

**Social Innovation Competence Centres – SI Plus  
Poverty and Inclusion Thematic Network - 1st meeting**

**27. February 2022, 10.00-13.00**

**Online event on ZOOM**

**Event report**

**IFKA Public Benefit Non-profit Ltd.** as the partner of the **SI Plus – Social Innovation Competence Centres** partnership organized the 1<sup>st</sup> online meeting of the thematic network on poverty and inclusion on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February, 2023.

**Welcome**

The programme of the event started with the welcome speech of Csaba Novák, PhD; project manager and leader of the International Department of IFKA Public Benefit Non-profit Ltd. In his speech, Mr. Novák highlighted that the main purpose of the event was to present what kinds of social innovation-related activities were happening in the field of poverty and social inclusion in the CEE region, in the consortium and particularly in Hungary. He explained that the logic of the thematic network meeting was to listen first to the messages of the EC DG employment regarding the role of SI in tackling poverty and incentivizing social inclusion. Then presenting how these messages have been included in operational programmes set up by a member state (Hungary) jointly with the commission would follow. Then priority 7 of the Human Resources Development OP would be presented as the most important policy in terms of poverty and inclusion, told Mr. Novák. He also explained that in the second half of the meeting, good practices of social innovations addressing poverty and social inclusion from partner countries would be presented. The meeting would be finalized with a discussion on the conclusions.

**Icebreaker**

After the welcome speech, a Mentimeter quiz was held to introduce the topic of the thematic network meeting and encourage communication and dialogue between attendees in gamified form. Participants were asked about their expectations from the week ahead, their knowledge on the European Pillar of Social Rights also had been tested and updated, as well as their knowledge of the main features of poverty and social exclusion in the European Union.

**Thematic input from the European Commission**

The first thematic presentation of the event was held by Katalin Szatmári, representative of the Directorate D – Social Rights and Inclusion of DG Employment’s Social Affairs and Inclusion Department. In her presentation, Ms Szatmári explained the overall policy framework for tackling poverty and fighting social exclusion in the EU. Participants could learn about the share of competencies between the EU and the member states in the field of setting up social protection and social service systems, the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular its 3<sup>rd</sup>

chapter (Social protection and social inclusion) as well as the Action Plan for the implementation of the Pillar, namely the Porto Declaration and the targets set in it. Ms Szatmári also presented the key indicators applied by the Commission for measuring poverty, the main social challenges the Union is facing with, the most important policy responses the Commission has given to these challenges in the former and the current programming periods and the role of social innovation in these responses. A special focus was given to the introduction of the new Recommendation on adequate minimum income (2023/C 41/01) which determines social policy interventions for the next couple of years in the EU. Finally, Ms Szatmári presented some of the most important funding programmes and opportunities (ESIF including ESF Plus, EaSI and FEAD, RRF and TSI) which have been provided so far or are planned to be granted by the commission to support social innovations for social inclusion in the EU. As it was emphasized, project promoters may expect funding programmes under EaSI related to the mitigation of the social challenges of green and digital transition and the energy crisis in the close future.

### **Financing social innovations for tackling poverty and strengthening inclusion - Interventions on the member state level**

After the European-level thematic input, a member state-level example of policy interventions for supporting social innovations to tackle poverty and incentivize social inclusion was presented by István Tamás Szenttamási, social innovation expert of IFKA. Mr Szenttamási presented the structure of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme Plus (HRDOP Plus) which includes the majority of human development measures of the new programming period in Hungary. Priority 3 - Developments for social inclusion, Priority 4 - Social developments and Priority 6 - Supporting People in need of HRDOP Plus were introduced in detail by the speaker as priorities focusing on tackling poverty and enhancing social inclusion. Mr Szenttamási emphasized that Priority 3 provides the majority of opportunities for socially innovative solutions unlike Priority 4 and 6 which supports more traditional types of interventions. Finally, Priority 7.1 and 7.2, two components of the “Emerging Settlements Programme”, the compulsory dedicated social innovation priority of ESF+ in Hungary were shortly introduced.

