hours can be considered, which, however, could be connected with some other type of motivation, not only training as such.

Another disputable group with the job seekers are graduates who expect to continue their studies in the future and are registered in the Employment Office only due to health and social insurance. They want neither to work nor participate in project activities. Another issue is long-term unemployed who come only once or several times and stop coming. In this respect some addressed organizations explicitly referred to the Roma people whose motivation is lower. In some cases it may be difficult to engage persons above 55 years of age who do not want to educate themselves any more. Since most of the addressed respondents from the target group of persons above 50 years of age evaluated the projects positively, it may be assumed that members of this target group who were interested and not interested had been separated already in the intake to the project.

In other target groups persons on the fringe of society (typically people without home but also persons addicted on drugs) are difficult to be addressed. Solution may be engaging such field social workers who know their target group well and are able to win their trust. Dropping from projects often occurs in persons with alcohol addiction.

Varied answers about individuals who were found difficult to be engaged in the project activities are illustrated by the following answer:

> "Overview of all target groups – there are simply people who don't want to educate
> and nothing can be done about that – if they are ordered to attend the classes, they
> spread negative mood. It is better to leave such people alone."

3.6 Monitoring System

EO20. To what extent is the setting suitable for the monitoring system, self-evaluation and external evaluation of the HREOP in relation to finding real effects of HREOP help on target groups?

The basic identified deficiency of an overall monitoring system is a lack of relation to the target group on the level of individual assisted persons, or subsidized persons. Though beneficiaries (organizations) file these data, due to their form (paper sheets of attendance, contracts and other documents) they cannot be shared and cannot be used further. Organizations then become a necessary connecting link for mediation of contacts among respondents or for evaluation surveys, which may lead to a distorted result and, de facto, disables objective survey in case that the quality of project implementation is to be assessed. On the other hand, duty to keep information on assisted persons in the central system, if any, must not lead to more administrative burden imposed on these organizations. On the contrary, it should simplify their work and enable, e.g. automatic generation of contracts or other documents connected with the agenda of assisted persons' administration. Also, the fact needs to be taken into consideration that not in all target groups the available data is valid in the long term and sometimes such data is omitted, which can be considered as obligatory. An example which should be incorporated in the setting of the central system, if any, is homeless persons. Current setting of services provided to the homeless people does not enable differentiating attitude towards young and old homeless people. Out of these reasons the young homeless people consider such services stigmatizing and try to avoid them.

Link to the other systems should also be considered, such as basic registers, systems of the Czech Social Security Administration, data from the Czech Statistical Office and, of course, IS CEDR (the Central Register of Subsidies). That would enable direct monitoring and evaluating "destinies" of assisted persons, and, at the same time, it would provide valuable information about the influence of projects in the region (by comparing assisted persons with the rest of the population including, i.e., Employment Office activities). On the part of the announcer, such a link would enable to choose projects objectively within the call, which consider specific character of the territory (municipality, region etc.). In this way situations would be prevented when several intervention projects receive aid within one call for one target group on the same territory, i.e. interventions would be prevented that exceed the absorption capacity on the part of assisted persons. Aid could then be focused exactly, for instance when knowing the exact number of aid beneficiaries in the past they could be focused on and offered follow-up activities.

Within the calls not only their objective should be clearly defined (what the intervention wants to achieve and in what time frame, or with what means) but, in the first place, it should be specified on what issues (and in the figurative sense on what typical life situations of individuals) the call is focused. The following points need to be clearly specified:

1) the base line (mostly static parameters coming out of the specification of the target group) of potential assisted persons and

2) dynamics (trend) of such a base line

At the present time the calls target the whole groups (such as employees or disabled persons), which often leads to applying inappropriate project activities and reduction of intervention efficiency[43]. Adequate attitude of defining the target group should always build upon an analysis of life situations (of individuals) and should include conditions, under which the given target group may be supported in a concrete way[44]. Sufficiently extensive analytical background materials thus should create a part of the call, obtained both, from external (tailored survey) and local and regional participants within the procedure of preparation of the call and its formal commenting procedure.

Furthermore, it is also necessary to ensure so that the monitoring system is functional also after finalization of the project, i.e. so that the relevant data are recorded in relation to evaluation of the intervention impacts. That must be ensured on the level of organizations (contractual obligation resulting from the status of the subsidy beneficiary), as well as assisted persons (especially content to access personal data in relation to the above provided information and data from other sources, such as basic registers).

