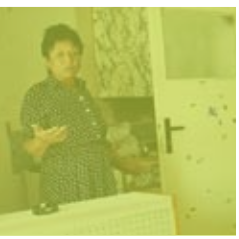
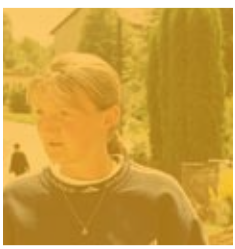
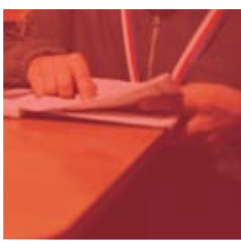
Agency
for Social Inclusion







Social Inclusion in the Municipality

Handbook for Municipality

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Handbook for Municipalities

Agency for Social Inclusion

Social Inclusion in the Municipality

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Agency for Social Inclusion

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Handbook for Municipalities – Agency for Social Inclusion
Social Inclusion in the Municipality

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Introduction

Dear mayors and councillors,

we have prepared for you a Handbook, which should help you with practical decisions about what to do if there are socially excluded localities in your town or municipality.

The Handbook has eight sections. The first one describes the issue of social exclusion itself, how to recognize it and how to react to it, what to do first and what later, with who to cooperate, who to ask for help.

The remaining seven sections focus on individual areas, which you will have to solve – education, employment, housing, security, family, social services and indebtedness. It is impossible to leave out one of these areas, because they all are interconnected.

The Handbook may serve as a manual for comprehensive social integration policy for your municipality or you can "only" use it as an inspiration for your daily decisions and choose proposed measures from individual sections.

The Handbook has been created as a set of methods and best practices, which the Agency for Social Inclusion developed and gathered since its founding by the government in 2008 and during its cooperation with 33 towns, municipalities and micro regions. All measures include links to their practical implementation, detailed description of their implementation, funding options and legislative framework. The enclosed DVD contains 12 videos from towns, where the individual measures have been best implemented. The digital form of the Handbook including the description of activities and achieved results in individual towns, where the Agency operates, can be found at www.socialni-zaclenovani.cz.

The Handbook has been compiled in 2012. Information about the legislative framework and funding possibilities will deteriorate in time; however the main principles of all measures will remain valid for a long time. They are the result of the natural development of social inclusion policies in the Czech Republic at least in the past 20 years. Each has a background of successful and unsuccessful implementations; many of the measures were inspired by foreign practices.

Although the media and public more often speak about issues and bad solutions, there are more and more towns and municipalities in the Czech Republic, which have begun to address the situation of socially excluded localities in a constructive way and they are gradually becoming successful. For those towns and municipalities, which haven't started to address it yet or are addressing it sporadically, this Handbook presents an opportunity to receive inspiration and start addressing social inclusion in a systematic way.

We wish you patience and endurance and are always available should you need our help.

Employees of the Agency for Social Inclusion

What is the Agency for Social Inclusion

- The Agency for Social Inclusion is a governmental support tool for municipalities in the field of social inclusion of inhabitants of socially excluded localities.
- It is a department of the Office of the Government, Section for Human Rights
- It was established by the Government Resolution No. 85 of 23rd January 2008, its mandate has been prolonged by the Government Resolution No. 570 of 25th July 2012.
- It aids towns and municipalities with analysis and evaluation of the situation in socially excluded localities, preparation of the local strategic plan of social inclusion and its fulfilment in the field, with funding of the activities and measures for social inclusion and with ensuring sustainability of inclusive policies in towns and municipalities.
- Currently operates in 26 towns, municipalities or micro regions.
- Uses participation methods – involves not only towns and municipalities and their bodies, but also NGOs, schools and school facilities, the Labour Authority, employers, the police and the public.
- Helps with the activation and involvement of socially excluded persons, particularly the Roma, in addressing the situation in excluded localities.
- Cooperates with Ministries, transfers information from the communal level to the state administration, takes part in forming the national policy of social inclusion and its coordination.
- In cooperation with the Government Commissioner for Human Rights it coordinates the fulfilment of the governmental Strategy of Combating Social Exclusion.
- Participates in the implementation of funding from EU structural funds into the support of regional development and social inclusion.
- Conducts awareness campaigns against hate violence and extremism.

All information can be found at www.socialni-zaclenovani.cz.

Information about cooperation possibilities are available
at the website or telephone number 296 153 223

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Social inclusion in the municipality

THERE'S A SOCIALLY EXCLUDED LOCALITY IN YOUR TERRITORY, WHAT TO DO?

The term "socially excluded locality" itself casts doubts. Is the socially excluded locality a lone house with a couple of families or an apartment block where families of different status live, including the poor and socially weak? And does not this designation bring further depreciation to such locality?

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs mapped the situation in hundreds of municipalities in 2006 and designated more than three hundred localities as socially excluded (see http://www.esfcr.cz/mapa/). This surely is not the whole list, moreover the situation in the territories is changing, some localities have disappeared and some emerged. The interactive map shows localities of various sizes, from dozens of inhabitants to thousands. Further research is planned for 2013.

Although the territorial boundaries of the locality are usually quite apparent, it does not always have to be the case. The "locality" can be surrounded by neighboring buildings or it even can be an entrance or a couple of flats in one panel house.

It is therefore necessary to understand the term "socially excluded locality" in an extensive manner, as a common term, which describes a territory, where people who are socially excluded or threatened by it live. Even this term does not have a unified definition; these are people with a limited participation in society in several areas. Most frequently these are long-term unemployed or unemployable people with low or below average qualification and education. Families or individuals are usually dependent on income from social benefits or illegal employment and often are overindebted. The problem is compounded by a bad school attendance of children and neighborly disputes. Socially excluded people gradually adapt to such a situation, which makes the problem significantly more serious and makes its solution even more difficult. People inside the localities usually create an alternative way of survival, which could be irritable to the neighborhood. This often is a reason of a coexistence disturbance, which in turn can cause serious social conflicts.

The issue of social exclusion often has an ethnic dimension; the localities are often populated by the Roma. Their ethnicity is then explained as a cause of this problem, there is talk of a different culture, dissimilarity and in extreme cases of inadaptability of the Roma. However, if we perceive the issue of social exclusion as an ethnic one, we de facto lose the ability to solve it, because it is primarily a social problem and for its solution it is necessary to use proven methods applied in the Czech Republic as well as abroad.

