



Combating Inequalities through Innovative Social Practices
of and for Young People in Cities across Europe

**WP7 Case study: Innovative Practice
'Learning by Working'**

Date: June 2015

City: Brno

Authors: Tomáš Sirovátka, Jana Válková, Ondřej Hora

Cover page

INNOVATIVE PRACTICE/PROJECT TITLE	
Learning by working	
City	Brno (CZ)
Pilot type	1. based on own fieldwork
Type of target group	1. motivated for integration into mainstream society but in need of support; 2. motivated and ready for a job without further support;
Type of practice	1. Learning and counselling; social capital; matching/bridging; 2. Offering opportunities; 3. Empowerment: developing ambition, competences and social network;
Aims/objectives in brief	To raise chances of socially excluded group of Roma to get employed in the open labour market by increasing their competences and by offering opportunities.
What needs, what inequalities	Poor access to employment, low employability (lack of human capital, job-search competences, social networks)
What (activities in brief)	Case work -job mediation, counselling, support of job-search competences, vocational training, subsidised jobs, transport subsidy, contacting employers, media campaign
Who (actors)	NGO IQ Roma servis, cooperation with the employers, employment office
How (involvement of the actors, their roles)	IQ Roma servis as principal (project implementing body), addresses the employers in order to get job offers, cooperation with employment office (using ALMP tools)
Scope: number of the participants of practice(s)	622 in the project (350 in Brno)
Duration (when the project/practice started)	July 2012 – June 2014 (24 months)

RESOURCES	
Financial	<i>187 thousand EUR in total 144 thousand EUR personnel costs 9,2 thousand EUR direct support to participants 8,2 thousand purchase of services 2 thousand equipment</i>
Personnel	<i>Staff – 10 people, 5 full-time equivalent</i>
Other	Know-how: IQRS as experienced actor, trusted by Roma in neighbourhoods, respected among the public, experiences with several project, Centre for employment performing for years; support from ESF

Contents

Introduction 5

1. Evaluation methodology 5

2. Project/Practice Design 6

 2.1 Social Issue(s) addressed..... 6

 2.2. Project goals and plans 6

 2.3 Competences and resources required 10

 2.4 Degree of organization 11

 2.5 The logic of intervention 11

 2.6 Transfer adaptations 12

3. Organisational context of implementation 12

4. Project implementation and outputs 16

 4.1 Targeting of the program..... 16

 4.2 Addressing needs..... 17

 4.3 Empowerment, engagement and choice 19

 4.4 Stakeholders involved 20

 4.5 Competences and resources involved 20

 4.6 Process evaluation criteria..... 22

 4.7 Innovativeness 24

 4.8 Success factors and conditions, critical implementation barriers 25

5. Project results/outcomes..... 26

6. Final reflections 30

 6.1 The role of the pilot/project/practice 30

 6.2 Innovation..... 31

 6.3 Success factors 31

 6.4 Policy recommendations, transferability 32

References 34

Introduction

The project represents a continuation of the complex approach by NGO IQ Roma servis in Brno in supporting the employment of Roma mostly living in deprived neighbourhoods, with emphasis on young Roma. The approach is complex in the sense that it effectively combines the focus both on the supply side (by supporting the competences of Roma) and demand side (by close cooperation with and intensive acquisitions among the employers) of the labour market. The project also attempts to alleviate discrimination of Roma in the labour market and break the negative stereotypes in the perception of Roma by the Czech public. Cooperation with the employment office is also an important element of the project.

The method of work builds effectively on the existing experience and skills of the Centre for Employment IQRS: this is a case work base on individual action plans. Individual and complex approach, trust, partnership and cooperation represent key operational principles/elements.

ESF funding enabled IQRS to increase the coverage (there were 340 participants in Brno during 24 months of the project duration) – the major part of the estimated population in need was included. The project was relatively low cost thanks to the fact that rather ‘light’ measures were used like case work, job-mediation, counselling and training in job-search related competences. The results are relative good, considering the target group: about one third of participants found a job.

The complex approach and methods of operation seem to be innovative and effective at the same time in approaching the problem of Roma unemployment. For this reason, most of the elements of the method of operation were transferred to Sofia within Citispyce (Work Package 6) as a small scale pilot project implementing a complex approach to support Roma employment in Sofia.

1. Evaluation methodology

There were several sources of data used in this case study. First, the primary data collected by IQRS for the project and stored in the database (the database is intended as a long-term monitoring tool where data on the participants of the project and activities are collected as well as data on the activities) were used for the quantitative part of the evaluation (see the outcome section). Secondly, we used many written materials, especially half-year monitoring reports of the project (the sources used are listed at the end of this report). We were especially looking for a) project design, b) the data and c) comments on implementation of the project in the written materials.

We also carried out four interviews with relevant workers who realised the project and with three of the project participants. We have chosen workers on various key positions in the project for interviews (coordinator, evaluator, two workers for employment, one of them also a head of the Centre for Employment at IQRS). We have also chosen three project participants. We were especially interested in cases when the project led to employment or the cases in which their participation in the project was intensive (e.g. participation in several key activities). Lastly, within the field work in Work Package 4 we carried out a focus group in June 2014 where several participants of the project took part.

2. Project/Practice Design

2.1 Social Issue(s) addressed

The project “Learning by working” reacts to the position of Roma in the labour market from socially excluded neighbourhoods in the South Moravian region. Unemployment is considered as the main factor contributing to the social exclusion of these people and finding a job may help stabilise the life situation of these people, help them find better quality housing and solve the very frequent problem of indebtedness of families, and overall help the social inclusion of Roma.

The insight of experts from the IQRS suggests that the target groups of a size at least around 600 people (more than half of them from the excluded localities in Brno, the rest from the other cities in the region of South Moravia) that would use the services related to employment and job search. The majority of the target group (80%) have low qualification, poor professional record, poor competences to orientate in the labour market and suffer from employers’ discrimination. A social worker commented that young clients have problems on the labour market, as they are unable to write CV, call employers or find a job on the internet (Man, employment counsellor). The young participants commented on the low interest of employers: they say they do not have jobs (Client of the project, young Roma woman) or they usually do not inform them about the result of recruitment even if they promised so (Client of the project, young Roma man). A project worker stated that the low demand from employers was a key factor in shaping the project design. She said: “*Is not enough to work only with clients*” (Woman, project evaluation and monitoring coordinator).

The project offered interrelated services to help to integrate the target group into the labour market – especially job-search related services including assisted job mediation and job supervision, raising competences of the target groups necessary for their better orientation in the labour market, cooperation with employers and other actors and the promotion of Roma as workers through good practice examples. These services are interconnected to other services of the organisation, such as counselling, outreach services, and educational and training services.

2.2. Project goals and plans

The project focuses on the long-term unemployed inhabitants of socially deprived neighbourhoods aged 15+ who are seeking a job. Specifically, attention was paid to groups with cumulating handicaps (such as low professional competences, loss of work habits, employers’ distrust, low self-confidence, suffering from discrimination). There are around 12 to 15 thousand inhabitants of such socially deprived Roma neighbourhoods living in the South Moravian region. These people are at risk of social exclusion, are often long-term unemployed or in permanent risk of job loss.

The project defines 2 specific target groups in focus:

- Young people in the age from 15 to 26
- Mothers returning to work after maternal/parental leave – this group will compose up to 35% of the total number of the clients

Part of the project was realised in Brno, the other part in small towns in the South Moravian region. Namely, the educational and training services provided within the project are targeting young, low-qualified people to tackle the problem of low competences to operate within the labour market. The project is aiming to provide extra services on the top of the usual offer to help orient them independently in the labour market, and allow for lasting inclusion in the labour market.

The overall objective of the project is to raise the chances of a group of socially excluded Roma to get employed in the open labour market.