Generally, the online monitoring system should provide all instruments necessary for the project implementation, including management of the process with the project manager, i.e. leading to avoiding agendas discussed via emails and formats of XLS (MS Excel). This requirement comes of the above effort to interconnect the data as much as possible and being able to gain them again without necessity of contacting beneficiaries and/or assisted persons (i.e. for the purposes of evaluation). This system should – in an ideal case – enable administration of requirements of evaluators, i.e., to record when the organizations were contacted in the name of the Managing Authority (evaluation contracting authority). Currently, organizations (not only beneficiaries but also applicants, including the unsuccessful ones) are burdened within various surveys, which may gradually decrease their willingness to be engaged.

The process of external evaluation of submitted applications must be fully adapted to the nature of the call that defines and mediates to the public requirements of the Managing Authority on projects that are to be supported. If the system of so called "template projects" is to be implemented, it is necessary to set the input parameters in an absolutely unambiguous way to ensure fully transparent processing, and to continuously evaluate outcomes and results of the evaluation process, so that it was not misused. At any case, it would be appropriate to enable free consultations to every call, including its content, and not

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[43] An example could be obtaining trade licences for the unemployed who have insufficient qualification in the regions with a high unemployment rate when such focused individuals primarily solve their problems of the imminent fall into the debt trap (or problems directly connected with poverty) and who, at the same time, have a low level of financial literacy and minimal entrepreneurship abilities that may not be substituted by attending a short course dedicated to this topic.

[44] For example, in relation to the the labour market analysis to perform partial trainings of employees only if 1) they have insufficient qualification, 2) they are at risk of a loss of a job due to the pressure from the regional labour market where there is a sufficient number of potencial employees with a suitable qualification able to replace them on their position, and 3) if they keep their job for at least another year.

to limit only to formalities. With the projects focused on social innovations it is then necessary to ensure corresponding professional evaluation exceeding knowledge and human resource capacities available in the Czech Republic (the final report Evaluation of the Innovation Principle in HREOP focuses on these problems). Generally, it is necessary to minimize the time which lapses from the date of submitting applications to the moment of initiating the implementation, so to speak, to minimize outdating of the project. At the same time, the procedure of submitting applications should be simplified so that the applicants could prepare them without necessity to engage a third party (processer of the application)[45], which has been planned in relation to the above mentioned "template" projects.

Finally, we sum up findings from the quantitative survey related to the question whether the organizations prepare the projects within the HREOP by themselves or whether they let them done externally. The recent survey from January 2013 shows that 43 % of the addressed organizations prepared the whole project applications by themselves, 21 % prepared most of the project applications, while 11 % hired external firms to prepare them. Most often, the organizations had the project budget, indicators and description of the project drafted by external entities; see Chapter 1.2, Appendix 1, graphs P.7 and P.8.

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[45] Quantitave survey shows that repeatedly unsuccessful applicants prepared their applications by themselves more often (approx. 60 %) than the successful ones (approx. 40 %). If successful applicants made use of the author, then for all key areas, i.e. they had the whole application prepared.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

The projects have been evaluated mostly positively, both on the part of the organizations (HREOP beneficiaries) and the part of participants in the project activities. Certain reservations were declared by employees, i.e. the participants of the Priority Axis 1, who not always recognized the impacts of projects or had doubts about whether the company they work at would make use of the project activities in a sufficient way. On the other hand, the most positive evaluation of the project activities was declared by the target groups whose members understood the help as something they received "beyond the frame" and what is rather a gift and goodwill gesture than their entitlement. It was mainly the target group of the addicted persons (drugs etc.) and persons endangered by addiction and the target group immigrants, foreigners and ethnic minorities (excluding the Roma people). On the part of organizations, there is an obvious connection between the evaluation and the received share of funding from the HREOP. Sometimes, this share reaches up to 100 % of all means allocated to solving situations of these target groups. In organizations where the HREOP funding allocated to solution of situations of the target groups was gradually decreasing during the Longitudinal Study, the opinion was weakening that HREOP represented a meaningful way of solving situations of the target groups (see Chapter 2.4, Appendix 2). Moreover, in organizations the evaluation of the HREOP was gradually slightly decreasing, even though in the last wave of survey in 2013 it remained strongly positive.

