

## WP4 Case studies

### D4.2 Evaluation report

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Case Study: The Social Land Program in Hungary

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## Executive Summary

### *The programme*

The concept of social land programs was initiated by the Crisis Management Program Office of the Ministry of Social Welfare in 1991<sup>1</sup>. After the democratic transformation the government intended to introduce local employment programs in small villages of the agriculture regions, which combined the government and market mechanism and targets. Strengthening of local communities and decreasing social tensions was a further target.

Land programs help socially disadvantaged people with no financial means to engage with agriculture to acquire supporting services and support to enable them with household type agricultural production and livestock keeping. The supported activities are the following: the production of goods, the delivery to markets, the creation of retail processes, the strengthening of network cooperation's and procurement of missing tools, objects and equipment. The main objective of the program is to strengthen self-sufficiency and to support the drop out from the social aid reliance. The advantage of the program compared to other activating tools is that there is a chance to receive the support across many years. Due to this, there are participants (8-10%) who step out of this frame and become self-sufficient producers and other who become governmental non-profit enterprises.<sup>2</sup>

### *The legislative and/or regulatory framework*

In the beginning of the 1990s the land program started as an experimental project and it became part of the law in 1993.<sup>3</sup> The constitution paragraph 47.§.4. dictates that family need satisfying agricultural production supporting aids should be ruled by the municipalities. Aid and support structure and process should be formalized, the rights of the parties should be described and the consequences of the breach of the support

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<sup>1</sup> See XCI/1991 Law on the Budget of the Hungarian Republic and the regulations of state finances in 1992. [http://www.complex.hu/kzldat/t9100091.htm/t9100091\\_0.htm](http://www.complex.hu/kzldat/t9100091.htm/t9100091_0.htm);

<sup>2</sup> Nagyné Varga Ilona expert, Interview: Jászladány, 2015. August 12.

<sup>3</sup> According to Chapter 47/3 of the Law III/2003 opportunity for land using, agricultural services and transfers, labour tools, assets for operation, advising, and opportunity for training can be regarded as support that contributes to satisfying the needs of the family and supports the agricultural activities.

contract should be defined. 19/2006. (III.14.) FVM<sup>4</sup> decree assures the opportunity that the cultivation of the land pieces from the National Land Fund can be organised by local entities.<sup>5</sup>

### *Financial framework of the program*

During the first 10 years, the project (1993-2003) was financed from domestic state budget, The reason of the government support is the deep poverty in disadvantaged regions. The program from the beginnings had social and not economic targets. It can be also seen in its infrastructural background (EMMI)<sup>6</sup> the target group and the low volume of used resources.

When Hungary joined the EU in 2004, it was suggested that the Social Land Programme be financed by the EU Structural Funds. Because in 2004 the social land program could not be integrated with the European support system<sup>7</sup>, national resources are providing further its financial base. The yearly budget is designed by the yearly central budget law.<sup>8</sup> Between 26 March 2015 and 30 June 2016. this amount was equal to 130.000.000HUF according to Hungary's 2015 central budget defined by 2014 C law XX Human Resources Ministry chapter, 20/59/5. „Social, economic, locational disadvantage balancing supporting programs colleges.” (ÁHT: 331195). This consisted of equipment procurement and development base (50.000.000HUF) and garden culture and livestock

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<sup>4</sup> FVM= Földművelési és Vidékfejlesztési Minisztérium (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development)

<sup>5</sup> This decree was modified by the 263/2010. (XI.17.) Governmental Decree on land assets belonging to the National Land Fund, but its substantial parts remained unchanged.

<sup>6</sup> EMMI=Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma (Ministry of Human Resources). While the public employment, that consumes the overwhelming majority of resources dedicated for active labour market tools and reaches more than 200.000 people, belongs to the Ministry of Interior Affairs, the social land program, that has much less resources, belongs to the EMMI that manages (among others) social affairs. It is a serious problem that the programs operate on the same field, but follow two different strategies and the elements of the programs are not harmonized.

<sup>7</sup>It was regarded as covert agricultural support, therefore it was not allowed to be financed by EU Funds.