The aims of the project are:

1. To provide/mediate the offer of available work places to people who have poor competences or opportunities for independent job search
2. Teach the target group to independently orientate themselves in the labour market, apply for jobs and attain of basic knowledge of the legal framework in labour law
3. Find jobs for at least 60 clients
4. Raise the competences of 280 clients
5. Increase chances for employment of the target group through cooperation with employers and improve the target group's image in media through raising awareness of good practice examples
6. Set up a long-term functioning system of cooperation among relevant institutions for Roma inclusion in the labour market

These aims are coherent with the overall strategy of the implementing organisation. The Strategic Plan for years 2012 to 2016 (IQRS, 2012c) has employment of Roma as one of its priorities. In more detail, the priority is formulated as follows (IQRS, 2012c):

Raising employment opportunities and work-related pride of Roma

It comprises various activities to help achieve the goal:

- Help to place young people from The Programme for Youth in the labour market
- Help to place young people, especially those who cooperated with the Educational Centre of IQRS, into a job, apprenticeship or short-term job
- Raise general and professional competences of the adult clients in order to find a job
- Cooperate with the employment offices/employers/public administration in order to help place Roma in work
- Cooperate with employers and job agencies and facilitate matching of Roma to the available offers
- Place students/young people over the summer to summer jobs
- Support new work and training opportunities for Roma
- Promote Roma as successful workers contributing to Czech society

The project aims to comply with the priorities of the organisation and are ongoing on the agenda.

The aims of the project are formulated in a measurable way, some of them are quantified from the beginning of the project.

The project activities are all employment-related and address various aspects of integration of Roma in the labour market – raising the individual competences, cooperating with employers and facilitate matching, and promoting Roma as good employees.

In detail, the activities have been formulated as follows:

- Counselling and diagnostic activities focussed on offering the available workplaces, and defining the level of competences important in the job market, for individual clients in order to set up goals for their development
- A set of educational activities to improve individual orientation in the labour market, including indispensable knowledge for responsible job uptake with a specific focus on the target group of youth aged 15 to 26
- Implementation of the ALMP instruments within the network of all relevant subjects necessary for long-lasting sustainability and purposefulness of the investments
- Cooperation with key segments of employers to support the above mentioned activities and mainly to keep the Roma in work and improve the negative image of the target group among the public
- To establish a monitoring system to evaluate real and long-lasting effect of the invested financial means

To sum up, the project aims at raising employment of Roma through raising the individual competences, cooperating with employers and facilitate matching, and promoting Roma as good employees.

Activity no. 1: Matching, assistance, tutoring in the labour market

The client, together with the worker, define the ability and readiness of the clients to find a job. The client receives information on available work places and can also enter further training within the following activities. An individual action plan is established.

Activity no. 2: Competences for the orientation in the labour market

This activity aims to raise competences of the clients in job seeking – writing a professional CV, training them in communication with potential employer, raising abilities to work on PC (especially in job seeking), orientation in labour law (types of contracts, conditions etc.).

Activity no. 3: Competences for the labour market

This services are available to those whose were not able to find employment with the support from activity no. 2. The instruments used are as follows: vocational training (re-qualification courses etc.), contribution to transport costs to support those commuting longer distances, wage contribution for the employer to be used especially to place young people in work.

Activity no. 4: Active involvement of employers

This activity aims to strengthen the network of Ethnic Friendly Employers developed in an earlier project and involve more employers in order to raise employment of Roma and to improve the image of Roma (at work).

Activity no. 5: Evaluation and monitoring of activities and conception work

The aim of this activity is to monitor the implementation of the project through a created database of clients and to analyse results of project activities in order to provide evidence of project impact and success.

The activities in the project are scheduled as follows:

Table 1: Schedule of the project

Year	Activity No.	Activity	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
2012	01	Matching, assistance, tutoring in the labour market							X	X	X	X	X	X
2012	02	Competences for orientation in the labour market							X	X	X	X	X	X
2012	03	Competences for the labour market									X	X	X	X
2012	04	Active involvement of employers							X	X	X	X	X	X
2012	05	Evaluation and monitoring of activities and conception work							X	X	X	X	X	X
2013	01	Matching, assistance, tutoring in the labour market	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2013	02	Competences for the orientation in the labour market	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2013	03	Competences for the labour market	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2013	04	Active involvement of employers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2013	05	Evaluation and monitoring of activities and conception work	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2014	01	Matching, assistance, tutoring in the labour market	X	X	X	X	X	X						
2014	02	Competences for the orientation in the labour market	X	X	X	X	X	X						
2014	03	Competences for the labour market	X	X	X	X	X							

2014	04	Active involvement of employers	X	X	X	X	X	X						
2014	05	Evaluation and monitoring of activities and conception work	X	X	X	X	X	X						

Source: IQRS, 2012a

2.3 Competences and resources required

The project counted on the involvement of several specialists in order to carry out its activities: programme manager, coordinator, administrative support, financial manager, and mainly employment specialists and specialists for cooperation with employers.

For direct work with clients and employers the following positions were the most relevant: lawyer, employment specialist and specialist for cooperation with employers. The legal consultant was responsible for preparation of all the contract templates, agreements etc. and also for provision of legal counselling in labour law to the project participants. The employment specialists who provided both in-house and outreach services were social workers with general competences in provision of social services, with the abilities to undertake intensive individual work with clients, individual planning with clients, but also with specific competences in the field of employment. These comprise very good orientation in the labour law, knowledge of the local labour market, ability to develop and maintain contacts with the most relevant employers in the city/broader metropolitan area, awareness of the trends in HR (CV writing, preparation of clients for interviews etc.), ability to motivate the target group, to organise a job club, to develop key competence in clients for job search (Woman, project manager). The specialist for cooperation with employers should also be well aware of the situation in the local labour market, with a specific focus on employers. They should be able to find the most suitable ways to establish fruitful contacts with employers (competences in sales and marketing), to test various concepts if one way is failing. (Woman, project manager).

All of the involved employees of the organisation are certified in provision of social services. Most of them are educated in social work (Woman, project evaluation and monitoring coordinator, Man, employment counsellor).

As this project has been implemented as top-down initiative, it does not count directly on any specific competences of the involved youth, contrarily the project aims to develop their competencies and improve their position in the labour market. One of the key risk factors defined as the absence of motivation for change among the target group indicates the only desirable feature among the clients – motivation.

The project budget has been estimated as 5 131 872.90 CZK (i.e. around 187 000 EUR) used on personnel costs, travel costs, equipment, direct support and purchase of services. More than half of the expenditure was related to the participants living in Brno neighbourhoods.

2.4 Degree of organization

The project is based on the concept of case management – a model of complex work with the family with the aim to improve the social and economic situation of the target group – people in risk of social exclusion. In this sense, the project addresses both the individual and meso-levels focusing on increasing competences for labour market inclusion and motivation to work. The methods of work are based on the long-term expertise of the implementing organisation but also on foreign practices (Spanish model Aceder, Finnish methods of work Tutor, English model of diversity support in the labour market).

The objective of the project can only be reached when other stakeholders will be involved in its implementation. One of the planned activities focused on cooperation with public administration bodies, such as employment offices, and employers themselves. These activities want to increase the opportunities for Roma job seekers in the labour market through both direct support to employers hiring Roma workers, and through promoting a positive image of Roma at work. Therefore, the activities should, in the long-run, help fight ethnic discrimination in the labour market.

The project as such is a top-down initiative of the implementing organisation designing a service for the unemployed Roma. The project is backing up for insufficient provision within standard instruments of the ALMP. The project was based on previous experience with clients and it did not receive much influence from the bottom-up (Woman, project evaluation and monitoring coordinator).

2.5 The logic of intervention

The project is aiming at:

- Social integration (SID) – through raising competences of the target group and facilitating the matching process to find a job
- Redistributing resources (RED) – through wage subsidy to the employers when they hire a Roma, through travel cost reimbursement for individuals to tackle the problem of costs of commuting
- Addressing the standards of normality (MUD) – fighting MUD through Ethnic Friendly Employer component of the project – promoting Roma at work, enlarging the network of employers hiring Roma

The project is mainly targeting people with at least some motivation to integrate into mainstream society, specifically in the labour market. The project works with people with low abilities and support but also with those who have abilities but need some additional support in job seeking. In terms of the intervention typology, the project provides:

- Learning and counselling, improving social capital, matching;
- Offering opportunities.