In this part we summarize recommendations that, in our view, could lead to first reimprovement of HREOP evaluation on the part of the organizations, as well as (and above all) to improvement of effectiveness of the Programme as such. The recommendations come out of recommendations formulated within the Interim Report 5 which was build upon both waves of qualitative surveys and two out of three waves of quantitative surveys. Therefore, here the recommendations formulated above are only amended and particularised.

4.1 Recommendations for the Priority Axis 1

 "The objective of the Priority Axis 1 is to prevent unemployment by means of supporting the investments into the development of human resources and modern systems of their management".[46] A typical form of investment into human resources is various training programmes for employees. In their framework, we recommend focusing on **long-term nature and sustainability**. Promising projects are those involving **training of internal (in-house) lecturers**; however it is necessary to develop mechanisms ensuring that after internal lecturers have been trained, they would really start pursuing their lecturing activity in the firm. It would be appropriate to link these mechanisms to trainings of as many employees as possible on all levels of the firm. The research failed to identify a specific case of an internal lecturer who could be called an example of best practice with a final effect, which could be taken as an example to be followed. This fact illustrates well that such problems are relatively new and not completely mastered. The example which approximates most an example of best practice is the project presented in

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[46] Source: http://www.esfcr.cz/07-13/oplzz/prioritni-osa-1-adaptabilita

the Case Study 1, Subchapter 2.1.4 of Interim Report 5. It shows the significance of mutual communication and cooperation of both firms: that which helps to implement the procedures from outside and that into which they are implemented. Apart from this cooperation "tailored to somebody's needs", it is the communication that plays a significant role of in the sense of educational activities on all levels of the firm.

This is connected with the need to **interconnect education and training to the corporate culture**. Especially with firms in which training is not an ordinary part of the corporate culture, it is necessary to focus on explaining benefits and potentials of education and training, including support of such activities under projects (such as within the obligatory activity focused on spreading knowledge of the project and reinforcing image of the project within the organization). At the same time, it is appropriate to work both, with the company's management and its employees, so that education and training becomes their mutual task whose objectives are understood by all the people in the company. The educational mission statement can be declared and incorporated into the corporate values or (ethical) codex, however, it is essential to reinforce such values in the daily life of the firm. The implementation of the procedures of (internal) education and training alone may be supported in the firm by, i.e. spreading a story of best practise (e.g. from abroad) that should be ideally targeted as the desired objective. This, however, requires existence of really open communication channels and platforms within the firm (from team and group activities to, i.e. internal periodic) whose implementation could be included among the supported project activities. To increase effectiveness of activities offered, stronger interconnection with the services of daily care of children, even outside the working hours, could be considered; that means providing possibilities of education and training even outside the working hours with permanently ensured care of children.

Another recommendation is connected with the above that relates to putting emphasis on **individuation of the projects**. For the education to be perceived as a legitimate part of the corporate culture, it is good to focus on such education and training which can be **directly used in the daily life of the firm**. Direct instant usability and use of the learned may positively influence perception of the significance of the project on the part of employees. For this reason, the strategy of **engaging internal company employees into the planning** seems appropriate. This staff (specialists or managers) will be able to clearly specify the firm's requirements and together with the education professionals will negotiate a concrete look of the projects. Usability depends on topicality. Therefore, we recommend **reducing the time from the submission of applications to the initiation of the project's implementation**. Despite specific requirements of various firms some almost universally usable and positively evaluated courses were successfully identified, such as **IT courses** (use of the office software etc.).

From the point of view of the author it seems most appropriate to formulate in the call (or its appendix) some very concrete recommendations only as hints and pieces of advice, the use of which should be, at least, considered by the applicants, or for which the applicants should try to suggest their improvements. In this sense, subsidy applicants should be invited as partners to solve the open problem.

It is of a key importance what the call announced puts an emphasis on because the applicants will probably try to include the above hints into their applications (and later into the project implementation). Sustainability problems could then be solved by, i.e. imposing a condition that the project will obligatorily include a one-year final activity when it would be possible to draw the funding only for salaries of internal lecturers. This measure will enable monitoring project activities, on the part of the organization it will lead to reinforced awareness of the continuous running of the project and, while saving costs on full implementation of the project, in an ideal case to gradually shift to the sustainable financing.