<sup>8</sup> SZOC-15-ALT-KKA-2-0031 - 'Szociális Agrárgazdálkodási - Szociális Földprogram 2015.' (Social Agriculture – Social Land Program) coordinated by NRSZH (National Rehabilitation and Social Bureau). See 2015 call for proposals:

[http://nrszh.kormany.hu/download/5/a9/00000/SZOC\\_AP-15-2%20komp-](http://nrszh.kormany.hu/download/5/a9/00000/SZOC_AP-15-2%20komp-EMMI_NRSZH%20v%C3%A9gleges.pdf)

EMMI\_NRSZH%20v%C3%A9gleges.pdf For further details see also: Social Agriculture – Social Land Program guide for applicants:

<http://nrszh.kormany.hu/download/2/f9/00000/Szoci%C3%A1lis%20Agr%C3%A1rgazd%C3%A1lkod%C3%A1si%20Program%20v%C3%A9gleges.pdf>

keeping projects (80.000.000 HUF). With this budget they intended to involve 130 settlements.<sup>9</sup>

Each project receives approximately. 1 million HUF on average and includes 25-30 families. The supported families are funded at 30.000 HUF/year.

### *Main actors including mix of public, private and not-for-profit sectors*

During its 25 years of existence, the project has been restructured in various ways. Since it was identified in the beginning as a social project, its highest coordination always took place in the actual ministry dealing with social affairs. Since 2011, it has been the Ministry of Human Resources, and since 2015, the operational tasks have been executed by National Rehabilitation and Social Office. For participation in the program is voluntary, beneficiaries receive resources through call for bids.

Families can only join the program through applying municipalities and non-profit institutions. In the 90s applications channels were very limited, however by today the involvement in the program is easier: non-profit organisations, social organisations, municipality associations, micro-regional associations are all able to apply for the program.

The tendering organisations are usually coming from settlements with less than 1000-2000 inhabitants, where the land programs, besides the public employment, is the only tool for the local employment activation.

The tasks of the national methodological centre for developing social land programs had been executed since 2001 by the Esély (Chance) Public Foundation in Szolnok.<sup>10</sup> On the initiative of the participants the National Professional Association of Municipalities Operating Social Land Programmes was founded in 2002. The activity of the supporting organisations helped the constant development of social land programs, its spreading reputation and efficiency and its competent representative role.

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<sup>9</sup>Pronouncement of Károly Cibere, the State Secretariat of Social Affairs and Social Integration, 27 March, 2015.<http://www.kormany.hu/hu/emberi-eroforrasok-miniszteriuma/szocialis-ugyekert-es-tarsadalmi-felzarkozasert-felelos-allamtitkarsag/hirek/szocialis-foldprogramot-hirdetett-az-emmi-szocialis-hivatala>

<sup>10</sup> <http://eselyfk.hu/>

### ***Social innovation elements***

- Volunteering, in comparison to the majority of the activation programs this case the municipalities and families should apply for the opportunity;
- Bottom up organisation, in comparison to the top down coordinated public employment programs here the activity is designed and carried out locally;
- Attitude towards the target group – enabling and motivating and not sanctions when activating the segments who currently rely on social support;
- Recreation of the traditional, but forgotten, household economies for the disadvantaged segments;
- Entrepreneurial municipalities instead of provider municipalities;
- Flexibility, variety, according to the needs of the target groups the program can be anything from self-sufficiency to goods production;
- Professional supporting methodology network.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The Social Land Programme

Following the fall of the communist regime in Hungary, in order to reduce the then increasing poverty in smaller villages of agricultural regions, the government was seeking local solutions for employment that combined the objectives and characteristics of both the private and the state sector. An additional goal was to reinforce local communities and to diminish social and economic tensions that came into existence due to the lack of income. In 1991, when the concept of the “Social Land Programme” – an active social policy programme serving as an alternative for passive benefits – was developed, the Bureau of Crisis Management Programmes of the Ministry of Welfare was trying to accomplish these goals. The professional and financial bases of the programme were provided by the Crisis Management Program Office of the Ministry of Social Welfare<sup>11</sup>. Local Crisis Management Programs secured the infrastructure of the program. In framework of this program the government intended to introduce local employment programs in small villages of the agriculture regions, which combined the government and market mechanism and targets.