More generally, the project aims at bridging distance between the majority and minority population, and building trust between young Roma and the employers through ongoing work with both sides and active matching of Roma job-seekers with employers.

2.6 Transfer adaptations

This project has been developed by the implementing organisation. It is not a transferred practice.

3. Organisational context of implementation

“IQ Roma servis” (IQRS) is a non-governmental organisation founded in 1997. Its mission is to provide and develop free social, counselling, educational and employment services for socially excluded people in Brno and the South Moravian Region (generally speaking services of public interest) (IQRS 2012a: *Žádost o finanční podporu*). The scope of various activities provided by the IQRS is rather complex: it includes street work, employment services, educational activities, maternity centre, leisure and recreational activities for the youth etc.¹. The organisation employs around 60 employees (IQRS 2012a). The Employment Counselling Centre is the most relevant programme of the organisation regarding the project Learning by working.

IQRS has got the funding for project “Učíme se práci” (Learning by working) in 2012. The project was part of ESF Operational Programme Human Resources and Employment. The project was in the substantial part aimed at young Roma aged 15-26. Most of the project activities started in August 2012 and ended in June 2014 (less than two years). There were no official project partners in the project (IQRS 2014c). The project was seen as a possibility to strengthen and improve the existing activities of the Employment Counselling Centre, as well as the opportunity to add new innovative elements to the employment services.

The capacity of the activities and clients served by the programme was defined by the goals in the project proposal (see IQRS 2012a). It was promised in the project to implement the following activities (see table 2):

¹ The organisation is well known in the Czech Republic. It has gained an award for the best big non-governmental organisation in the Czech Republic in 2013 (<http://www.iqrs.cz/cs/kvalita>).

Table 2: Proposed capacity of the project “Učíme se práci/Learning by working”

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Activity description</i>	<i>Proposed client capacity</i>	<i>Proposed worker capacity</i>
Activity 1	Active matching	600 clients	3 full time advisory workers, 1 full time worker for employment, 1 lawyer (all in cooperation)
Activity 2	Training of job search competences	280 clients	
Activity 3-1	Specific education	8 clients	
Activity 3-2	Wage subsidy	8 clients	
Activity 3-3	Travel costs reimbursement	16 clients	
Activity 4	Cooperation with employers	30 employers	
	New employers addressed	140 employers	
	New work places	4 new work places	
Activity 5	Evaluation		

Source: IQRS, 2012a

Due to very ambitious goals of the project the organisation invested more time and financial means to its implementation than initially planned in the project (Woman, project manager).

Activity 1 and 2

There were 4 more outreach social workers involved in the project apart from the project team. The estimated workload of this additional capacity was from 0.5 to 0.75 for the last 6 months of the project duration. The costs of around 280,000 CZK (i.e. 10,200 EUR) were borne by the organisation.

Activity 3 and 4

Project capacity for these activities was also insufficient and 3 more employees from the leadership of the organisation and outreach social workers were involved as follows:

- One employee for 8 to 9 months before the end of the project on 0.8
- One employee for 8 to 9 months before the end of the project on 0.5
- One employee for 6 months before the end of the project on 0.5 – 0.75

The estimated costs covered by the other than project sources were around 450,000 CZK (i.e. 16,400 EUR).

Activity 5

Due to the intensive evaluation work before the end of the project to accurately monitor the indicators 2 more employees were involved on 0.3 and 0.1 workload for the last 6 months of the project. The costs covered by the organisation from other than project sources were around 80,000 CZK (i.e. 2,900 EUR).

The organisation invested staff effort on the top of the project budget to the amount of almost 30,000 EUR. Some of the hours worked were, however, considered as overtime which is non-paid.

The organisation follows the standards of quality in social services provision. For this reason, the team has formulated methodical guidelines for service provision – how to define the goal of the service with the client, how to deal with a clients, how to find an agreement, how to plan the service provision, how to receive and deal with complaints from clients and how to raise quality, awareness and accessibility of the provided services. These guidelines are

reformulated as needed by the team (also due to staff turn-over to find formulations understandable and comfortable for every team member) (Woman, project manager).

Process standards of the services as such are not defined from the outside but the project has to follow the ESF project rules (e.g. monitoring standard of progress in the project each half a year), Czech law standards etc. Internal standards were defined by providing methodical instructions on how to work with individual clients (IQRS 2012b, IQRS 2014d), methodical instruction for cooperation in using ALMP (IQRS, 2014d) and clear case monitoring instructions (for individual workers on how to provide evidence).

The provision of training courses has been standardised in terms of clients' competences when entering the course and measuring the competence gained due to the course attendance (guide on how to measure client's development). These guides were formulated for the courses provided within the project.

Work positions in the project can be divided into two groups (core positions and support positions)². The following work positions were defined as necessary for running the project in the project proposal:

- Core positions: 1) Three workers for employment, 2) Worker for cooperation with employers, 3) Lawyer (legal consultant).
- Support positions: 4) Project manager, 5) Project coordinator, 6) Project administration worker, 7) Financial manager, 8) Social work supervisor.

Workers for employment and worker for cooperation with employers were employed full-time, while most of other support/infrastructure positions were rather small and the supervisor was paid hourly for hours provided. During the project the key work positions have changed.

- Positions of the workers for employment positions were divided among several people with the goal to provide the service both in the Employment Counselling Centre and during the outreach work (IQRS 2013a, IQRS 2013b).
- The position of the worker for cooperation with the employers changed during the project. Firstly, this position was substantially reduced (IQRS 2013a), later it was increased again (IQRS 2014a).

As mentioned above, the workload invested to complete the project and achieve the set-out objectives was higher than planned (partly uncovered, partly paid from other sources of the organisation). Key staff members on several positions also changed due to various reasons – mainly due to turn over and consequent availability of staff. One of the key positions was unoccupied for five months during the project.

The Project Manager appointed to lead the project left the organisation and the position was taken over by a new staff member. Due to this fact, it took some time to clearly recognise delays of the project in major activities. Consequently, the staff effort was increased to compensate for the slow and not-well coordinated start of the project. This pressure partially led to the frustration of involved employees due to lack of time and obligation to achieve the very ambitiously set-out goals (Woman, project manager).

² This refers to classical management theory dividing workers according to their part on the direct creation of product or direct provision of the service.

Also due to the involvement of other employees in the project, these complications did not have much impact on the outcomes and delivered services. It partially had an impact on the selection of employers and placing clients in jobs in activity 1, where in one case the communication with the employer was not sufficient and therefore the client did not stay at the position for long. This was due to delays and a lack of time by the end of the project. Poor management of the project at the beginning also meant that some activities were not being so actively developed right from the start (e.g. job clubs which took place only later in the project because the employees found them difficult to implement and had low motivation to use this tool) (Woman, project manager).

During the project the sufficient space and access to 3 PCs for the clients were provided (IQRS 2013b). They used the infrastructure of the organisation – premises of the Employment Counselling Centre, of the Youth Club, Placky (green space and playground for youth). The resources of the project were sufficient and helped to cover the operational costs of the organisation due to available indirect costs eligible in the project. The only budget line that turned out to be short was personal costs (as explained above).

One link to other practices can be seen in the inner cooperation within IQRS. Note that the educational activities other than activities specified above were not supported in the project.³ The project was interconnected with the other educational activities (e.g. the language course, manual skills training), which were funded from other sources (IQRS 2013b, IQRS 2014a). The project was intended to be enriched by the realisation of job clubs (IQRS 2013b) and use of an Ethnic friendly employer project. Public institutions as well as private companies were contacted during activity 4, with variable success. In many cases the cooperation looked well, but at the end only modest results were achieved (IQRS 2014a).