What are the symptoms?

The problem of social exclusion has many symptoms and its manifestations grow stronger as the exclusion deepens. It is possible to regulate (lessen or even solve) it by applying efficient social policies.

Life in a socially excluded locality

A two-story worn panel house is standing behind a huge puddle of water; a couple of rusty cars are standing in the mud. A worn doorless entrance invites into the bowels of the social institution: the corridors are covered in sticky dirt; there are piles of garbage under the stairs. The walls are thickly covered by writings, doors bear marks of kicking. Behind them are small, usually mouldy rooms, where families with often 6-9 members live. The only furniture is beds and a TV. Water and toilets are common, all use one electric meter for lighting. Once in a while there is a literal fight going on as people have to share a bill of over a hundred thousand crowns for electricity. They fight similarly for water; one 80 litre boiler has to provide water for three flats (which could easily be 16 people including children). People and particularly children immediately begin to be ill in here. Contracts are signed for three months and the rent is below two thousand crowns. Currently there are approximately two hundred people including dozens of children: mostly non-payers from Kladno and also those, who were placed here by the city hall after an accident and await substitute housing. Some even for a couple of years already, so they just sit for days and watch TV. They are mostly unemployed and afraid to go outside in case someone would rob their flat. After all there isn't anywhere to go anyway and as the town is far across the forest.

Brabec, J. *Czech Towns: Nowhere to go*, EURO, 11. 7. 2005.

The most common visible symptoms of the issue are:

- Increasing numbers of long-term unemployed persons, especially with low education and qualification, increasing numbers of job applicants who are difficult to employ
- Increasing numbers of offenses and petty crimes, particularly thefts
- Migration (internal within the municipality, external via the immigration of new inhabitants)
- Deteriorating atmosphere within the town, tensions among people, social unrest
- Increase in violent crime, visible prostitution and procuring, drug distribution
- Increase in the number and size of the socially excluded localities
- Increasing number of below-standard housing, i.e. dormitories, unfurnished apartments etc.
- Visible manifestations of homelessness and begging
- Media constantly publish articles regarding the issues related to social exclusion, inadaptable persons, crime etc.

Some of the less visible problems, which signalize the problem:

- Deepening indebtedness or overindebtedness of the households including lower-middle and middle class households
- Increase in the number of poverty benefits recipients, including contributions towards housing costs
- Increasing number of illegal workers
- Refusal to participate in public service by long-term unemployed
- Deteriorating social and economic situation of the poorest inhabitants in municipalities
-

- Deepening of the inhabitants' addictions to gambling, money lending and drugs
- Deteriorating school attendance of children, increasing number of unexcused absences of children in schools
- Increasing number of cases solved within the social and legal protection of children, increase in the number of preliminary measures or court decisions to take children from families
- Changes in the structure and amount of applications for municipal flats
- Indications by field social workers, who monitor the deterioration of the situation of poor and excluded people in the municipality
- Apathy, people lose motivation to improve their situation

However, these are only the symptoms of the issue, which has deep roots in the past, when it probably hadn't been solved or had been solved insufficiently or wrongly. It could have also been imported into your municipality via immigration.

The problem of social exclusion usually isn't taken into account sufficiently and sometimes not at all. The necessity to solve it is usually caused by crises (public disorder, petty crime, bad coexistence In town, truancy and problems of children at school, dilapidating houses or expanding dormitories and hostels, pressure of the majority of citizens etc.).

It is necessary to realize that these are symptoms of a widespread social problem of people in your municipality or town, which cannot be solved by suppressing its manifestations, but by finding its causes, and subsequently influencing and changing them.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that there won't be one single cause of social exclusion, but a long list of them. Furthermore these causes are interlocked (loss of employment → loss of housing → overindebtedness → migration → poor school attendance/truancy). By addressing one or only selected causes doesn't lead to change; the situation must be solved comprehensively and all causes must be rooted out simultaneously.

The simplified procedure is to focus in the long-term on the removal of causes, which lead to the exclusion of the part of the inhabitants into the fringe of society and in the short time on the symptoms, which are irritable to the people in the municipality, who demand their swift removal. None of these parts can be underestimated.

Is it a serious problem?

Social exclusion is often reduced to the issue or Roma or the so-called inadaptable. Such simplification usually prevents the problem from being solved, because it is based on mistaken (or even mythical) ideas, which are in conflict with reality. A frequent argument is that the "Roma are different", in more extreme cases it is possible to find opinions such as that "they don't want to live like us", "they like ghettoes" and "they don't want to work and send children to schools". Such approach prevents any kind of change as it de facto makes it impossible to solve the situation by involve the excluded persons in the labour market, education, housing market, makes the Roma minority a closed community, which has a group identity and doesn't differentiate individuals according to individual abilities, motivation and activity.

Similarly destructive is to designate the socially excluded persons as inadaptable. This designation is giving them a group identity; in this case a strongly derogative

one. It supports the tendencies of some people to attribute all crime, coexistence difficulties etc. to them. It is very difficult for each individual to get rid of this reputation, convince the public, that he isn't inadaptable and therefore non-inclusive.

The term "inadaptable" is very static; it states that someone has some characteristics, in this case very bad ones. This strongly limits the possibilities of a change in a positive way, i.e. the chance to be included in the society.

As we stated above, the process of social exclusion is on the other hand very dynamic, usually the individual or family have headed into this critical situation for several years, the reasons usually added to each other and intensified. The opposite process – social inclusion – is in its nature **dynamic** as well and demands gradual and well planned steps towards stability – inclusion of a person into society.

Social exclusion is therefore undoubtedly one of the most serious problems of contemporary society; it severely disrupts social cohesion (interpersonal relationships, neighbourhood and community relationships), is connected with very serious pathological phenomena related to crime and therefore security risks.

As such the issue of social exclusion requires educated solutions, i.e. not random ones without consulting experts, other mayors who are solving them, with openness toward finding new information and inspiration, including foreign sources. Inconsistent or partial solution often leads to the deterioration of the problem and mistaken conclusions, that the "prevention failed", "social work won't solve it" etc.

It is also extraordinarily difficult to win the citizens over to solve the issue – both inside the excluded locality and the general public. We often face disagreement, xenophobia and prejudice, in worse cases even active opposition and populism.