The following table summarizes what the individual recommendations mean from the point of view of the Managing Authority and from the point of view of the beneficiary. As hinted in several examples in this part of the document, individual recommendations may be further specified; however they lose their general validity and cannot be used as requirements when formulating the call, without limiting possibility to individuate the individual projects to reflect specific needs.

1. Projects must be based on the principle of long-term nature and sustainability.	
This means from the point of view of …	
… Managing Authority	• to support projects of training of internal lecturers • to support mechanisms ensuring their subsequent lecturing activity, such as earmarking funding to internal lecturers' salaries or part of their salaries for the time after the phase of the training procedures implementation has ended
… Beneficiary	• necessity to concisely prove on concrete mechanisms how the training project shall continue in the future, how its sustainability will be ensured
2. Interconnect education and training with the corporate culture	
This means from the point of view of …	
… Managing Authority	• to support training of employees on all levels • to request a strategy of education and training implementation into the corporate culture (as a declared mission statement, as well as in daily life of firms)
… Beneficiary	• to explain to the management and employees the sense, contribution and potential of education and training (as a part of the project) • to pursue incorporation of permanent training courses into the shared objectives of the firm, which everybody in the firm understands
3. To individualize projects (tailor projects to specific needs) + ensure topicality	
This means from the point of view of …	
… Managing Authority	• to request that the beneficiaries build upon the current educational needs of the firm • to request description of mechanisms how the learned knowledge will be reflected in the practice of the firm • to generally support IT courses (office software etc.) • to reduce time from the application submission to the project implementation
… Beneficiary	• necessity to cooperate with in-house staff and people who know procedures in the firm when creating projects

4.2   Recommendations for the Priority Axis 2

"The objective of the Priority Axis 2 is improving access to employment, permanent integration of people seeking employment and prevention of unemployment of the groups at risk on the labour market".[47] A typical form of projects under the Priority Axis 2 is retraining courses. Though they have their positive impacts, they should be neither overestimated nor considered as a solution that would be sufficient alone. Retraining course may be recommended to receive support in the future, however several facts should be reflected. First, **courses must be more individualized** so that the sense of meaningfulness when participating increases. This includes **differentiating courses by levels** (especially IT courses), as well as putting emphasis on **individual consultations and counselling**. Second, we recommend granting **quality certificates** to evidence attending a retraining course. This may influence the potential employer, as well as self-consciousness of the participant. Third, it is appropriate to perceive the situation from the point of view of the course participants. Though they might experience different situations, the common characteristic of the participants is a **difficult financial situation when being unemployed**. Projects should, therefore, pay attention to the **synchronization of the activities**. During the project, the participants cannot often take even temporary jobs, so in case of a long-term course the risk rises of their financial difficulties deepening. That is related with the recommendation **to reimburse, at least, some expenses** connected with the project (such as travel expenses) so that the project is made more accessible.

Despite the fact that the retraining itself often increases motivation and self-consciousness of the participants, only in a limited number of cases it leads to a fast job finding. Over the time, the motivation drops again and scepticism comes. Therefore, it is necessary to focus also on **support of short-term attachments and work experience as opportunities to win professional experience**. It is appropriate **to use motivation acquired in the retraining course and try hard to become involved in the working process soon**. That is linked to a general recommendation to support creation of vacancies. In some cases, it may be suitable to **keep in touch with the course participants even when they find their jobs to reinstate motivation**. Above all, that relates to target groups of the long-term unemployed, young people from 15 to 25 years of age, persons under 26 years of age growing without families, persons with a health disability and persons addicted to drugs.

Regarding the above, more intensive **cooperation with potential employers during the project** seems to be suitable. Of course, it would be ideal to arrange with these employers a guarantee to provide trial jobs for a certain number of the project participants, or provide an incentive that would make the trial job very probable (such as a subsidized salary). Retraining without work experience is often very insufficient. Even a several-month experience can significantly change the position of the project participants, which should be primarily emphasized within the Priority Axis 2.