Key stakeholders for the project were the employers. IQRS contacted hundreds of them but formally reported (in monitoring indicators) cooperation with only those which showed some interest in employing Roma people. Finally, in Brno 4 employers hired people from the project. Other key partners were providers of the programmes like vocational training. Their flexibility has turned out to be very important. When an employer wanted to hire a project participant, he could not wait until the person completed the course in the usual run. Often, the partners provided the training individually, or outside their usual schedules. The Employment Office was not involved in the project implementation. The project provided parallel services to the activities of the Employment Office and the team aimed to provide the support for their clients within the planned activities in the project.

The cooperation of the organisation with the Employment Office was facilitated through Community planning of Social Services organised by the City but did not play a key role in this project. On the contrary, the Employment Offices in general may perceive these projects as competing. The next important actors for employment of Roma people are city districts and other municipal organisations (such as Public Transport Company) where IQRS tried to place their clients on public subsidised work places. However, often these workplaces are in street cleaning and maintenance (feeding the stereotype of poor work competencies of Roma sweeping the pavements in the city) (Woman, project manager).

³ From the perspective of the IQRS the completion of the education is preferred to finding a job, when working with young Roma (IQRS 2012a, woman, project evaluation and monitoring coordinator; man, employment counsellor).

4. Project implementation and outputs

4.1 Targeting of the program

The project was targeted at the long-term unemployed from the socially excluded localities in Brno and other cities (Břeclav) older than 15, with specific emphasis on the group 16-25, and those who have multiple/cumulated handicaps (low professional competences, lack of practical work experience, loss of work habits, lack of trust by employers, low self-confidence, discrimination in the labour market). During the project the targeting of services was broadened to young clients (below 18 years old) (Man, employment counsellor)⁴.

This strategy is close to the targeting of the activities of the Employment Counselling Centre of IQ Roma servis: these are the long-term unemployed young people, in risk of social exclusion (see section on the project design). The specific target group was mothers re-entering the labour market (nearly 35% of the participants) and young people in age 15-26.

The project was open to anybody from the target group (had to be older than 15 years) visiting the Employment Counselling Centre or part of the outreach programme (Woman, project evaluation and monitoring coordinator, Man, employment counsellor).

Activity 1 and 2 was accessible to all clients who were seeking employment. As for the training courses, these were accessible to active and motivated clients who were struggling to find job for a longer time. Clients who were offered a workplace through the project must have matched in several aspects: (1) in profession or training, (2) other work-related competences and (3) motivation (e.g. displayed through long-term cooperation with the Centre) (Woman, project manager).

Publicity/ dissemination tools have played an important role in the project implementation in several respects:

- Reach and intake of the participants
- Increasing engagement of and cooperation with the employers
- Engagement of other stakeholders
- Creating positive attitudes and increasing support among the public

The project has used several dissemination tools⁵:

NGO IQ Roma servis took a great advantage of linking the project with the other activities which helped to disseminate the project and to recruit both the participants/clients and partners (mainly employers) (Woman, project evaluation and monitoring coordinator).

- Field social work in the excluded localities
- Counselling centre of IQRS
- Centre for employment of IQRS
- Ethnic Friendly Brand project

⁴ These young Roma are usually without education, competences for job search, without motivation to look for more qualified jobs. They did not finish high school, or finished their education in primary school (Man, employment counsellor).

⁵ Source: IQRS 2014 Shrnující informace.

In particular, the potential clients were approached by social workers and counsellors through field social work, Counselling centre and Centre for employment and Low Threshold Centre.

Web pages presenting the project:

www.esfr.cz; www.iqrs.cz; www.ethnic-friendly.cz;

The following presentation were placed there:

- Learning by working – about the project
- The offer of cooperation for employers
- Job clubs IQ Roma servis
- The press releases below (4 press releases)

Posters and information leaflets (600) on the following topics: employment services, job interview and how to prepare oneself, Job Clubs, re-qualification programme offers, job subsidy offer, transport subsidy offer.

Press releases:

- Example of cooperation with Ethnic Friendly Brand holder Drogerie Markt s.r.o.
- Employers in Brno provided a chance to young Roma to strive for a better position in society
- Good practice in using active labour market policy tools
- We are learning by working – satisfied employers and Roma

It may be assumed that those young Roma who do not participate are not in contact with the counselling centre of IQRS, or they are not addressed through other services of IQRS like field work. These Roma are those who are totally discouraged, or those who opt for the alternative ways of coping with inequalities (Woman, employment counsellor).

4.2 Addressing needs

A high degree of the responsiveness to the needs of the participants represents the key device of the project. The project is based on individualised case-work aiming to address, in a complex way, the multiple barriers in the labour market.

Within the introductory phase of the project the mapping of the available job opportunity was carried as well as specification of the “typical client” member of the target groups (according to age, education, skills and job experience, demanded job positions). The front-line/case-workers carried diagnostics of the readiness of the client to gain a job. After this stage, concrete activities appropriate for him/her were offered (job mediation and assistance, tutoring in the labour market, training in competences and/or direct support – job subsidy, transport subsidy).⁶ In all these activities the principle of the individual case-work was applied: as a starting point the individual action plan was prepared in cooperation with the client before starting the activities.

The manual of the competences for the labour market for the youth was one of the two key working materials produced within the project which aims to help the young unemployed to be oriented within and to function in the labour market.

⁶ Source: IQRS 2014 Shrnující informace.

The monitoring system of the activities, processes, as well as of the results of the project, was developed at the beginning. Evaluation and monitoring represented in fact one of the main 6 project activities. This was based on the computerised system of the internal electronic database where the data on clients and activities were evidenced in standardised form: there are personal files on the clients and evidence about meetings with them, their activities, participation in the programmes, placements in jobs.

Among other information collected about the type of job, type of contract – duration, who helped to find job, and job retention within a period of 4 months, if possible.

The summary data are provided in the form of statistics. There is also qualitative assessment available through the reflections on the fulfilment of the individual action plans of clients, notes about individual contacts (Man, employment counsellor), and changes in clients' situation were assessed each half year.

Similarly, data were collected on the contacting employers, their database, activities and cooperation on implementation of active labour market policy measures, as well as their internal culture. The above data are assessed by the specialist for evaluation. The project was evaluated in half year cycles.⁷

In total 622 participants took part in the project, 296 men and 326 (52%) women.

There were 340 participants from Brno neighbourhoods (152 younger than 30 years), 159 men (89 younger than 30 years), 181 women (63 younger than 30 years).

In the activity 'competences for job search' there were 401 participants in total (Brno – 199, 91 below 30) while the original plan was 280 in total. This means that about one third of the participants (221, in Brno 141) were provided just job-mediation or related counselling services. The monitoring system provides the overview of the outputs of the project/participation in the project activities (activity no 2 and no 3):

Table 3: Capacity of the project in the individual abilities raising activities (output results)

	Participants	Men	Women	Participants Brno ⁸	Men	Women
Training course						
PC skills for job search	155	60	95	86/34	35/16	51/18
Professional CV	185	86	99	106/55	43/30	63/25
Phone call with employer	151	53	98	76/30	25/14	51/16
Job interview	103	30	73	61/31	17/16	44/15
Work legislation	135	36	99	70/32	24/14	46/18
Group PC skills	15	2	13	13/2	2/0	11/2
Re-qualification	14 (15 re-qualification courses)	9	5	8/6	6/4	2/2
Total	316	133	183	157/76	69/44	88/32

Source: IQRS 2014d, for Brno computations from IQRS database

⁷ IQRS 2014: Souhrnná informace.

⁸ Please, note that the second figures in the cells (after slash) for Brno are participants up to 30 years of age.