What are the consequences of not addressing the issue?

The unaddressed problem of socially excluded locality presents **an extraordinary security risk**. This doesn't mean only petty crime, which can be committed by some inhabitants and is irritable and deteriorates the sense of security in the town/municipality.

In some places we record activity of the so-called child gangs. This is how many people generally, but quite authentically, describe the irritable behaviour of older children and youth, who are negatively influenced by the dissatisfactory situation of their parents, unsuccessful education and often premature end of school attendance (immediately after finishing the elementary school). Young people are frustrated by the failure and lack of vision of further development, poverty and many other things. At the same time many of them have difficulty to find their own identity and simultaneously they react to the xenophobic behaviour of the majority of the town population against them.

In some places there are drug dealers, procurers and moneylenders in the excluded localities.

Crime related to the excluded localities doesn't have to manifest on the surface outside the locality, but can have a devastating effect on the inside, which further complicates the solution of the situation. Many people inside the localities are being extorted by the moneylenders, women and girls are forced into prostitution and especially the young people are endangered by the drug dealers.

The less the responsible institutions (the police, local administration) know about

the situation in the localities, the bigger is the threat of an uncontrolled development, which can even result **in social unrest**. Unsolved situation, particularly in places where problems escalate, is then systematically abused for propagation by extreme-right radicals with the Workers' Party of Social Justice at the forefront.

The failure to address the situation doesn't only mean significant security risks, but more often and long-term also **the breakdown of social cohesion in town, increase in social tensions, loss of identification of inhabitants with public spaces, pressure on political solutions** (including populism). Dramatic consequences can be seen particularly among children at schools, where future social relations and values of the next generations are formed. If the children don't feel comfortable at schools, are spiteful and don't respect each other, the problems in the town will probably get worse.

Prevention, support or repression?

The answer to the question, whether to prioritize prevention or repression is easy to guess. One cannot function without the other. **People living in social exclusion must feel both – support and help and a clear, comprehensible order and sanction for its violation.**

All measures must be prepared so that they would be comprehensible to all or at least to the majority. The optimal situation is when people from the municipality participate in their creation at least in the way that they help to propose and develop them.

If the rules are not comprehensible to the people in the locality or are unreachable, they will surely fail and won't be fulfilled.

It cannot be expected that only the stricter conditions, monitoring and enforcement of debts would lead to the desired result.

Repression has a negative impact on the psychic condition of people and their motivation to participate in life and develop.

The feeling of fear, which each repression develops in people, has destructive effects on the relationships in society, mutual trust, willingness to actively participate in the life in the municipality and contribute to its development. Therefore it is always necessary that the repressive measures would be maximally just and at the same time had a clear recourse for everyone they are aimed at. It is necessary that there is a variant for each individual to rectify in a constructive and comprehensible way that which is why repression is being used on him. It is clear that only by increasing the pressure and threats of punishment the people won't integrate into society but on the contrary they will fail more and more.

By balancing pressure and support it is possible to achieve the best results.

Usually the talk is about balancing prevention and repression; however, this is inaccurate. It is necessary to put supportive measures opposite to the repressive ones. Preventive measures, which precede social exclusion, should be a natural part of so-

Janov: from the "battlefield" to integration projects

At the end of the last year the ultra-right radicals stormed twice through a Litvínov house development and attempted to make the largest contemporary pogrom against the Roma. They were accompanied by active and latent support of local "non-Roma" citizens. At that moment it seemed that coexistence in the housing development would be almost impossible in the future and that its streets will turn into a battlefield. The immigration tide of poor and indebted people from various towns in the Central Bohemia and Ústí Regions, who

solved their critical situation by exchanging their flat with a "better" address for housing in Janov regardless of what it would mean for their future, was at its peak. One and a half year later there are ten more policemen in the streets of Janov, who focus among others on prevention. There are also additional field social workers, less gambling houses and a couple of months ago a pilot project of transition housing has started, which involves flat owners, the social department, town leadership and the non-profit organizations. The principle is simple – who diligently fulfils their rental obligations, moves up into better housing, who doesn't pay moves down into worse (and receives support from field social workers so that even his situation would improve and stabilize e.g. by finding a job, which is one of the crucial principles of social services – to assist there where without help there would be a fall into a unsolvable situation, which would be detrimental to the neighbourhood as well!).

The members of the Agency's local partnership prepare materials for widespread integration projects funded from the structural funds, for which the town leadership applied and is preparing them for submission. The projects will help to provide not only social, educational and employment services, but also reconstruction of the school building in the Janov housing development, which will serve children as a centre for free time, education and other development activities.

Litvínov succeeded in mixing a balanced cocktail of preventive and repressive measures. The other town inhabitants starting to take notice as well and they appreciate the improving atmosphere in the housing development and the town hall's approach.

Šimáček, M. *Litvínov and Most – stars in social integration,* Aktuálně.cz, 6. 5. 2010.

cial policies of the municipalities – a safety net for all who find themselves in a crisis situation.

What could happen if you try to force socially excluded people out of your town/municipality?

Forcing poor and socially exclude people out of towns/municipalities (by selling the housing fund, not prolonging rent contracts, combination of checks and coercive measures) **is an extraordinarily incorrect way of solving the situation.**

Forcing people out and the related forced migration **only deepens the crisis of socially excluded people, cuts their family, friendly and institutional ties,** which has a devastating effect particularly on children, who have to go to a new school in a position of outsiders. People, who find alternative housing in dormitories or other substandard housing conditions usually cannot gain permanent residence in the town and remain in the registry of authorities of their original residence. This greatly complicates or makes it impossible for them to maintain a long-term functional contact with institutions. Being in the position of hardly employable persons these **migrants usually have no chance to succeed in finding new job in the new place.**

The migrants might have problems to create a relationship to the new residence, which further complicates their integration into society. The situation is further worsened by the fact that the original inhabitants adopt a negative attitude towards these newcomers, who are socially weak, which makes it almost impossible to develop a non-conflict open coexistence.

Forcing socially excluded persons out of the municipality/town **is an extraordinarily incorrect approach even towards other municipalities/towns, their leadership**

and citizens. Moving the issues from one municipality to another usually puts more strain on those, who behave correctly and responsibly, attempt to apply functional social policy or at least don't move their problems to other municipalities.