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[47] Source: http://www.esfcr.cz/07-13/oplzz/prioritni-osa-2-aktivni-politiky-trhu-prace

Another suitable activity would be supporting a more intensive training of employees of the Employment Office so that their cooperation with the job seekers was more effective. Such training should relate to both, extending and updating their knowledge of different programmes targeted on the labour market (staff of the Employment Office are sometimes unable to provide satisfactory information or do not know about some options at all), acquiring the ability to give the right piece of advice to a concrete applicant (identify needs of such a person), as well as, so called, soft skills so that staff of the Employment Office were able to win trust of the job seekers and motivate them.

In relation to the above objective of the Priority Axis 2 it must be mentioned that projects supported under the Priority Axis 2 do not solve the problem of unemployment prevention. This is rather solved by the Priority Axis 1. Projects in the Priority Axis 2 solve the problems of unemployment that have already occurred.

4. To clarify requirements on an ideal retraining course	
This means from the point of view of …	
… Managing Authority	• to request differentiation of retraining courses by the level of input knowledge (in relevant cases, i.e., in IT and language courses) • to favour retraining courses which offer quality certification to evidence successful attendance of a course • to give preference to timely compact courses which will take into consideration needs of participants (such as picking their children from kindergarten) and, at the same time, reduce stand time • to enable reimbursing of some expenses for a better accessibility of the courses
… Beneficiary	• necessity to design the project so that it takes into consideration needs of participants, even at the price of higher organizational demands
5. To interconnect retraining with work experience or short-term attachment	
This means from the point of view of …	
… Managing Authority	• especially in retraining courses for employment whose performance requires certain work experience, to request providing or intermediating this experience as a part of the course • to benefit also other projects offering work experience or short-term attachment
… Beneficiary	• to focus more on contact with employers • when the retraining course ends, to "hand over" the participants further, not only let them go "their own way"

6. To make use of motivation encouraged by the retraining course towards more intensive effort in engagement in the working process	
This means from the point of view of …	
… Managing Authority	• to support projects that actively try to mediate vacancies for the participants • to support projects that take into consideration the period of increased motivation and self-confidence of participants and that interconnect these activities with, e.g. more intensive cooperation with the Employment Office • to put an emphasis on training and readiness of the Employment Office staff who often represent not only the gateway to the projects but can also take part in a more intensive effort of searching employment for the participants, immediately following the end of attended project activities
… Beneficiary	• to focus more on contact with employers • to offer possibilities of short-term attachment or work experience

4.3 Recommendations for the Priority Axis 3

"The objective of the Priority Axis 3 is to provide assistance to persons at risk of social exclusion, to improve the quality and accessibility of social services, and to implement measures leading to increase of employability of these people, inclusive of pursuing equal opportunities for women and men on the labour market."[48] Apart from emphasizing the employment, a good prevention of social exclusion is a functional family and community. Therefore, in the integration programmes we may recommend **working with the whole family, especially when solving problems of minors**. **Voluntary projects** can help support community, whereas it may be assumed that from the long-term point of view they lead to upbringing engaged and mature citizens and to reinforcing of civil society. **Volunteering is also an inexpensive means of assistance**. We may recommend searching **new ways of use of volunteering**, however, practice shows that volunteering is not very effective as a means for obtaining experience that should lead to finding a paid employment later. We may rather recommend volunteering of minors, students of high schools and universities who want to take part in helping socially disabled people, i.e. by giving them remedial classes.

A frequent problem is low self-confidence and lack of independence of the respondents addressed. The project consultancy must be focused on acquiring some basic skills, such as **search on the Internet and communication with authorities**, which lead to **increase of independence and self-confidence**. The objective of the projects should be aiming the participants to their independence and control over their life situations, but not in the form of a superordinate relation reminding of school environment against which some participants had reservations.

Since people at risk of social exclusion tend to accumulate various issues, it is necessary to support projects that may ensure **complex help**. Suitable strategy may be motivating **various organizations in the regions to cooperate**. Know-how of individual organizations may serve as an additional tool. Some organizations may have a better ability in making contact with a particular endangered group; some have deeper know-how in the area of debt repayment strategies. Cooperation in the project may also lead to sharing best practice examples and **mutual learning of organizations** ensuring projects of social integration. It is necessary to say that the topic of debt repayment is always a long-distance run. For that reason we recommend more intensive investments into **enhancing financial literacy** and preventing a fall into a debt trap.