Land programs help socially disadvantaged people with no financial means to engage with agriculture to acquire promotional services and support to enable them with household type agricultural production and livestock keeping.<sup>12</sup> The supported activities

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<sup>11</sup>Regional Crisis Management Programmes have been in existence since 1991 in Hungary. In the most disadvantaged regions of the country, the programmes assist in solving local social problems and in improving the social welfare system, mainly in areas where long-term unemployment rates are higher. In the 1990s, 350-400 communities were provided with financial support in a total of 20-25 micro-regions every year. See Act XCI of 1991 on the 1992 budget of the Hungarian Republic and the 1992 regulations regarding government budget management

[http://www.complex.hu/kzldat/t9100091.htm/t9100091\\_0.htm](http://www.complex.hu/kzldat/t9100091.htm/t9100091_0.htm);

<sup>12</sup> Regarding the circumstances of the foundation and the first results of the program see Kriszta Jász and József Szerafin (1998): *Mezőgazdaság és szociálpolitika. (Agriculture and Sectoral Politics) Szövetkezés* 1998/1: 72–84.; Zsolt Szoboszlai (1999): *A szociális földprogramok hatékonysága. (The effectiveness of Social Land Programmes) Esély* 1999/3: 26–44.; Anna Mária Bartal (2001): *A szociális földprogramok – avagy az aktív foglalkoztatás- és szociálpolitika alternatívái a rurális térségekben. (Social land programmes–the alternatives of the active employment and social policy in rural areas.) Acta Civitalis*, Budapest; Tibor Szarvák– Zsolt Szoboszlai (2001): *Szociális földprogramok Magyarországon. Egy aktív szociálpolitikai modell eredményei – 1999-2000. (Social land programmes in Hungary. The results of an active social political model – 1999-2000)* Esély Szociális Közalapítvány Regionális Szellemi Forrásközpont, Budapest, 2001; Zsolt Szoboszlai (2003): *A szociális földprogram vidékfejlesztési hatásai.*

are the following: the production of goods, the delivery to markets, the creation of retail processes, the strengthening of network cooperation's and procurement of missing tools, objects and equipment. The main objective of the program is to strengthen self-sufficiency and to support the drop out from the social aid reliance.<sup>13</sup> The advantage of the program compared to other activating tools, that there is a chance to receive the support through a number of years.

From 2011 the program was launched in three categories:

- "A" In the framework of the ***Social Land subprogram linked to public employment, support can be claimed for promoting employment*** of registered job-seekers.
- "B" In the framework of the Subprogram for ***purchasing and developing tools***, support can be claimed for developing tools that could help organisation executing agricultural activities to get to the market.
- "C" In the framework of Subprogram for ***horticultural and small-scale animal husbandry***, support can be claimed for developing labour experience in household agricultural and horticultural activities.

## **1.2 The policy area this case study**

In the beginning of the 1990s the land program started as experimental projects and the legal background for it was created in 1993. **Act III 1993 Section 47** entered this type of benefit into the law, and supporting family farms was defined as being a form of non-monetary benefits. To apply for the type of support regulated this way **local governments** have to formulate a **decree** on the operation of Social Land Programmes, the requirements of becoming a beneficiary of the programme, and the obligations and rights of the participants. Afterwards, the participating disadvantaged families have to individually sign **contracts** in order to receive the benefits provided by the programme.

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(The effects of social land programmes on rural development.) In: Kovács Teréz (szerk.): *A vidéki Magyarország az EU-csatlakozás előtt*. VI. Falukonferencia. MTA RKK – MRTT, 471-478

<sup>13</sup> According to some experts, the social land program 'functions as a quasi-successor organization of cooperatives' i.e. it offers such agricultural services in villages with lack of resources and low population that the local cooperatives organized before for the population. (Katalin Rácz (2009): *Útban a szociális gazdaság felé? Beszámoló egy produktív szociálpolitikai program eddigi eredményeiről* (On the way to a social economy? State-of-the-art report on the results of a productive social political program.) KAPOCS VIII. évf. 3. szám (42) p. 13)

19/2006. (III.14.) decree of the Ministry for Agriculture and Rural development assures the opportunity that the cultivation of the land pieces from the National Land Fund can be organised by local entities. On national level, the program is organised by State Secretariat for Social Affairs and Social Integration of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. On a local level the participating municipality decrees regulate the projects.

The reason of the government support is until today the deep poverty in disadvantaged regions.<sup>14</sup> The program from the beginnings had social and not economic targets. As it can be also seen in its infrastructural background (EMMI)<sup>15</sup>, the target group and the low volume of used resources, this program handled as a program of the active social policy. In the same time it also one of the well known tools of activating the disadvantaged social groups – especially Roma people- and one of the main supporter of the local economy development.