In direct support measures participations were as follows: 15 re-qualifications courses (Brno – 9 re-qualification courses – 8 participants), 17 transport subsidies (8 in Brno) and 7 job subsidies (wage subsidy to employer) (4 in Brno)

One of the workers for employment emphasised as an important contribution/value added of the project, when compared to the standard activities of the Employment Counselling Centre: *“Finally, we could offer something more than job mediation, counselling. Especially important was training in competences and vocational training. Vocational training provided by Employment Office is not accessible for most of our participants since secondary school certificate is required.”* (Woman, employment counsellor)

As mentioned above, the project has been quite ambitious in its goals. They were set-up based on previous experience:

- With the target group within the operation of Employment Counselling Centre – estimations of the potential number of clients was based on the number of clients of the centre and experience from the outreach programme (Woman, project evaluation and monitoring coordinator)
- With different projects submitted within calls of different priority axes (such as 3.2 of the ESF programme) – usually higher numbers of monitoring indicators to be achieved were selected. It turned out to be not so important within the call where the project was submitted. But the previous professional experience of the project implementing organisation (and author) meant that the numbers are higher than could have been. This also partially caused stress and frustration of the employees (together with weak management in the first months of the project duration).

The balance between the activities – how many clients to be involved in what activity – and related budgetary division was regulated by the call for proposals. Therefore, the goals and their proportion is also influenced by the funding programme as such.

The project is aimed at providing support through various instruments to young Roma parallel to the usual instruments of the ALMP provided by the Employment Offices. Despite the will to build meaningful cooperation between these actors (recently through Community Planning of Social Services), this project actually aims to back-up the insufficient support from the Employment Office and selective access to the usual ALMP instruments.

4.3 Empowerment, engagement and choice

The project was top-down project implemented by an NGO which is well aware of the needs of the target group thanks to the long-term individual, family and community social work within the excluded neighbourhoods.

The participants of the project – although they were not in the role of principal agent – could express their needs and also to co-determine the activities aiming at them/helping them by participating in the process of Individual Action Plan setting. The principle of individual approach and empowerment of the clients was applied as a guiding rule. It was effectively used by the participants. Preparation of the Individual Action Plan is always a co-creation process between the client and the worker, and the final agreement on the objectives is a compromise. This process is also regulated by the methodical guidelines (see chapter 3).

Social worker said that the look of the project is mainly influenced by social workers previous experience rather than by wishes of the clients. It is very difficult to persuade clients to be initiative in saying their wishes (Man, employment counsellor).

On the other hand the choices available to them have been limited to the activities offered in the project. Still, there was a range of options available to them: individual support in job search, counselling and job mediation, training in job search competences, direct support – job subsidy and transport subsidy, supervision on the workplace. These options have been broadly discussed between employment focused workers and the clients within Individual Action Plans. Respect to the client and his/her wishes represents a rule in the Centre for Employment IQRS (Woman, employment counsellor).

Young people involved in cooperation with Employment Counselling centre were sometimes clients of other services for a younger target group – using services of the Youth Club (Client of the project, young Roma woman). There is an overall idea to direct the clients of Youth Club in their young adult age to the Employment Counselling Centre although for some of them it is a difficult change, mainly in the design of the service which is more formal and requires somewhat serious approach (Woman, project evaluation and monitoring coordinator and 2).

4.4 Stakeholders involved

Cooperation with the stakeholders (employers, municipality, employment office in Brno, and others) was considered to be the crucial element of the project. This is the reason why the methodology of cooperation of the non-profit sphere with employers, state-public administration and municipal administration was created. This fits very well to the key objectives of the long-term strategic plan of IQ Roma servis.

During the whole period of project implementation it was recognised that the key partners are the employers. For this reason 227 employers (193 in Brno) were addressed in private, non-profit and public sector with the offer of the Ethnic Employer Brand and with direct support to job creation for clients.

In total 5 new jobs were created thanks to subsidies and 7 clients provided with job subsidies, results very close to the planned outcomes (Brno - 4 clients – supported job positions, incl. 3 NEW job positions).

Also, 15 new jobs were created without subsidy thanks to project activities and negotiations with employers (4 in Brno) (IQRS 2014d, for Brno computations from IQRS database).

4.5 Competences and resources involved

There were two key competencies recognised as crucial for the project implementation:

1. On the side of the participants, certain level of motivation was necessary so that the activities might be successful (motivation level was not so easy to sustain during the whole duration of the project) (IQRS 2015).
2. On the side of the stakeholders it was the long-term experience of the implementing organisation (IQRS) in identifying the needs of the clients, designing and

implementing the activities which meet their needs and to manage the project effectively. This was gained thanks to the activities of the Centre for Employment (IQRS).

3. The implementing body (IQRS) is trusted by the participants thanks to the long-term beneficial activities and support provided, and approach.

There was another precondition which was the already existing cooperation among the partners, especially important was the cooperation with the employers developed thanks to the other Ethnic Friendly Employer Brand project. Other necessary professional competences are described in subchapter 2.3. In particular, flexibility and managerial skills represented important devices.

The project employed 10 job positions (5 full time equivalent workers plus one time-to time supervisor).

- programme manager (0.1 FTE),
- coordinator (0.2 FTE),
- project administration (0.2 FTE),
- financial manager (0.2 FTE),
- employment counsellor (2.15 FTE),
- worker for cooperation with employers (0.9 FTE),
- lawyer (0.3 FTE),
- supervisor (60 hours per year).

Total costs of the project lasting from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2014 was 5,132,873 CZK (i.e. around 187 000 EUR).

(Brno part represented about half of the cost (53%), corresponding to the numbers of the participants: 2,715,000 CZK, about 99,000 EUR).

These total costs included:

Personnel costs: 3,884,453 CZK, i.e. 143,869 EUR (24 months of the above 10 job positions)

Equipment: 53,400 CZK, i.e. 1,978 EUR

Purchasing services: 222,000 CZK, i.e. 8,222 EUR

Direct support (job creation, transport subsidies, courses) 250,400 CZK, i.e. 9,279 EUR

Overheads 705,638 CZK, i.e. 26,135 EUR

The expenditure on vocational programmes (provided as purchased services through Employment Offices) represented between 4,500 CZK (in the case of driving licence for fork-lift (truck) to about 8,500 CZK (PC courses)).⁹

Job subsidies were provided in amounts up to 24 thousand CZK per month (this is the level of the average wage), which means that this could also cover social insurance, since the wages offered were considerably lower. In total about 83 thousand CZK were provided for 4 job positions in Brno, this is only about 20 thousand per one job position in average.

⁹ The currency rate used: 1 EUR = 27.50 CZK.

Transport subsidies in Brno covered the cost of public transport, on average about 700 CZK per participant covered the cost of transport for the first month of employment before the first salary was received.

The costs of the project may be assessed as pretty low. Considering 622 participants it was about 8,300 CZK per participant, if we consider only those who got at least job-search competences training, it was 12,800 CZK per participant.¹⁰ Note, that only a very minor part of the participants (15 participants) received a vocational training programme and similarly low numbers were supported through job subsidies and transport subsidies.

It is possible to compare some other projects financed from ESF and targeting Roma like the project “New Chance – micro-region Kojetínsko” where cost per participant are estimated at 40 thousand CZK, or “Support to work integration of Roma minority in Vsetín region where the costs per participant are estimated at 105 thousand CZK or “The other chance for Roma minority from Karviná” where costs per participant are estimated at 120 thousand CZK. The reason for these costs are that typically the projects oriented to this target group are quite complex in using various tools: most of the participants get individual diagnostics, job-search competences training, vocational training. Often, a considerable share of them also get job subsidies. The numbers of the participants are typically less than 100 or only a little more (estimates are based on the information about project costs and numbers of the participants from the web pages of the individual projects, see <http://www.esfcr.cz/modules/projects/index.php?lang=1>).

In contrast IQRS covered a rather broad group of participants and concentrated on job mediation and counselling, accompanied by training in job-search competences. A big emphasis was put on the work with the employers as one of key activities, assuming that this could bring positive results. IQRS profited from their own long term experience and skills.

4.6 Process evaluation criteria

Several drivers were identified among which the most important:

- ambitious objectives leading to higher capacity dedicated to the project
- creativity in finding arguments for employers
- thorough preparation of clients – better and more intensive matching
- assistance of the IQRS staff during the hiring process
- meditating the relationship between employer and employee

For the successful implementation a good cooperation with agencies providing training was important in order to prepare the candidates as flexibly as needed.