Especially in some target groups (people under 26 years of age growing without families, persons leaving facilities of institutional or protective care, persons leaving prison, addicted persons (to drugs and the like) and persons endangered by addiction, persons without home, the Roma people, and persons from different socio-cultural environment) the most burning problems need to be solved by satisfying **basic needs, such as providing a night shelter, instantly followed by long-term social work**. The necessity to satisfy above all the basic life needs seems essential. Only then the attention can target other issues, for

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[48] Source: http://www.esfcr.cz/07-13/oplzz/prioritni-osa-3-socialni-integrace-a-rovne-prilezitosti

instance looking for a job. The best approach is providing complex help. Also in the protective action it is important to **identify possible risk of losing housing** in time, give it a priority and focus on it.

Social exclusion is very often connected with unemployment. For this reason it is suitable to interconnect almost all **integration projects with work consultancy** and prevention of long-term unemployment. The support of **social enterprise** seems a promising strategy, as well as support of **part-time and flexible jobs**. In combination with support of **care services for dependent persons** (children, seniors, dependents with disability), which we recommend to make more intensive, this strategy may help mitigate impacts of exclusion of parents (specifically of women) from the labour market, i.e. their difficult employability. A specific target group from the point of view of integration is immigrants, refugees, foreigners and ethnic minorities (except the Roma people) for whom the fundamental moment of integration is **mastering the Czech language**. Offer of more convenient courses (if possible for free) is on the part of the target group perceived as helpful approach of the Czech government, which is also an important impact of the support.

It also seems that participants of the Priority Axis 3 projects often find themselves in such a serious situation that a long-term patient cooperation is needed, while no tangible breakthrough results may be expected. Vice versa, it is necessary to reconcile with a slow achieving of results when even **stabilization of the situation may be considered a good result**. A suitable means of long-term, patient cooperation is projects making use of **field social workers** whose objective is to make a contact with the clients and **raise their trust**. This is important because it is little trust in the society and its institutions, which is a frequent accompanying element of social exclusion. The problems can be approached with the perspective of life strategies. For instance, in some target groups under the Priority Axis 3 there are different defensive strategies which are based on severing one's ties with the majority society. The most radical manifestations of such defensive strategies may be homelessness and drug addiction. This should not be interpreted in a way that homelessness is always or in most cases the question of choice. In some cases, however, homelessness is accepted and the homeless people identify themselves with their role of the person on the "edge". The projects should strive for the participants to adopt active life strategies when under the projects they take their part in determining what and by what means they want to achieve. It is important that they take their responsibility for their own future and acquire ability to describe their life strategy and identify with it. An example may be persons above 50 years of age heading towards "bridging" of the time to their pension.

Regarding the deteriorating situation from the point of debt repayment of Czech households, it would be appropriate to obligatorily include debt consultancy among the indicative priorities of the HREOP. For the intervention to be successful, indebtedness often means an insurmountable obstacle. At the same time, it is a problem that relates to most target groups under the HREOP at risk by poverty. Data on indebtedness were not collected purposefully under the study, however it has been declared by the respondents that this problem is often perceived as crucial, and many a time it is the reason why the HREOP assisted persons searched social prevention services in the first case. Apart from increase of

emphasis on the fight against indebtedness in the sense of indicative priority on the part of the HREOP calls, it is necessary to solve the problem, above all, systematically. The current setting leads to serious negative impacts on employability, social improvement and, consequently, future of the endangered groups and regions in the society. The major problem is not the principal but the debt collection, as a result of which the over-indebtedness rises in a dramatic way. The affected over-indebted persons cannot handle the situation anymore and intervention in the social area and area of employment under the public policies then becomes very little efficient for them. Since we consider this problem topical at present time (at the same time, it is a system problem the solution of which on the part of the Managing Authority would require intensive cooperation with other executive authorities), it is covered in Appendix 8, which is to illustrate the current situation in the Czech Republic, at least, in short.