A huge strain is caused by forcing the socially excluded inhabitants into very small towns and municipalities without complete institutional coverage, free financial sources or sufficient amount of members of the council who could address the issue systematically.

Small towns and municipalities have significant disadvantages in solving social exclusion when compared to middle-sized and large towns; however they are increasingly burdened by forced migration of poor people from towns into municipalities. The situation is of course most complicated in municipalities with high

Migration of socially weak people in the Šluknov region

The Agency for Social Inclusion prepared a comprehensive analysis of the migration in the region in the first half of 2012. The results show that socially weak people migrate mostly between individual towns within the region. This migration isn't regulated in any way by the authorities and is caused mainly by poor stability and sustainability of housing. On the other hand some poor persons stay in the dormitories for long periods, where they pay higher rents for lower quality housing than the tenants in the neighbourhood. Reports of hundreds of poor people heading into the region from all parts of the Republic haven't been proved. People in the region migrate mostly because of accessible housing within the region.

In the recent years there were 461 poor migrants arriving into municipalities/towns in the region and 520 persons left. More than 2/3 of those were people from other municipalities/towns in the region.

Research report: Eviction of families from Vsetín was non-constructive and costly

The research report on the impacts of eviction of several families, which the Agency prepared in the first half of 2011, showed that the eviction of dozens of socially weak Roma from Vsetín into municipalities of Jesenice and Prostějov districts had catastrophic consequences for the families and at the same time was an expensive solution for the state and municipalities. The social situation of families deteriorated, at the time of the research they all were threatened by seizure and evictions. This process burdened small municipalities, where the people were forced to move, and consequently demanded difficult interventions of the regional administration, NGOs or the Ombudsman. The costs of the houses, where the six families were moved, reached approximately 2.5 million CZK. The city of Vsetín further paid costs of transport as the people were moved during nighttime without previous warning into selected municipalities.

Most of the properties were in a very bad technical condition. One of the buildings had been ordered to be removed. Necessary repairs strained significantly the budgets of poor and indebted households. A rapid deterioration of the housing and economic situation of the families led to the threat of removing children into institutional care, which in the end was the case of five children. This presented additional expenses for the state budget in excess of a million crowns a year, regardless of the impacts on the situation of the children itself.

unemployment rate and lack of work opportunities.

Forced migration **has substantial negative impact on public budgets**. Not only does it increase the burden of municipalities, into which the people are forced to move, and their necessary immediate expenses to ensure security, services, solve municipal coexistence etc., but it also deepens the crisis of the migrating family, which has been proven to lead to more frequent failures, the results of which are e.g. the family break-up and children being taken into alternative institutional care, which is very expensive.

You are not alone: what are the obligations and options of the municipality, region and the state?

As representatives of the town leadership you are in an unenviable situation when solving situations in excluded localities. However, due to your position you are also the ones who are the most responsible for changes – whether for the better or worse. This responsibility is extraordinarily demanding, particularly if you administer a small town or municipality with a strained budget and lack of personnel capacity. And also because the legislation and financial frameworks (budgetary tax allocation, subventions and structural funds) aren't always in accordance with some of the measures recommended by experts, particularly in the area of education of children, preschool preparation or support of employment and enterprise development.

It is especially you, who are in the position of mayor, who have the strongest influence on what solutions will be applied in the municipality. This doesn't concern only the measures themselves, but also the overall framework, beginning with the decision whether the municipality will be active in social or social inclusion policies. As a mayor you have a direct influence on the events in which you are competent (town council meetings, municipal budget, activity of the authority and its individual parts, management of committees and commissions, administration of municipal property including flats, the position of the founder of elementary schools and kindergartens, implementation of social services etc.) and also an indirect one, based on the position's authority in public and in contact and dealings with other institutions and actors of the public administration – regional administration, labour authority etc.

Despite all that you cannot remain in your municipality without the support and aid of other institutions, particularly the following:

The Region

- Prepares and implements mid-term plans of social services, is involved in decisions regarding the allocation of grants for social services
- Has its own grants to support not only social services
- Has in its structure a regional coordinator of Roma advisors, who can methodologically lead Roma advisors in municipalities and aid the social integration
- Prepares the regional plan of crime prevention, which is related to grant possibilities of the Ministry of Interior
- Prepares a regional strategy of education system development, founds certain schools (particularly practical elementary and high schools) and educational facilities (pedagogic-psychological counselling centres, orphanages etc.)
- It recommends and co-finances teacher assistants at elementary schools

- Provides methodological support for the social and legal protection of children
- Cooperates with regional directorates of other authorities, which have their branches in municipalities (Police, Labour Authority)

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

- Methodologically directs the system of social services, social and legal protection of children, active employment policy including public service (in cooperation with the General Directorate of the Labour Authority)
- Allocates grants for support of social services
- Is the managing authority and intermediary of the European Social Fund, Operational Programme Human Resources and Employment (ESF OP LZZ).

General Directorate of the Labour Authority

- Directs the active employment policy including requalification courses
- Manages the system of social benefits and material support
- Manages the public service, community service and socially desirable jobs
- Prepares and supports regional employment support projects

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

- Manages systems of preschool preparation, elementary and high school education
- Methodologically leads pedagogic-psychological counselling
- Allocates grants for the support of teacher assistants, inclusive schools etc.
- Is the managing authority and intermediary of the European Social Fund, Operational Programme Education for Competitiveness (ESF OP VK)

Ministry of Interior

- Provides methodological support within the law on the right of assembly
- Implements crime prevention programmes and methodologically supervises the preparation of crime prevention plans
- Educates police officers

Ministry of Local Development

- Supports construction of flats for low-income households (in cooperation with the National Fund of Housing Development)
- Is the managing authority and intermediary of the ESF/ERDF Integrated Operational Programme

Agency for Social Inclusion

- Methodologically aids the municipalities with social inclusion
- Systematically monitors and analyzes situations in socially excluded localities in the Czech Republic
- Provides direct help to municipalities with practical activities within social inclusion
- Cooperates with ministries, regions and municipalities on the application of EU structural funds

NGOs

- Implement practical programs of social inclusion, most frequently in social services, employment support, education and housing
- Work directly in the field with inhabitants of socially excluded localities

I want to address the situation How to solve social inclusion in the municipality