The ambitious goals of the project are perceived both as a driver, but also as in certain respect as a negative element bringing much frustration and stress to the employees of the project. Other barriers were seen as:

- the contacts with employers were not yet established – the project duration was too short to allow the placement of more clients
- parallel run of similar project in the last months of Learning by working duration – confluent aims, responsibilities of workers

¹⁰ In fact it was about 20% higher since IQRS invested more human resources into the project, beyond the budget provided.

- fluctuation of workers during the project
- external changes in policy context – ongoing changes in the ALMP – subsidy on workplaces (explained further below).

From the data and documents provided we can see that from the time perspective some outcome indicators are very heavily misbalanced towards the end period of the project (see table 4). The project was not successful in the first part but due to high effort in the second part of the project it was possible to accomplish the goals (see below).

Table 4: Time progress in Accomplishment of project goals

Activity	Activity description	7-12 2012	1-6 2013	7-12 2013	1-3 2014	4-6 2014	TOTAL
Activity 1	Active matching	53	145	173	199	222	558
Activity 2	Training of job search competences, job clubs etc.	15	70	122	271	245	759
Activity 3-1	Specific education (training)	0	2	0	4	9	15
Activity 3-2	Wage subsidy	0	0	0	1	6	7
Activity 3-3	Travel costs reimbursement	0	1	0	5	11	17
Activity 4	New employers addressed	?	33	57	89	45	227
	New work places	0	0	0	1	4	5

Source: IQRS 2013 a b, 2014 a b c

Following non-organisational barriers were found during the project:

- Individual competences: Social worker described how they worked with young clients: *“Young people are shy or they have bad previous experience that employers do not want to recruit them. They lack competences and want us to solve their problems. We teach them to do it themselves, to create CV...but there was nothing to write to the CV without any education or previous experience...I think that work experience is biggest problem....Raising their competences strengthens their employability on the labour market”* (Man, employment counsellor).
- Trap of unemployment and trap of poverty is relevant for some clients, they were unable to find a job similarly paid as their income from social benefits. The parents did not allow their children to work because they would lose part of social benefits (Man, employment counsellor).
“We have had to solve this problem in several cases. In some of them young people moved out from their parents’ household in order the family would not lose welfare entitlements” (Woman, employment counsellor).
- Clients under 18 years are in a difficult situation because they are limited on employment by law. Simultaneously their motivation to return to the education system is limited due to their previous school experience (Man, employment counsellor).
- People prefer to work close to their home (IQRS 2014 b).
- Some people are subjected to financial sanctions which limit their willingness to get an official job (IQRS 2014b).

The project was implemented from July 2012 until June 2014. In this period the context of active labour market policy was drastically changing and not very supportive to the project.

In 2012 the centre-right government cut the expenditure on ALMPs and the number of ALMP measures participants dropped to less than 10% of the unemployment stock (own computations based on data by Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs). Due to this change, the Employment Office in Brno was limited in its capacity to offer participation in ALMP measures to the project participants.

Since the second half of 2013 until 2014 when the interim government and newly elected left-centre coalition came to power the new initiatives in ALMP emerged and the scope of ALMP increased (by about half in 2013 and doubled in 2014 when compared to 2012). At the same time, new specific national projects financed generously from EU funds were implemented which offered, for example, job subsidy to young people to gain work experience, jobs in a higher amount than the job subsidies provided within the project what made cooperation with employers even more difficult (Focus group at IQ Roma servis, June 2014).

4.7 Innovativeness

The area of the policy innovation was employment (and education to some extent) in this case. The logic of intervention is mainly underpinned with SID – social integration discourse (competences) but also important is that the intervention contradicts the dominating MUD discourse and thus creates trust between young Roma and the stakeholders. Re-distribution (RED) of job opportunities is also included in the policy in lesser extent.

The key innovations of the project consist in several aspects¹¹:

1. Application of the case management approach (in fact non-existent in the Czech context of employment policies) based on the complex case-work with the aim to improve the social-economic situation of the target group
2. Continuous, interconnected services, created in cooperation with the client, based on the individual diagnostic and planning of the activities which followed
3. Active involvement of employers as well as of state institutions and municipalities (cooperation with employers)
4. Dissemination of the examples of good practice with the aim to suppress discrimination in the labour market

From a long-term perspective, the development of new methods of cooperation among the employers, NGOs and clients are promising when NGOs function as a mediator and supervisor of the quality of cooperation, and a guard of compliance to the rules of cooperation between client and employer.

The innovative solution was implemented as the top-down institutional solution by the NGO, in cooperation within the network of actors – employers, employment office, municipality, other.

The solutions is addressing dimensions of neglect of the target groups in the mainstream policy, this is neglect of the needs of the target group. Secondly, it also addresses the lack of trust among the participants, employers and employment office. The NGO IQRS is functioning as a trust building actor, in the role of the principal and mediator of cooperation. Also, the communing dimension is addressed to some extent, by improving the perception/image of Roma among the Czech public.

¹¹ IQRS 2014d.

Within the typology developed in WP6, which distinguished the target groups addressed by the policies, the target group consists mainly from the young people which seem to be motivated at least to some extent (not prone to alternative solutions) although sometimes discouraged and sometimes resigning (due to low self-confidence and negative experiences with the labour market). Some of them have more competences (and need just some direct support) while most of them (prevailing part) lack labour market competences and job skills. Summarised, three groups of the clients are identified in the project, the prevailing group being young people who are motivated but lack skills/abilities.

The project itself is flexible to great extent to recognize these individual differences and to offer individualized support by suggesting an Individual Action Plan which mirrors the differences among the participants and their different needs quite appropriately.

The project recognised the needs of the target group from the beginning (see the part on project design) which was the reason to win the funding from ESF. It was also consistent to meet these needs during implementation phase thanks to effective management.

4.8 Success factors and conditions, critical implementation barriers

It was required in the project proposal to specify the numbers of the participants in various project activities as well as output and outcome/effects indicators. Within the implementation of the project it proved that the needs of the clients required a different structure/proportion/pattern of activities which would best help them to get employment (as specified in the individual action plans). On the other hand, the ambitious goals set-out in the project proposal are considered as both as a driver and a barrier (Woman, project manager):

“Well, we were under pressure a bit that we have to fulfil it (the project) so we dedicated an extreme amount of energy into it. Together with negotiating workplaces, communication with employers, finding various arguments why it should work...This time we went for something completely new about which we knew in advance how ambitious it was, working with young unemployed Roma. And for the employers nowadays it still seems unreliable and there is not high demand for this workers from their side.”

The implementation of the project was flexible enough to react to the needs of the clients: it appeared that the need of training in job search competences is much higher than the original expectations. On the other hand the demand for a direct job subsidy was not so high: not so much because of sufficient labour demand, rather because of the engagement of the employers in job creation and their reliability. Similarly, transport subsidy was less demanded since the clients, due to their low skills and experience, achieve only a very low wage and for this reason they prefer to work close to their residence and not commute to work. (IQRS 2014d).

The other experience was that the planned job clubs were not of much interest to the project participants: rather they preferred the individual counselling/support and courses in job-search competences.

The overall assessment by IQRS (2015) has recognised as key success factors of project implementation the following:

Substance of the project:

Matching of the concrete clients with the concrete employers

Contracted employers at the beginning of the project is an important device – they are the most important partner

The project is unique in the emphasis put on employers. It has profited from the beginning from the already established cooperation networks under the other project “Ethnic Friendly Employer Brand”. However, with the high numbers of the participants in the project, the significance of the acquisitions aiming at the employers and cooperation with them proved to be a crucial issue. Among others, a special job position for cooperation with the employers was established soon.

“The work with employers has become more important and more effective. Thanks to the project we have changed the method. Now, we are starting from the concrete client, his/her abilities and needs. Then we are searching a addressing the suitable employers with the offer. (Woman, employment counsellor).