7. To lean on family and community	
This means from the point of view of …	
… Managing Authority	• in the projects of integration of the youth to support work with the whole family • to support volunteering as a manifestation of community reinforcement and, in the total result, of the civil society
… Beneficiary	• in the projects of integration of the youth to work with the whole family – for instance, field social workers are suitable for this task (it relates, above all, to work with the Roma minority for which at least identification of the whole family with the project engagement is important) • to enlarge functional methods of volunteering • to cooperate with high schools and universities as potential volunteering sources
8. To increase basic competences (search on the Internet, communication with authorities etc.) as an instrument of increasing independence and self-confidence	
This means from the point of view of …	
… Managing Authority	• support the projects that lead their participants to independence by enhancing their competences usable in daily life • in the target group of immigrants, refugees and foreigners it means supporting teaching Czech language (if possible for free)
… Beneficiary	• to avoid performing any actions instead of the participants which they can easily learn so that they could perform them by themselves • to design projects so that their outcome brings as much independence as possible • under the project to define a life strategy of participants

9. To support complex projects with individual attitude and motivate cooperation of various organizations	
This means from the point of view of …	
… Managing Authority	• to motivate interconnecting know-how of individual organizations (beneficiaries) and support their cooperation (due to threatening accumulation of various problems in persons at risk of social exclusion) • to enable sufficient number of projects targeted at solving basic needs and the most burning issues, such as providing a night shelter
… Beneficiary	• to share experience, to be open to mutual learning • to integrate into projects less intensive follow-up activities that will continue even in case of partial success (such as finding a job due to which some persons from the target groups may have a problem to get used to the new everyday routine and need occasional encouragement and motivation; thanks to appropriate cooperation such people can serve as a good example of success for persons in a different phase of the project)
10. To focus on prevention	
This means from the point of view of …	
… Managing Authority	• to support prevention projects (also on the level of cooperation of various state institutions) • to demand projects targeted at increase of financial literacy • to support projects including courses of financial literacy
… Beneficiary	• to identify in time risk of losing a home, i.e. in cooperation with lessors in risk areas or with courts having jurisdiction over divorces • to offer projects increasing financial literacy
11. To interconnect integration projects with employment projects	
This means from the point of view of …	
… Managing Authority	• to support social enterprise • to support work counselling as an integral part of most (all) integration projects
… Beneficiary	• to interconnect integration projects with unemployment projects
12. To base projects on work of field social workers	
This means from the point of view of …	
… Managing Authority	• to support projects using work of experienced field social workers who are able to reinstate often broken trust of project participants in the society and its institutions (field social workers can further ensure long-term cooperation with the clients, including providing support in case of partial success, such as finding a job) • to consult with experienced field social workers serving as a source of information in the area of social exclusion to identify regional specifics • to support motivational programmes for experienced field social workers to prevent their leaving due insufficient income
… Beneficiary	• to base projects on work of field social workers and their experience
13. To obligatorily include debt consultancy among indicative HREOP activities or put a bigger emphasis on it	
This means from the point of view of …	
… Managing Authority	• to request debt consultancy as significant or even obligatory indicative activity of the HREOP projects in the Priority Axis 3 or its selected specific objectives
… Beneficiary	• apart from financial literacy as an instrument of prevention to focus also on debt consultancy (in many cases it is too late to target prevention)

4.4 General Recommendations

General recommendation 1: to achieve more individualized projects and enable flexibility

To achieve a maximum effect, it is important that the right people attend the right projects. For instance, when talking with employees who underwent any HREOP project, it often showed that though the project made their work more varied and they "even learned something", not all of them made use of it at work in their companies. Individual approach is essential in other groups, too. Some victims of crime require rather assistance in dealing with authorities while other need psychological help; other would be helped most if supported in their return to the labour market (many victims may lose their jobs as a consequence of the crime). For some respondents, the most important thing was to find a job as fast as possible, while others needed to solve their debt repayment immediately or find a home so that their children were not taken away from them as a result of moving out. These are just some examples of cases solved.

Projects must be able (and ready) to identify the most burning issues in the given area of intervention and focus on their flexible solution. A project itself needs not to include all possible instruments and activities; the objective is to support cooperation among existing subjects on the level of locality or region and to enable them allocating part of the obtained funds to solve a new, unexpected situation. To be able to do this, it is necessary to apply individual approach from the part of the beneficiary (organization) towards the end beneficiary (assisted person), as well as sufficiently flexible approach towards defining extent and concrete content of the project and, if needed, possibility of its fast adjustment on the part of the Managing Authority or mediating body. It is therefore necessary to tolerate legitimate changes. Such tolerance should be declared in the announcement of the project.