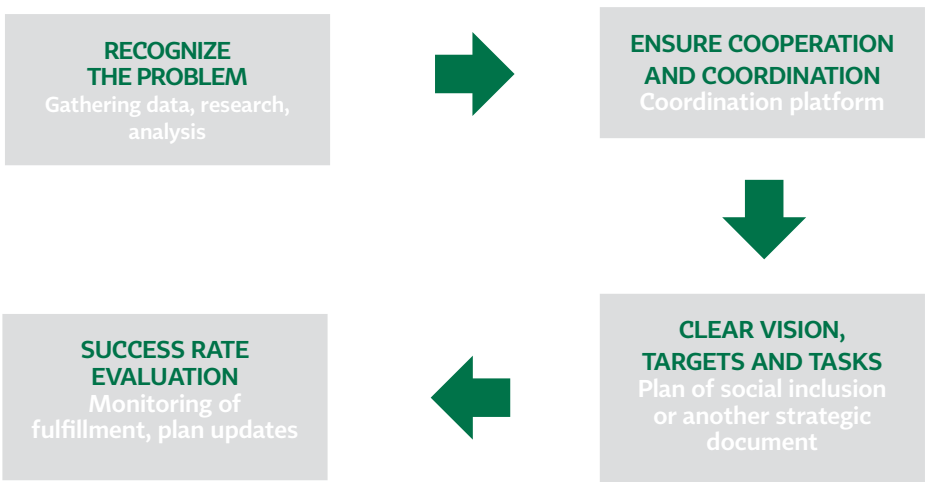
You probably have been witness (perhaps even participants) to a situation, where several parties decide to solve a problem at once, each according to its own preferences. This could often lead to a situation, when all start working without consulting the others, clarifying where the actual problem lies and what they want to achieve by addressing it and without cooperation. Even good faith and enthusiasm can be wasted at this moment.

This understanding is crucial for you in the event when you are firmly determined to start addressing social exclusion and related issues. Your determination is important and commendable; you decided to face heads on one of the most serious problems of today. However, determination and enthusiasm alone may not be enough. **If you really want to be efficient in solving this problem** and not waste effort and resources your municipality has at its disposal, **it is wise to proceed together and united with various other partners.**

We offer you a proven and logical procedure, which – if upheld – brings visible results. It may seem simple at first, bud you will probably be surprised, how much effort and determination it costs only to strictly uphold it.

Simply said, it is necessary to start with clarifying what the problem you are facing lies in and what exactly you want to do with it. Apart from the expert and political opinion it is necessary to get to know the opinions and ideas of the municipality's inhabitants, both the majority and the socially excluded ones. To achieve that it is necessary to bring together all those, who could do something about the issue in the municipality (from town representatives to NGOs and even commercial parties). An agreement must be made with all of them on how to transform the idea of the solution into practice – who can contribute, what funding and capacities are available. The assigned tasks should then be formed into a plan, according to which all proceed and which must be continuously monitored and even changed if need be.

THE RECOMMENDED PROCEDURE IS SHOWN IN THE FOLLOWING DIAGRAM:



1) RECOGNIZE THE SITUATION IN THE MUNICIPALITY

Before you start doing any proposals of solutions, it is necessary to gain sufficient knowledge about the socially excluded locality and its issues. The socially excluded locality is often a complex, closed and non-transparent tangle of relationships and issues, which are difficult to understand. There is much untrue and inaccurate information, speculations, subjective opinions and judgments or outdated data, which complicate the way to a solution.

A suitable tool to gather more accurate data on the locality's inhabitants and the overall situation, understanding of the causes of the problems and connections, which hinder its solution, is the situational analysis[1].

1 Samples of selected situational analysis can be found on the enclosed DVD

Preparation of such a document is a necessary prerequisite for further planning. The results of this analysis enable you to better discuss with other partners what the current situation is and which problems in what time horizon should be addressed.

How to prepare a situational analysis

Situational analysis can be prepared in the following steps:

1. Gather all research and surveys aimed at similar issues, which have been conducted in the municipality in the past. Study these documents thoroughly and use their results (among others also not to repeat activities, which had been done by someone else).

2. Gather all available quantitative socio-odemographic data on socially excluded population – from sources available to local authorities and organizations (e.g. departments of the town authority, police, schools, Labour Authority, NGOs etc.). Various quantitative data can be gathered in areas of employment, housing, education and family, whereas the specific content of the data gathering can be adjusted to the expected areas of intervention. In a special annex you will find a list of quantitative data, which can be gathered and from whim these data can be collected.

3. Map the potential of local organizations and the needs of socially excluded inhabitants. Let the partners and organizations, with which you'll be cooperating, to fill a common table of need analysis:

Partner	What are we doing regarding this issue	What we want to be doing regarding this issue	What do we need? What does hinder us?	What do we expect from the common platform?
P1				
P2				
P3				
P4…				

4. Based on the information gathered from documents and partners fill the **so-called measure checklist**[2], which serves to provide a quick overview of the measures, which are already implemented in the locality and which are not.

5. It is also recommended to conduct a brief survey to find out **the attitudes of the socially excluded persons and the broader public** towards **what they perceive as serious issues within the municipality**.

This way you can conduct the situational analysis on your own. If you have enough financial resources, you can contract it to an external subject (ideally to a sociological, socio-anthropological etc. Institution or agency), which will conduct the research in the locality according to your specifications. It is best to combine quantitative methods (gathering of numerical data) with qualitative ones (field research, participated observation etc.). The price of such research depends on the size of the municipality and locality and varies from 30 000 to 200 000 CZK.[3] According to the possibilities it is possible to let the external subject prepare also the listed points 1-5.