Mediating role of IQRS in the relationship between employer and employee turned out to be a very important factor for a successful start and duration on the work contract. IQRS accompanied and provided support to the clients at the job interviews. When they were selected, they could undergo one to two days trial to test the match of the person to the position. Further, regular meetings of IQRS, employee and employer were scheduled to facilitate the communication between the contracting parts. As one client states:

“They are still in touch, IQRS and the employer... (The meetings) were mostly about how I liked the job, if they were satisfied, if I was satisfied and so...” (Client of the project, young Roma woman).

Management of the project:

Coordinated planning of the project through regular project meetings

Coordination of the whole of the project activities by one project manager.

Summing up (when learning from the other sections of the report) that several success factors played a role:

- **Internal**
Experienced and trustful NGO IQRS, knowledgeable of the needs of young Roma, equipped with managerial skills and owing established social networks, cooperation with the employers in particular. Commitment and flexibility of people in IQRS.
Motivation on the site of young people.
Cooperative attitude of some employers.
- **External**
Funding from ESF available to expand the scope and range of the activities and to increase the coverage/outreach.

5. Project results/outcomes

The project “Learning by working” ended in June 2014, so in this evaluation we have an opportunity to do a kind of summative evaluation of final project results. We refer separately to quantitative and qualitative part of the evaluation.

Quantitative part of the outcome evaluation

IQRS promised to monitor all relevant goal accomplishment (output/outcome) indicators in the project proposal. According to the evidence (mainly quantitative data) provided to us, we can state that monitoring of the outcomes was systematically done by individual workers and recorded in the database. It is important to note that not all the project “Učíme se práci” was realised in Brno, its activities were also realised in other small towns in the south Moravia region (IQRS 2012b Zpráva o zahájení realizace). In some aspects the hard data evaluation is difficult: it is based on individual workers’ effort, their ability to maintain the contact with the client and changing conditions (typically lost contact, phone number no longer functioning etc.) (Woman, project evaluation and monitoring coordinator). The causal chain between the project activities and the results (job found) is not exactly measured. It is expected and somehow estimated in concrete cases (Woman, project evaluation and monitoring coordinator). The impact of the project was not evaluated.

These are the following outcome indicators results for the employment provided by IQRS.

- Total 120 clients who had got support during the project found job later.
- 79 clients who lived in Brno and who had got support during the project found a job during the project, and 20 others between July 2014 and June 2015, this is 99 placed participants out of 340 (i.e. 29%).
- 38 clients who lived in Brno who were younger than 30 years and who had got support during the project found job during the project duration, 10 other after termination of the project, this is 48 out of 152 participants (i.e. 32%).
- 5 new work places were created during the project.

The placement results (one third of the young participants) seem to be satisfactory, considering the heavily disadvantaged target group and that to most of the participants only job-mediation and counselling services, accompanied with job-search training were provided. When comparing with the placement results in 2012 before the project was started, there were 296 clients in the Centre for employment cooperating from which 29 found a job, in Brno 234 clients, from which 24 found a job, this is about 10% in both cases. This would mean that the projects increased the placement results by 200% which is an excellent value added.

We, however, need to note that the jobs were more often temporary, non-standard jobs – this corresponds to the fact that young Roma are attached to the secondary labour market, sometimes in the informal sector.

Table 5: Job positions (99) of the project participants (and participants of the other activities of the Centre for Employment IQRS which count for 39 job positions)

	Free work agreement	Public works	Standard work Contract	Work without contract	Total
7-12 2012	9		5	6	20
1-12 2013	35	8	8	14	62
1-6 2014	15	6	12	3	36
7-12 2014	10	3	6	1	20
Total	69	17	31	24	138

Source: monitoring database by IQRS

Note: project terminated by June 2014

One can see that the jobs to which the participants of IQRS activities were placed are mostly non-standard jobs: from 139 jobs nearly one half (69) are temporary job positions on free contract agreement. Then 24 jobs are jobs without contract and 17 are temporary public works positions subsidised by Employment Office. Only 24 jobs are standard work contract positions (less than one fifth of the job positions). However, during the project, in 2014 in particular, the share of standard contracts increased to about one third while the share of jobs without contracts dropped to minimum.

Also the quality of jobs provided was appreciated in some cases. A young man was offered a job as a pedagogical assistant at IQRS, which was subsidised by Employment Office through public works job for one year. He worked as leisure activities trainer in Youth centre. *“It was a challenge for me – I was not sure whether I can master well the job. Finally, I enjoyed it. I have only basic education level. It would be fine to get some training as pedagogical assistant but this is not offered. Now, I only can have low paid manual jobs.”* (Client of the project, young Roma man).

The outcomes in the education part of the project were not evaluated (Woman, project evaluation and monitoring coordinator). The only exceptions are formal training courses, where the criteria of success are defined (usually attendance and some skill (competences) testing at the end of the course. In other courses the success is usually based on appraisal of lecturer or social worker.

Accomplishing of the project goals:

Most of the project goals were accomplished (see table 6). Note that most of these are output goals. This is in accordance with the demands for monitoring defined in ESF.

Table 6: Accomplishment of project goals at the end of the project

Activity	Activity description	Proposed client capacity	Results of the project	Goals accomp.
Activity 1	Active matching	600 clients	558 clients	No
Activity 2	Training of job search competences	280 clients	401 clients	Yes
Activity 3-1	Specific education (training)	8 clients	15 clients	Yes
Activity 3-2	Wage subsidy	8 clients	7 clients	No
Activity 3-3	Travel costs reimbursement	18 clients	17 clients	Yes
Activity 4	New employers addressed	140 employers	227 employers	Yes
	New work places	4 new work places	5 new work places	Yes
Activity 5	Evaluation	database	evidence	Yes

source: IQRS 2012a; IQRS 2014d

Below we provide brief comments to specified goals:

Training of job search competences: was provided only to participants who didn't have the necessary skills (because they did not have skills and in did not acquire these skills in IQRS before the project.

- 155 people participated in a PC course with the goal to help them find a job.
- 185 people participated in the CV creation course.

- 151 people trained in phone calls with employers.
- 103 people trained for job interviews
- 135 people participated in the course about labour law (labour relations)
- 15 people participated in group PC course¹²

Formal training was provided to 15 people in following skills (technology, fork-lift driving, social care, PC, using saws (forestry), catering and welding). The motivation of clients to undertake training is low – they prefer employment (Woman, project evaluation and monitoring coordinator).

Wage subsidy: was only provided to people aged 15-26, because they are seen due to low qualification as the group with the lowest chances on the labour market (Shrnující informace o realizaci projektu). All wage subsidised participants were also formally trained. The wage subsidy was provided up to the amount of 24 000 CZK. In the second part of the project the subsidy was low when compared to subsidy provided by the employment office and this led to a low interest of employers (Woman, project evaluation and monitoring coordinator).

New work places created: The employers were not much willing to create new workplaces (Woman, project evaluation and monitoring coordinator). There were only 4 new jobs created/subsidised in Brno.

Travel costs reimbursement: There was relatively low interest in commuting to work. Most of the clients preferred to work in their home town even for lower wage (IQRS 2014b). Still in some cases the travel cost reimbursement was useful because the social economic situation of the clients did not allow them to get a job to pay for the travel cost until their first wage (IQRS 2014d). The maximum amount provided was 2000 CZK. Only 8 transport subsidies were provided in Brno, in average in amount 700 CZK for the first month on the job.

Qualitative part of the evaluation

Part of outcome evaluation was conducted during interviews. Some respondents evaluated subjectively the results of the project as good because of the results – it helped difficult clients, cooperation with employers was good (Man, employment counsellor). We did three interviews with young Roma participants in the project. We understand these three cases as (critical cases) illustrations, because it was not possible to evaluate more cases this way.

The first critical case (Client of the project, young Roma man) is a young man who did not finish high school (he only has primary education). He found a job due to individual work during the project. It was a manual job in industry. He has also got training for the job during the project. He was in the job for three quarters of a year but he was forced to leave because his new employer was late paying his wage several times. Nowadays he works in temporary job in the building industry.