General recommendation 2: to invest more into creation and maintenance of current jobs, as well as (or above all) part-time jobs

Majority of the most often identified problems that people in the observed target groups solve shares a common denominator: unemployment. That relates to both financial difficulty and debts, as well as housing problems and a number of other problems, including social stigmatization and gradual creation of a vicious cycle which further deepen crisis, i.e., on the level of a family, and thus have a crucial impact on another generation. Survey shoes that nether retraining courses, nor intensive assistance of field social workers usually lead to finding a job. As a result, these activities act as prevention and instrument of stabilization of the situation or they help improve the partial situation (in the long term). However, without the connection to the work position and related socio-cultural relations they do not lead to independence on the system of support, financed from whatever source.

A number of respondents declare their willingness to do almost any job; though they are limited by their health or performance limitations, they do not usually have high expectations. In such a situation, a suitable strategy is to invest into creation of new and preservation of current jobs, or interconnect retraining options with instant and successive offer of employment, albeit as a trial job. It is crucial to

support creation of part-time jobs. The reason is on one hand winning more vacancies for more persons (and more work experience) for the same funding, on the other hand such types of employment enable engagement of target groups that have to play the role of persons caring for their family members (such as parents). Also, a thorough and long-term combination of activities focused on creation of vacancies may be recommended, while ensuring care services for such dependent persons (children, seniors, health disabled etc.). The aid should not depend only on the type of social enterprise, even though it is suitable that this type of projects be continuously supported. The reason is that this approach is not compatible with some relevant types of beneficiaries (types of organizations) especially due to formal requirements on the status of organization (see conditions in the HREOP Call 30). We recommend considering whether HREOP calls should be limited by types of organization. From the point of view of the author of the study, a type of organization seems to be irrelevant with regards to the HREOP objectives.

Such projects should be promoted with a priority, which will ensure contact of participants and potential employers. Success in the shift of project participants to employment could serve as a criterion for extending or not extending financial aid to the given organization (beneficiary) but only in case that the organization itself would not decide on the choice of course participants. In other case, this criterion could lead to the same type of discrimination which the target groups' representatives face on the labour market nowadays.

General recommendation 3: to put emphasis on accompanying activities under projects

Not only project participants from the target group of persons caring for a relative must arrange looking after the dependent persons, most often children, for the time they attend the project. In Chapter 4.3 a recommendation has been formulated to support providing care services for dependent persons as a general instrument enabling, at least, partial return of the caring persons to the labour market. Furthermore, it is recommended to connect all projects expecting participation of persons caring for a dependant person with the offer of a free care service for such dependants when the project takes place. We may also consider a whole range of other accompanying activities. A frequent problem that is perceived by mothers on a parental leave is, i.e. social isolation and "losing connection to the world of the adults". Projects may therefore be devised so that the participants are offered voluntary extra activities focused above all on informal or "semi-formal" social contact. A discussion with an interesting person may be considered.

14. To individualize projects more and enable flexibility
This means from the point of view of …

… Managing Authority	• to ensure flexible approach to the specification of extent and concrete project content • to be tolerant to legitimate changes
… Beneficiary	• to perform sufficient input diagnostics of problems • to potentially address various problems • to cooperate with other organization or more organizations that are be willing to share their know-how under clearly defined responsibilities

15. To invest more into creation of new and maintenance of current jobs and also (or above all) part-time jobs
This means from the point of view of …

… Managing Authority	• to support retraining courses with an immediate link to employment (or at least sufficient practice) • to support investments into creation of new and maintenance of current jobs • to support short-term jobs • to motivate employers to recruit employees (with caution against possible misuse) • to evaluate projects (and their further support) based on successful shift of participants to employment (under the condition that beneficiaries cannot basically influence selection of participants)
… Beneficiary	• to focus on contacts with employers • to mediate contact to potential employers and course participants • to obligatorily continue in making contact between employers and project participants after the end of the (i.e. of retraining) course

16. Under the projects to put emphasis on support of accompanying activities
This means from the point of view of …

… Managing Authority	• in projects where it is meaningful to request looking after children of the participants for free as a condition, not only an option • to support other (voluntary) accompanying activities, i.e. informal or "semi-formal" social contact
… Beneficiary	• to see problems of the target groups in the eyes of participants and to perceive them in their complexity