Situational analysis should include the following topics:

Basic characteristics of the municipality and its inhabitants

- Brief characteristic of the municipality
- Socio-demographical context of the municipality while taking into account data reflecting aspects of social exclusion

Socially excluded inhabitants

- Summarized information about the historical background, presence of

2 The checklist form can be found on the enclosed DVD

3 You will find a sample research brief on the enclosed DVD

exclude persons and origin of the social issue in the municipality/locality
- Estimates of socio-demographic characteristics of the socially excluded population
- Characteristics of the relations between the majority and the excluded population
- Description of the inner structure of the socially excluded population
- Description of the dynamics of social exclusion

Description of socially excluded localities
- Identification and description of individual socially excluded localities
- Description of the quality of life in socially excluded localities
- Territorial aspects of social exclusion

System actors and analysis of partial areas of social exclusion/inclusion
- Mapping of local mechanisms of social exclusion in partial areas: education, housing, employment, security, social services, health, local social policy and political participation
- Mapping of integration/inclusion mechanisms in selected areas: education, housing, employment, security, social services, health, local social policy and political participation
- Analysis of the efficiency of measures in the listed areas
- Characteristics of the total integration policy of the municipality

Conclusion
- Identification of key elements of the dynamics of social exclusion in the municipality/locality
- Identification of weaknesses of municipal integration policy
- Summary and proposed measures

2) ADDRESS SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE MUNICIPALITY TOGETHER AND IN A COORDINATED WAY

Another step, which is recommended to take when you know the situation in the municipality in detail, **is to create a common platform**[4], where the problem can be solved further. You may have a feeling that there are enough various committees, commissions and workgroups in your town focusing on everything possible. Without them, however, you won't achieve a good result in many cases. If this platform is well managed and has a good topical focus, then its sessions won't be just boring meetings which no one wants to attend, but quite on the contrary they can become a place where people will gladly come and mutually inform themselves about their common goal. The municipality probably won't be able to solve this problem alone. It most likely would have to involve other organizations operating in this field. An agreement must be made about what they see as the main issue and how to solve them together. It is also important to communicate constantly about who does what (so that there are no duplicate activities or on the other hand an area which is not covered). It is necessary to cooperate so that each partner won't solve social exclusion in their own area but to put effort and resources at the disposal of the joint action to achieve better results.

4 In places where the Agency for Social Inclusion operates are these platforms established under the name Local Partnerships. The Agency is represented by a local consultant who coordinates the activities of the local partnership. The Agency operates in the municipalities for three years. After this period the coordination of the platform is handed to a town representative or one of the members of this partnership.

If you succeed in creating such platform, its positive influence might spread not only into social inclusion, but into several other municipal policies as well.

All local actors active in the field of social inclusion should participate in the activities of this platform. Typically it should be the following ones:

- Town representatives
- Relevant departments of the town authority: social, education, housing
- Public-funded organizations of the town
- Labour Authority
- Municipal police
- Czech Police
- NGO and social service providers
- Probation and mediation service
- Employers
- Housing fund owners
- Representatives of socially excluded inhabitants, public representatives

Coordination platform should primarily fulfil the following functions:

Information – serves as an information platform for its members. Platform members receive information from the town council more easily and for free, members inform themselves mutually. The platform management executes actions proposed by its members to increase their awareness.

Communication – area for the abolishment of communication barriers. The platform has to fulfil a facilitation role in situations, where there is distrust and low development of interpersonal relationships. Communication provides contacts and e.g. access to a wider range of opportunities.

Cooperation – the platform is a network establishing possibilities of cooperation. It helps to identify common projects, find new partners and organize contacts, meetings and expert consultations. To encourage cooperation is one of the fundamental functions of the platform and should be supported by suitable analytical, informational and methodological tools. The platform will create a procedure leading to a systematic solution of the issue of social exclusion at the local level.

Counselling and lobbying – each platform member can benefit from the concentration of information, personalities, contacts and opportunities, which are its integral part. The knowledge of the issues and needs at the local level enables the platform to promote the agreed common goals at local, regional and state authorities.

Public relations – the platform enables propagation of its members and activities at the local level. For platform members their membership is a matter of prestige.

They said about the Local Partnership[5]

The town of Vejprty is satisfied with the Agency's work. The representatives of the town's organizations and departments meet regularly at meetings of the local partnership and workgroups. We particularly appreciate that thanks to the Agency we have met for the first time at the so-called "round table" and address the issues together. We believe that thanks to the Agency we started to transform words into actions, because it is possible to help many citizens, if they receive timely aid.

Jitka Gavdunová, mayor of Vejprty

As for the town I can state that the cooperation brought especially an external perspective to the given issues and quickened the exchange of information about best practices among various subjects.

Radek Štejnar, mayor of Jirkov

5 Coordination platform for social inclusion established in municipalities/towns which cooperate with the Agency for Social Inclusion.

How to ensure the functioning of the coordination platform for social inclusion in the municipality?

It is necessary to assign some formal status to the platform so that – while upholding the principle of openness and other listed principles – its activities and proposals were granted real validity in the municipal policies and decisions and activities of all involved parties.

Coordination platform can function as:

A) Town commission or committee (e.g. commission for social inclusion), which to a certain extent provides the competences for the platform

B) Workgroup for community planning of social services – this platform can be established as one of the workgroups within community planning of social services or join it with an existing group, which operates within this planning. The procedure of community planning of social services is described in detail in the Social Services Handbook.

Apart from the institutional embedding of the platform it is also wise to appoint a **coordinator**, whose task it will be to unify the progress of all institutions and organizations when dealing with issues related to social exclusion.

Basic tasks of the coordinator will be:

- Gather current information about the situation and issues in socially excluded localities
- Ensure mutual exchange of information of involved subjects
- Directing the process of planning and coordination of activities in socially excluded localities
- Calling and presiding over meetings of the coordination platform
- Individual meetings with representatives of institutions, consulting current situation and issues to be addressed
- Identification of the needs of the socially excluded localities and initiation of necessary measures (e.g. if the social service for families with children is missing somewhere, he would strive to establish it and ensure its proper function)

They said about the Local Partnership

The local Agency consultant has a very thorough knowledge about the current situation in the town. In many cases the consultant acted very successfully as a mediator. We also have positive feedback on the coordinator's work from the majority of cooperating organizations. Until the beginning of the cooperation with the Agency the city of Litvínov had no experience with submitting non-investment projects. Since the Agency started operating in the locality we gained a lot of important experience in this field, which mean higher chance for the city to obtain funding, which is much needed to solve the issue of social exclusion.

Milan Šťovíček, mayor of Litvínov

What other tools can the municipality use

Apart from the establishment of the coordination platform for addressing social exclusion you can also use some of the other standard tools, which are available in your municipality. The agenda of most of them contains activities, which are closely tied to the issue of social exclusion and their workers should be informed in detail about this issue and options they can use.