### **“Emerging Settlements” – a dedicated social innovation priority**

The third presentation of the event by Zsófia Batta, Head of the Prime Minister’s Commissioner’s Secretariat at the Ministry of Interior was focusing on the detailed introduction of the “Emerging Settlements Programme”, the compulsory social innovation priority axis of the ESF+ programme in Hungary. The main goal of the Emerging Settlements program is the social inclusion of the 300 most disadvantaged settlements in Hungary. The most underdeveloped areas are identified in the northeast and south-west regions in Hungary. In 2019 about 31 settlements were involved, in 2020 the number increased to 36, while in 2021 the number of involved settlements reached 51. The presentation noted that the strategic framework of the Emerging Settlements project is in line with the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2023, and in compliance with EU Roma Framework Strategy 2030. The main objectives are identified as to reduce the rate of material and social deprivation, and the prevention of the reproduction of poverty. The selection of targeted settlements is based on a set of complex indicators identified by the Central Statistical Office of Hungary. The

programme is supervised by the Prime Minister's Commissioner for social inclusion and Roma issues at the Ministry of Interior, and is professionally coordinated by the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta. The Charity Service of the Order of Malta and other religious and civic organizations focusing on children's welfare and social inclusion are responsible for the physical implementation of the programme on the field. From 2023, the program is mainly financed from EU Funds with result-oriented financial innovation, meaning that finance is not linked to costs and no financial documentation should be submitted to the authority, but serious result should be achieved. The presentation also highlighted the elements of the programme with presence-based social work, building up trust in the community and crisis management, reducing housing poverty and innovative solutions to improve healthcare coverage.

### **Social innovations addressing poverty and supporting inclusion – Examples and best practices from the field**

After a short coffee break following the block of presentations about policy frameworks of social innovations for mitigating poverty and social exclusion, three additional presentations were held, focusing on good examples and best social innovation practices achieving significant successes in tackling poverty and enhancing social inclusion.

- SOPHIE project, Austria (Stefani Doynova, Volkshilfe Wien)

SOPHIE provides various counseling services for former and actual sex workers by multilingual and interdisciplinary teams in Vienna, Austria. The organization follows certain principles, including the non-moralizing approach to the life situations and decisions of workers as well as anonymity and inclusion. Sex work in Austria is legal, however, it has certain legal requirements that must be followed, including registration and taxation. Since working in the field of sexual services is still characterized by stigmas, and due to the dynamic nature of the target group, there is a need for innovative approaches to support those who decided to earn their living as sex workers as well as those who would like to change. SOPHIE provides specific services such as on-site consultation, social and career counseling, crisis intervention, communication room and workshops to satisfy the needs of the target group.

- Nurse-Family Partnership Program, Bulgaria (Iskra Stoykova, Trust for Social Achievement Foundation)

The programme is considered the most effective home-visiting program in the world (at least in Bulgaria), especially for Roma people. It focuses on reducing the poverty of the Roma people by paying special attention to early childcare especially the first 1000 days which are the most important regarding the future of small children.

The programme was created by a professor in Colorado some 40 years ago. It went under multiple trials and impact assessments and it has been continuously improved and adapted to different contexts. In Bulgaria, the programme has been present for 2,5 years with 14000 home visits. The programme started in August 2016 in Sofia and

then expanded to Plovdiv in 2019 where the largest neighborhood of the Roma in the Balkans is situated.

What makes the approach different? It is targeting mothers at risk to reduce the risk of early birth of children due to reasons like poor diet, smoking, alcohol consumption or early conception. Reflection and clinical supervision introduced into the public health system's services are two aspects of the programme which are quite new in Bulgaria. As there are approximately 200.000 people without a valid ID in the country and pregnancy registrations are incomplete, door-to-door visits may be hindered. To tackle this problem, the programme also applies innovative “Telehealth” solutions. In addition, interpreters and mediators are involved to communicate with Muslims and the Roma.

Child outcomes of the programme:

- decreased infant mortality
- increased rates of breastfed babies
- reduced cases of child abuse and neglect by parents
- decrease in access to hazards for children
- reduced child behaviour problems

Maternal outcomes:

- improved quality of parent-child interaction
- improved prenatal health
- longer intervals between pregnancies
- increased employment rate
- reduced use of social benefits

- Inclusive approaches for housing and supported employment in Slovakia (Nikoletta Luptakova, TENENET NGO)

TENENET started in 2011 to support the employment of people mainly with disabilities.

After some years they involved further targeted groups in their services:

- Socially excluded communities
- Parents raising their children alone
- Vulnerable groups
- Children in needs and risk
- Prisoners and their families
- Victims of violence
- People affected by addictions

Services of the organization targeting the above target groups include:

- Operation of community centers providing
  - Humanitarian help
  - Counseling
  - Prevention in schools etc.
- Implementation of a housing project

- Supported by ESF
- 2 years duration
- Focusing on stabilization of the work and the employment situation of the beneficiaries, debt relief, regular savings etc.
- Results:
  - 24 family members (17 families) in rental houses
- Implementation of supported employment programme step by step
  - 2 years of duration
  - Vulnerable environment (Roma community)
  - Focusing on soft skills such as communication and time management, helping to find jobs
  - Goals: inclusion of 60 people in the programme
  - Results:
    - 1 client in the education system
    - 3 clients in full time job