The handicapped families can join the program through applying municipalities and non-profit institutions. In the 1990s applications channels were very limited, however by today the involvement in the program is easier: non-profit organisations, social organisations, municipality associations, micro-regional associations are all able to apply for the program. It is compulsory condition at now for the project applicant working together with the local Roma government.

The tendering organisations are usually coming from settlements with less than 1000-2000 inhabitants, where the land programs, besides the public employment, is the only tool for the local employment activation.

The national methodological centre - for developing social land programs, and supporting the small communities by organising of local projects - had been executed

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<sup>14</sup> 'Indicators on poverty and social exclusions show that the situation has worsened in Hungary since the beginning of the crisis, especially in the case of children and Roma people. While the rate of population endangered by social exclusion decreased, 33,5% of the Hungarian population belongs to this category. Between 2008 and 2013, the rate of children living in poverty and social exclusion increased from c.a 33% to 43% (compared to the 28% EU average in 2013. Poverty is particularly frequent among the Roma people: 81% of them are in danger of poverty.' European Commission (2015): Country report 2015. – With detailed analysis on preventing macro economical imbalances and corrections. {COM(2015) 85 final} Brussels, 2015.2.26. SWD(2015) 36 final

[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/cr2015\\_hungary\\_hu.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/cr2015_hungary_hu.pdf) p. 56.

<sup>15</sup> EMMI=Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma (Ministry of Human Resources). While the public employment, that consumes the overwhelming majority of resources dedicated for active labour market tools and reaches more than 200.000 people, belongs to the Ministry of Interior Affairs, the social land program, that has much less resources, belongs to the EMMI that manages (among others) social affairs. It is a serious problem that the programs operate on the same field, but follow two different strategies and the elements of the programs are not harmonized.

since 2001 by the Esély (Chance) Public Foundation in Szolnok.<sup>16</sup> On the initiative of the participants the National Professional Association of Municipalities Operating Social Land Programmes was founded in 2002. The activity of the supporting organisations helped the constant development of social land programs, its spreading reputation and efficiency and its competent representative role.

Because in 2004 the social land program could not be integrated with the European support system<sup>17</sup>, national resources are providing its financial base. The yearly budget is designed by the yearly national budget law.<sup>18</sup> Between 26 March, 2015 and 30 June, 2016 this amount was equal to 130.000.000 HUF according to Hungary's 2015 central budget defined by 2014 C law XX Human Resources Ministry chapter, 20/59/5. „Social, economic, locational disadvantage balancing supporting programs colleges.” (ÁHT: 331195).

This resource could be increased with Area and Region Developer Target (TRFC).

The program duration is between 10-12 months and one of the major problems is that the financing is not adjusting to the rhythm of the economic year. One project receives 1million HUF on average and includes 25-30 families.

Compared to other activating methods, the programme can claim to have several benefits. The subject of the programme is the autonomous family economy, where *beneficiaries do not participate in the programme as employees, but as independent small producers*. The organisation of the programme is the responsibility of the municipality, which tailors the issuing of benefits to the skills of each family (based on the contract signed with the families) and local characteristics. As a result, the Social Land Programme has become an essential part of disadvantaged communities' social policy (Serafin 2015), and within this framework, the organisers of the programme operate a permanent support system for the participants (including e.g.: the provision of seeds and breeding stock, professional assistance, participation in training, free or low-priced services with agricultural machinery, etc.), allowing the participants to receive support

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<sup>16</sup> <http://eselyfk.hu/>

<sup>17</sup> It was regarded as covert agricultural support, therefore it was not allowed to be financed by EU Funds.

<sup>18</sup> SZOC-15-ALT-KKA-2-0031 - 'Szociális Agrárgazdálkodási - Szociális Földprogram 2015.' (Social Agriculture – Social Land Program) coordinated by NRSZH (National Rehabilitation and Social Bureau). See 2015 call for proposals:

[http://nrszh.kormany.hu/download/5/a9/00000/SZOC\\_AP-15-2%20komp-](http://nrszh.kormany.hu/download/5/a9/00000/SZOC_AP-15-2%20komp-EMMI_NRSZH%20v%C3%A9gleges.pdf)

[EMMI\\_NRSZH%20v%C3%A9gleges.pdf](http://nrszh.kormany.hu/download/5/a9/00000/SZOC_AP-15-2%20komp-EMMI_NRSZH%20v%C3%A9gleges.pdf) For further details see also: Social Agriculture – Social Land Program guide for applicants:

<http://nrszh.kormany.hu/download/2/f9/00000/Szoci%C3%A1lis%20Agr%C3%A1rgazd%C3%A1lkod%C3%A1si%20Program%20%C3%BAtmutat%C3%B3%20v%C3%A9gleges.pdf>

for several years. This way, the form and schedule of the social and labour market integration of the individuals concerned is adjusted for each individual's situation. Thus, the programme has seen (ca. 8-10 percent of all) participants throughout the years who left this framework and became farmers, while others transformed into non-profit organisations in recent years.<sup>19</sup>

During the years of its existence, the program needed to face more and more difficulties. Because most activities are attached to agriculture, lack of augmentation in the social National Land Base<sup>20</sup> can hinder the beneficial processes.<sup>21</sup> The small villages can only lobby inefficiently and receive bad quality lands and no extensive resources. Competition also came from the Start work-program<sup>22</sup> for the land programs, due to its more efficient employment impact that it reached in the framework of the public work programmes<sup>23</sup>.

In the framework of the "A" subprogram the Social Land Program ***linked to public employment, support can be claimed for promoting employment*** of registered job-seekers. This highly discussed new model of the Social Land Program would be a pilot program of the form of community entrepreneurship: the social cooperatives, which should be finance themselves. However, without any capital and human resources the sustainability of the social cooperatives remains just a wish of the regional policy, and could not substitute the integration element of the "C" subprogram of the Social Land Program.

### **1.3 Regional/local context**

In frame of case study, we investigated eight local communities participating in a Social Land program. The main characteristics of the settlements are long-term and high-level unemployment, and the high rate of unskilled work force. In the settlements, in the

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<sup>19</sup> According to the statement of Ilona Nagyné Varga (expert, head of the national methodological centre of the social land programmes). Place and date of interview: Jászladány, 12 August 2015.

<sup>20</sup> The Law LXXXVII/2010 on National Land Fund allows that land properties of the state be ceased to the trusteeship of municipalities with the purpose of using them in the social land programmes.

<sup>21</sup> In the framework of the programme, in 2015, 217 hectares were cultivated—reported by Katalin Langerné Victor, Deputy State Secretary for social inclusion.

<http://www.farmit.hu/uzletvitel/2015/08/08/megduplazodott-szocialis-foldprogram-resztvevoinek-szama>

<sup>22</sup> Start work-program was initiated in 2011 by the government of FIDESZ to increase the low employment rate in Hungary. The Start work program is kind of public work program, and a typical form of the conditional social benefit in Hungary.

<sup>23</sup> <http://kozfooglalkoztataskormany.hu/mit-jelent-a-jarasi-startmunka-mintaprogram>

majority of the cases, there is no work besides compulsory public services. After the shutdown of cooperatives and surrounding medium size towns, in the 90's, the level of income accruing from work decreased to the minimum. Entrepreneurs play marginal role in the local economy due to lack of resources. It is a general phenomenon that because of the closure of cooperatives and privatisation of the means of production (land, machines), agricultural production and horticulture also lost much of its previous role in generating income. Household plot type economies were closed and horticulture declined partly because of the lack of resources, production means and production culture.

Because of this, the income of families have been relative low in the last two decades, the budget of the local governments is characterised by shortage of resources and the need for financial social provisions cannot be satisfied from local resources, after the welfare reform initiated on 1 March 2015, which declares that the local government is responsible for the passive services of the inhabitants of the settlement.

The signs of disintegration strengthened in the settlements, and the work force remained unused. Long-term unemployment resulted in moral crises in the multi-generational families, the rate of local petty thefts increased. Due to the migration processes started in the mid-80s, young people with good qualifications left and were replaced by "immigrants" with lower status. This resulted in tensions in the local society, which calls for organising integrational programmes, developing the living standard and the ability for self-reliance of the families.

Table 1.