These are for example:

- Departments and sections of the municipal/town authority (social, housing, education etc.)
- Committee for ethnical minorities
- Organizations directly managed/ founded by the municipality or town (town-funded organizations, schools and school facilities)
- Municipal police

3) CREATE A PLAN OF SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE MUNICIPALITY

It is wise to create an agreement on how the municipality wishes to handle the issue of social inclusion, ideally in the form of a plan of social inclusion. This document will confirm the agreed goals, in setting of which all were involved and at the same time sets individual steps, which will lead to their achievement and responsible parties.

It is good to have such a plan also because social inclusion is a difficult policy, which has a number of subparts (employment, education, crime prevention etc.), whereas it is necessary to interconnect individual steps in those subparts to achieve the overall change. For example it is of little or no use to solve social housing for socially weak families if we don't solve their employment at the same time, if there are no social services available to them in an appropriate capacity, if their education isn't properly being taken care of etc. The plan serves to monitor whether individual processes make sense in the overall goal and whether coordination is ensured and the plan is heading towards the achievement of set goals.

Strategic planning is a standardized process, which always consists of three phases:

1. Where are we?

- Create a description of the current state
- Name the key issues, which we need to concentrate on
- Map the current potential of all partners and capacities, which are missing
- Set priorities for further planning
- According to the priorities we shall divide into topical groups

2. Where do we want to go?

- Set a framework idea of what the situation should look like in e.g. 10 years (create a vision)
- According to priorities we then formulate goals, which we want to achieve – describe the target situation in individual areas

3. How do we get there?

- Set tools for achieving individual goals
- Each tool or measure must have a precise owner, i.e. a person or organization, who is responsible for its achievement
- Targets and measures must have clear indicators of achievement
- Funding and other capacities (i.e. the use of European projects) must be set for each tool
- Create an overall time schedule of the project
- Finally it is wise to check the plan again from the other end, i.e. whether the agreed measures really aim towards the agreed vision and goals

The planning process may take various amounts of time – depending on the size of the municipality, number of partners, who are involved, gravity of the problems etc. – usually from 2 to 6 months.

When preparing the strategic plan, observe the following rules:

1. Focus on social exclusion
The plan should be oriented on reducing and gradually removing social exclusion in the locality.

2. Work in an open partnership
For the creation of the plan use the established group for social inclusion in the municipality, concentrate in it all relevant local actors active in social integration if possible. Those would be representatives of the town, region, schools and school facilities, Czech Police, municipal police, NGOs and social service providers, Labour Authority and employers, owners of the housing fund.

3. Follow up on past documents
The prepared plan must take into account all past strategic and other programme documents of the municipality, Agency and members of the group for social inclusion.

4. Mutually interconnect your activities
Whenever possible, all individual projects and activities should be connected so that the best possible goal would be achieved with minimal costs.

5. Take local needs into account
Bear in mind that the plan is above all a local document, which should reflect the needs of local citizens, its cornerstones are the goals and policies of the municipality and the members of the group for inclusion.

6. Use the results of surveys concluded in the excluded locality
The planned targets and activities listed in the plan should be proposed based on the data and information gathered from the initial mapping of the locality.

7. Be efficient
Efficiently use all resources at your disposal and select a limited range of priorities according to what the members of the group for inclusion agree upon.

8. Get a clear mandate for the plan
After the plan is prepared by the members of the group for social inclusion, submit it to the municipal/town council for approval. This way you get a clear political support for it, which you can use when implementing individual parts of the plan.

A similar procedure of how to proceed with strategic planning from formulating the vision and priorities to creation of short- and long-term goals to time schedule and budget can be found in the enclosed methodology of strategic planning.

They said about the plan of social inclusion

It is as if we had a timetable for the road to integration. Everybody knows their own specific goals, which they committed to fulfil. The measures will be implemented according to a clearly set schedule.

Vlastimil Vozka, mayor of Most

The goal of this plan is to meaningfully sort, accurately and expertly describe main issues related to social inclusion in town, assess them and propose a way of solving them. The result is a set of elaborate activities, which together will bring change in the quality of housing, rentals, employment and will limit some types of crime from the most obvious to the most concealed forms. The plan will lead to an improved school attendance of children from excluded localities and their improved school success rate.

Petr Rys, mayor of Bruntál

The strategic plan for solving social exclusion is a very important document for the city of Kutná Hora and a part of the strategy and plans for solving serious social problems. This strategic plan is a result of the work of experts and a broad and really democratic discussion in which participated representatives of various institutions of the city.

Ivo Šanc, mayor of Kutná Hora

We greatly appreciate that the Agency employees performed a situational analysis in Sokolov, identified the most important issues and provided specific ideas on how to solve the situation. We expect that by implementing the strategic plan the life in the town will move closer to peaceful coexistence of all citizens.

Zdeněk Berka, mayor of Sokolov

4) EVALUATE HOW EVERYTHING WORKS

The strategic plan has to remain a living and dynamic document, which reflects the developing situation in the locality or e.g. important legislative changes.

After its approval **set how you will monitor the fulfillment of individual goals** and mutual cooperation. At all times continue to inform each other about who does what; try to solve possible problems together and as soon as possible.

One year after the plan has begun to be fulfilled perform a more thorough evaluation of the fulfillment of the goals based on continuous monitoring. If you have trouble fulfilling some goals, investigate why that is so. Try to find alternative variants. These can be for example that you will use other financial resources or find other, more suitable measures.

Perform a revision of the whole strategic plan. This could be that you repeat the whole planning process in a shorter version. Evaluate together, whether that which you set a year ago is still valid and is worth the effort. Evaluate the situation of socially excluded persons, whether their needs and issues haven't changed. If some of your goals are already fulfilled, consider what to do next. According to this you should add new points to your plan.

The costs of creating a plan of social inclusion (community plan), work of the coordinators, steering and working groups, can be funded from the Operation Programme Human Resources and Employment, support area 3.1: Support of Social Integration and Social Services. The aim of this support is the social inclusion of socially excluded persons and persons threatened by it, including the removal of barriers of their access to employment and education by ensuring and improving accessibility, quality and supervision of the services.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs regularly issues individual calls for proposals in this support area. Information concerning the currently issued calls, including samples of successful projects, can be found at www.esfcr.cz.