The second critical case (Client of the project, young Roma woman) is a young woman who found a job during the project in social care. She also found the benefit of the project in personal development due to learning in the project. When the project started she was already trained for the job but she had not found it yet. She found her job with help of individual work and she was also provided with traveling subsidy for the first month of the job. The employer got a financial subsidy from the project for first six months of the job. She presently works in the same job.

¹² Some of the participants took part in more than one training activities.

The third critical case (Client of the project, young Roma man) is a young man who did not finish high school (he only has primary education). He performed always mainly unskilled, precarious, temporary manual jobs. Sometimes these were temporary jobs organised by the municipality: currently he has a similar public works position – cleaning streets, paid just little more than the minimum wage (about 40% of average wage in Czech Republic). He is also doing other small one-off one day, two days jobs in order to earn more money. He was provided by Centre for Employment a job at IQRS as a pedagogical assistant – trainer of the youth in leisure activities/sports. He would prefer to have some similar opportunities again.

Cost-benefit assessment cannot be underpinned with any contra-factual perspective. Nevertheless, one can assess the project as:

- Aimed at a highly disadvantaged target group (although most of the participants were motivated to find a job)
- Relatively cheap (about 8-10 thousand CZK per participant) and providing relatively 'light' support: job mediation and counselling

From this perspective the result is that about one third of the young people who got a job thanks to the project is a good result. Note that the cost per participant represents only about three months social assistance benefit for one person (housing costs not included).

6. Final reflections

6.1 *The role of the pilot/project/practice*

The project was specific in 2 major aspects compared to other project focusing on raising competences of the unemployed in the labour market:

- **Active cooperation with employers**

One key activity of the project was enlarging the network of employers willing to employ Roma (network of Ethnic friendly employers), to establish relationship with them and motivate them to inform IQRS about available workplaces. In this sense, the project wanted to bridge the gap between employers and Roma workers and to build mutual trust and, therefore, tackle the moral underclass discourse and help reduce discrimination in the labour market.

- **Mediation of the hiring process and worker-employer relationship in the early stages**

The project was very attentive to all the stages of the hiring process providing support to project participants before the job interview (professional training, training in soft skills etc.), accompanying the participant to the interview, support in contract conclusion and mediating communication between the employer and employee for the following 6 months of the contract duration in order to achieve mutual satisfaction and prolongation of the contract. This active matching and support in the early stages in work turned out to be an important element in making the project results sustainable through building trust between the parties.

6.2 Innovation

The area of the policy innovation was employment (and education to some extent) in this case. The logic of intervention is mainly underpinned with SID – social integration discourse (competences) but also important is that the intervention contradicts the dominating MUD discourse and thus creates trust between young Roma and the stakeholders. Re-distribution (RED) of job opportunities is also included in the policy to a lesser extent.

The key innovations of the project consist in several aspects¹³:

1. Application of the case management approach (in fact non-existent in the Czech context of employment policies) based on the complex case-work with the aim to improve the social-economic situation of the target group
2. Continuous, interconnected services, created in cooperation with the client, based on the individual diagnostic and planning of the activities which followed
3. Active involvement of employers as well as of state institutions and municipalities (cooperation with employers)
4. Dissemination of the examples of good practice with the aim to suppress discrimination in the labour market

From the long-term perspective, development of the new methods of cooperation among the employers, NGOs and clients are promising when NGOs function as a mediator and supervisor of the quality of cooperation, and a guard of compliance to the rules of cooperation between client and employer.

The solutions addresses dimensions of neglect of the target groups in mainstream policy, this is neglect of the needs of the target group. Secondly, it also addresses the lack of trust among the participants, employers and employment office. The NGO IQRS is functioning as a trust building actor, in the role of the principal and mediator of cooperation. Also, communing dimension is addressed to some extent, by improving the perception/image of Roma among the Czech public.

The project is targeting various groups of unemployed Roma – those who are motivated and have sufficient abilities but lack opportunities to enter the labour market, and mainly those who lack professional and other work-related competences.

6.3 Success factors

The overall assessment by IQRS (2015) has recognised the following as key success factors of project implementation:

Substance of the project:

- Matching of concrete clients with concrete employers
- Contracting employers at the beginning of the project is an important device – they are the most important partner
- Mediating role of IQRS in hiring process and early on job stages

¹³ IQRS 2014d.

Management of the project:

- Coordinated planning of the project through regular project meetings
- Coordination of the whole of the project activities by one project manager

Summing up (when learning from the other sections of the report) that several success factors played a role:

- **Internal**
Experienced and trustful NGO IQRS, knowledgeable of the needs of young Roma, equipped with managerial skills and owing established social networks, cooperation with the employers in particular. Commitment and flexibility of people in IQRS. Motivation of young people.
- **External**
Funding from ESF available to expand the scope and range of the activities and to increase the coverage/outreach.

It has also been distinguished that the synergic effect of more simultaneous projects could have been put in place (simultaneous run of an international project called Together for success of Roma in the labour market), had the personal capacities in the organisation been higher.

6.4 Policy recommendations, transferability

The project is specific in its focus not only on the unemployed but also on the employers and the matching process. The involvement of employers in the project is a demanding activity requiring creativity in formulation of benefits to the employers and certain persistence. Hundreds of employers were contacted in this project (Woman, project manager) but successful and fruitful cooperation has been established with only some of them (tens). This activity therefore requires large enough personal capacity.

The selected approach of subsidising newly created workplaces is not new – it is included in standard instruments of the ALMP – and therefore it is sensitive to changes of the policy context (ALMP). If the Employment Office provides a higher subsidy than the individual ESF project, the employers are more likely to opt for higher support and thus the involvement of employers in the project may be more difficult. On the other hand, it may motivate the actors to establish functioning cooperation between the NGO (expert in work with the target group), Employment Office (to provide the subsidy) and the employers. The Employment Offices themselves turn out to have poor capacity to implement the elements of active matching (as tested in this project) due to extreme workloads.

Lessons learnt from this project:

- Wage subsidy is sensitive to external policy changes
- Building the network of employers is demanding and continuous process
- Public administration, public companies, municipal organisations should be widely approached

- Transport reimbursement for commuting to work is an important element, it is recommended to provided it also to those traveling for a job interview
- Active matching and on the job support and mediation are key elements of the project

The project is transferrable to other contexts with necessary adaptations with regard to: (1) design of the ALMPs, and (2) the specific position of the target group in the labour market, and, more generally, in society. In the Czech context, the project is somehow backing up for the Employment Office who may work with the same instruments, as did the project, but do not systematically do so with the target group of young Roma.

However, most of the key elements of the approach and method of job mediation and support which were developed at Employment Counselling Centre IQRS such as individual approach, matching intensive case-work and work with the employers, cooperation with other stakeholders work with addressing both the unemployed Roma are clearly transferable. This was the case of the pilot project transferred to Sofia (see case study on Roma Youth Employment from Sofia).

References

Organisation and project (internal) materials:

IQRS (2012a). Žádost o finanční podporu z OP LZZ - Učíme se prací.

<http://www.iqrs.cz/cs/kvalita>

IQRS (2012b). Zpráva o zahájení realizace projektu operačního programu lidské zdroje a zaměstnanost – Učíme se prací. (168 ZZRP)

IQRS (2012c). Strategický plán IQ Roma servisu 2012 – 2016.

IQRS (2013a). Průběžná monitorovací zpráva č. 2/2013 (1. 7. – 31. 12. 2012).

IQRS (2013b). Průběžná monitorovací zpráva č. 3/2013 (1. 1. – 30. 6. 2013)

IQRS (2014a). Průběžná monitorovací zpráva č. 4/2014 (1. 7. – 31. 12. 2013)

IQRS (2014b). Mimořádná monitorovací zpráva č. 5/2014 (oprava 4) (1. 1. – 31. 3. 2014)

IQRS (2014c). Závěrečná monitorovací zpráva č. 6/2014

IQRS (2014d). Shrnující informace o realizaci projektu (1. 7. 2012 – 30. 6. 2014)

IQRS (2015). Hodnocení Strategického plánu 2012-2016.