**Summarised statistics of the analysed municipalities**  
(2016)

| community    | popu-<br>lation | applicant                                                          | star-<br>ting<br>year | activity in<br>2016                                                                                 | number<br>of parti-<br>cipating<br>families<br>2016 | the percentage<br>of Roma in the<br>community/<br>the<br>programme<br>2016 | collaborators                 | means of<br>production                                                                                               |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jászládány   | 5.800           | municipality                                                       | 2014                  | raising day-<br>old chicks                                                                          | 40                                                  | 40 %<br><br>85%                                                            | Family support<br>service     | big gardens<br>outside of the<br>municipality<br>being private<br>property, no<br>gardens in the<br>ghettoised areas |
| Katymár      | 2.059           | 2005-2015<br>municipality<br>2013-2016<br>Roma local<br>government | 2005                  | seeds, smaller<br>livestock,<br>social shop                                                         | 30                                                  | 5-10%<br><br>50%                                                           | Children's<br>house           | 40 hectares<br>owned by the<br>municipality,<br>+(big gardens<br>that belong to the<br>houses)                       |
| Kőtelek      | 1.600           | municipality                                                       | 2015                  | chickens<br>ready to lay.<br>horticulture,<br>household<br>land allotted<br>on<br>community<br>land | 70                                                  | 35%<br><br>50%                                                             | -                             | a few hectares of<br>land, 4 hectares<br>of sea buckthorn                                                            |
| Zsáka        | 1.619           | municipality                                                       | 2011                  | chickens<br>ready to lay                                                                            | 30                                                  | 25-30%<br><br>33%                                                          | -                             | ca. 30 hectares,<br>but only 2.5<br>hectares are<br>involved in the<br>land programme                                |
| Felsődobosza | 935             | municipality                                                       | 2012                  | horticulture,<br>vegetable<br>production                                                            | 30                                                  | 40-45%<br><br>50%                                                          | -                             | 2.8 hectares<br>municipality<br>land, community<br>cultivation +<br>gardens                                          |
| Magyargéc    | 880             | municipality,<br>minority<br>government                            | 1997                  | horticulture,<br>smaller<br>livestock                                                               | 30                                                  | 20-48%                                                                     | -                             | no land in their<br>possession,<br>farming only<br>takes place in<br>gardens outside<br>of the<br>municipality       |
| Rozsály      | 814             | municipality                                                       | 1993                  | asset<br>acquisition                                                                                | -                                                   | 20%                                                                        | Welfare Service<br>Foundation | 85.5 hectares<br>social land<br>programme                                                                            |
| Panyola      | 642             | municipality                                                       | 2012                  | horticulture                                                                                        | 30                                                  | 0%                                                                         | -                             | 4 hectares<br>community<br>farming                                                                                   |

#### 1.4 Selection of the programme

The Social Land Programme is one of the few initiatives which combine low investment with numerous innovative elements and large impact.

The first important feature is the voluntary nature of the programme. In comparison to the majority of the activation programs, in this one, the municipalities and families have

to apply for the opportunity. The motivation of the participants becomes more important in the program than the social control. In contrast to the public work program in Hungary, where control and sanction play an important role, this kind of program offers the opportunity for the participants to develop special skills, to achieve a good performance and self-confidence.

Further important characteristic is the bottom-up organisation of the local project. In comparison to the top down coordinated public employment programs, here the activity is designed and carried out locally, and with the participation of the Roma minority organisations.

This attitude towards the target group (enabling and motivating without sanctioning, offering different services, consulting and coaching, when the participants need social or professional support) is not usual in Hungary.

From the economic aspect, it is worth to mention the recreation of the traditional, but forgotten household economies by the disadvantaged groups, and to offer new roles in the family and the local community: to work, to produce something useful and to have chance to give something for the others and not just waiting for support from others. Flexibility, variety is also important, according to the needs of the target groups, the program can result is anything from self-sufficiency to goods production;

Entrepreneurial habit of municipalities and producing resources is also become more important with cutting the normative support for the local communities to finance the social disadvantaged groups. The bottom up professional supporting and methodology network organised by the mayors of the participating local communities makes the civil society stronger in Hungary.

### **1.5 Report structure**

First, the review of the literature on Social Land Programme will be executed with the purpose of presenting the results of previous theoretical and empirical studies and, second we analyse the economic and social needs that motivate the organisation of the program. In the chapter Theory of change, we describe the logical framework that underpins the policy programme. In the chapter Process evaluation we analyse the details of the execution of the programme starting from the section procedure, through the executed activities to the available support services. In this part we also describe the environment, the difficulties, and the rival programs. We dedicate two sections to the

impacts, in the first, we examine those impacts that can be measured with soft indicators, and the second is dedicated to a brief economic analysis.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Policy analysis