How to explain social inclusion to the public/ Communication with the municipality's citizens

In the field of social inclusion (as well as in other cases when deciding on public affairs) it is very important that the leadership of the municipality or organizations, which take measures to include people living at the fringe of society, proceed in an open manner and regularly inform other citizens. It is very important in connection to this topic as it often gives birth to various rumours, which can spread at an incredible speed, and if they are not dealt with early on they can have a life of their own and complicate the implementation of a number of things, which you planned to implement in the area.

The experience from a number of towns and municipalities of the Czech Republic shows as well how important it is to explain to citizens prior to steps such as the opening of a community centre or establishment of a dormitory or asylum house, what it will and will not include and what benefit it will provide to the citizens. This way you can prevent consequent protest, which could grow into petitions or even demonstrations of dissatisfied (and usually insufficiently informed) citizens.

Here we present several basic procedures, which you can use for regular and quality informing of the citizens of your municipality/town about the processes you wish to promote in the area of social inclusion:

1) THE TOWN/MUNICIPALITY IS OPEN AND REGULARLY COMMUNICATES WITH ALL CITIZENS ABOUT ITS ACTIVITIES AND PLANS

- **Provide regular information** about prepared projects and activities and about the meetings of the council **on the information board and website of the town/municipality.** Citizens should never have the impression that something is being decided behind their backs without them.
- On the website there should also be accessible **important documents**, which are related to social inclusion – e.g. the strategic plan of social inclusion, community plan, crime prevention plan etc. If you deal with this matter extensively, it may be worth considering creating a separate webpage.
- A suitable channel for providing regular information to the citizens are **local newspapers**, which are issued by the town/municipality (usually also distributed freely to all post boxes). Here you should provide regular information about individual steps in the field of social inclusion, present successful projects as well as stories of individual people tied to social exclusion (indebtedness, long-term unemployment, gambling) and mutual interconnectedness of these problems – to provide a better image to the citizens about what issues the excluded people deal with and what problems they actually solve.

- From time to time (or for example prior to some more extensive activity such as reconstruction or construction of a community centre or an asylum house) organize **a public meeting with citizens**. At this meetings inform the citizens about the planned activity, show them how similar service or centre operates in another town and give them opportunity to ask questions and prepare answers. Usually it is worth to organize such meeting as soon as possible before e.g. it would have to be organized due to the pressure of discontent citizens, who will oppose the implementation of a service or the construction of a centre.
- You can include the presentation of successful projects or services into other events as well. In a number of municipalities there are e.g. Days of Social Services, where the citizens are being presented individual organizations, which provide social services in the town or municipality and these show their activities and results.
- Also bear in mind that the information should reach all citizens of the town/municipality. It is possible that especially in the excluded localities the town hall newspaper doesn't reach everyone; their inhabitants don't read the information boards and often don't have internet access. Therefore it is sometimes possible to organize a public information event directly in the excluded locality or its vicinity and inform its inhabitants about the prepared activities. It is necessary that they too are aware of what will be happening in their immediate surroundings. You can alleviate their fears and prevent the spreading of rumours.

2) THE MUNICIPALITY/TOWN COOPERATES WITH THE MEDIA AND REGULARLY PROVIDES THEM WITH INFORMATION

- Openness and active approach will also be beneficial to your municipality/town in relations with the journalists and mass media (also not only regarding providing information about social inclusion). Prepare a contact list of journalists active in your region and **provide them with regular information about interesting activities or projects** in your municipality/town. In case of more significant events also add press releases, which will contain a detailed summary of everything important and also add contact information of a person, who will be available for their questions.
- Occasionally **organize a special event for journalists**, meet them at the place of the activity (community centre, place where graduates of requalification courses work, newly opened asylum house etc.). This doesn't have to be a formal press conference, journalists prefer informal meetings with several people who are involved in the activity including the service's clients (asylum house inhabitants, requalification course participants etc.), with whom they could make photographs or videos directly at the place.
- **Find time for journalists.** If the media contact you themselves with a question or a plea for a statement or information, try to find the time and reply as much as possible. Today's media work by the minute and if you don't provide a comment soon, the journal-

ists will find someone else. Especially in case of a more complicated situation not providing your comments to the media could have a negative influence on the public and give rise to rumours.

3) THE MUNICIPALITY/TOWN RECEIVES INFORMATION AND FEEDBACK FROM ALL ITS CITIZENS

Providing information and communication shouldn't be one-way only (i.e. only from you to citizens). Try to regularly gather feedback on activities related to social inclusion from the inhabitants of the municipality/town. Organize surveys on the website, provide a box for comments at the municipal/town authority building, ask the people about their opinions and solution proposals in local newspaper and during public events.

How to talk about social exclusion

The topic of social inclusion isn't easy and presenting it to the public may often prove to be difficult. Therefore at the end of this part we provide a number of tips on how to appropriately present the issue of social inclusion and related activities to the public so that you will reach the desired goal and your message will be comprehensible and useful.

- **Speak clearly and comprehensibly.** Don't use words, which the people don't understand (such as social exclusion, competence or allocate). You alienate yourself from them and act superior to them in a way.
- **Pay attention to the use of the so-called "project speak"** – the way the service or activity is described in the project application doesn't have to be comprehensible to the public. Try to describe the listed issues in a simple and clear way.
- When presenting a certain problem to the citizens or journalists **use concrete examples** and generally known situations (e.g.: "many of you know well, how does it feel like to be without a job for a long period and how difficult it is to find a job nowadays").
- **Don't forget to mention that the majority of activities and services are open to all citizens of the municipality** (e.g. job counselling, debt counselling, low-threshold facilities for children and youth). The people shouldn't have an impression that you are trying to implement activities, which would mean some kind of advantage for only a part of the municipality's inhabitants.
- However, at the same time **don't hide existing problems**; identify them clearly including negative acts, which the inhabitants of the socially excluded localities commit. If possible, try to link this identification to the cause of these phenomena, what is the connection between the existence of the socially excluded locality and the life in it and the behaviour of its inhabitants (loss of motivation, ideals, absence of role models etc.)
- **Refuse generalization and transfer of some facts to the whole group** (e.g. the Roma don't work, are loud and assault people on the street). In any case it is necessary to assess these cases individually and consider everyone a unique individual with all that is related to him and his life.

Agency
for Social Inclusion

www.socialni-zaclenovani.cz

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