#### 2.1.1 Development of the policy

The Social Land Programme is not a recent institution in the welfare system of Hungary. It was a part of social policy in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as between the two World Wars. Back then, social policy was mainly based on charity. (Bartal, 1998; Serafin, 1998; Bartal 2001, Hámori, 2006, Szikra 2006, Szikra 2008) As a means to react to the Great Depression between the two World Wars, there were so-called “third way” attempts. One of the examples of this was the “productive social policy” model in the Hungary of the 1930s. The conception of this model can be related to Béla Kovrig, a social policy expert and Lajos Esztergár, the mayor of Pécs. Kovrig claimed that instead of issuing benefits to the poor, there should be a social policy that is capable of producing productive, “nationally potent Hungarians”. He believed that the way towards creating a social state was through a “Christian national work agenda”. He considered his productive social policy model to be “third way” and he defined it as the opposite of liberal economic policy and Marxist socialism. He supposed that the “productive” way of obliterating unemployment was to create and preserve individual existences.

In the 30s, a reform movement started to unfold in the country, which was funded by the state and which was centred on the productive welfare model. One of the main elements of this reform movement was the Green Cross Service, which aimed to improve the living standards of villages, which then increasingly suffered from impoverishment. The other main element of the movement was the cooperative public welfare system based on location (the main unit of the system being the *vármegye* that was the main unit of the public administration system back then). This system managed to implement new forms of making a living and self-reliance.<sup>24</sup>

The practical realisation of the theory was initiated by Lajos Esztergár through the creation of so-called Public Welfare Cooperatives, which served as a framework to provide non-monetary benefits for those in need, but rather provide the conditions

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<sup>24</sup> Consult the following works for a detailed description of the era: (Kovrig 1932, Kovrig 1936, Kovrig 1940, Gayer 1991, Gyáni 1994, Gyáni and Kövér 2003; Szikra 2006, Csoba 2015)

(livestock, land, seeds, tools, etc.) required to establish one's own farm. The main principle of the productive social policy reform (that also included the Social Land Programme) was that issuing benefits and using policies against poverty cannot improve the situation of those in need efficiently and therefore, the form of solving social problems should be delegated to the economic sector. The reforms (that prioritised the activity of said people) aimed to help the poor become independent farmers and that way, self-sufficient as well. (Kovrig 1932, Kovrig 1940)

Besides aiming to establish financial independence, the programme was also initiated with the goal that through its moral education, those in need would become members of the corporatist nation with a Christian and nationalist lifestyle and mentality. Esztergár's experimental programme became a national programme with Act XXIII 1940, which created the National Fund for Population and Family Protection<sup>25</sup> in order to coordinate and improve the model experiment programmes. (Gayer 1991; Hátori 2006, Szikra 2008) The Fund also provided the financial background for the reform movement of the period. The productive social policy reforms that focused on providing active forms of benefits for marginalised social groups were controlled by the Ministry of Interior of the period.<sup>26</sup>

Between the two World Wars, 92 active public welfare organisations existed in Hungary that used elements of the Social Land Programme. (Kovács 1999) Experts on the era emphasise that the productive social policy programmes between the two World Wars did not have a wide range of effect and they were not elaborate enough, but they were rather highly politically influenced, propaganda-esque programmes that highly differed by location. (Hátori 2006, Szikra 2008, Rácz 2009).

In the post-World War II period, after the nationalisation of agriculture and the nationwide establishment of industry based on state-owned corporations, the concept of helping the poor with Social Land Programmes became irrelevant. On the other hand,

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<sup>25</sup> The Social Land Programme can be linked to the bill Article XIII 1940 proposed by Minister of Interior Keresztes Fischer on 19 June 1940 in the House of Representatives. The accepted law established the National Fund for Population and Family Protection.

<sup>26</sup> Not only it is important to highlight the role of the Ministry of Interior between the two World Wars because back then – due to the lack of a state welfare or benefit system – providing benefits for the poor was the responsibility of local governments, but also because in present Hungary, as part of the process of gradually ceasing to issue benefits to marginalised groups, the local governmental benefits and the public employment programme (that was created to serve as a requirement to receive benefits) are coordinated by the same Ministry (the Ministry of Interior). The similarity between the productive social policy model coordinated by the gradually more and more radical right-wing governments in the second half of the 1930s and the same model of today is being highly criticised by some social policy experts who also consider this process to be quite risky. (Ferge 2011, Hátori 2006, Szikra 2006, Szikra 2008)

however, the system of social family farms (which were supposed to augment basic salaries and enhance the quantity and quality of self-containment) became widespread.<sup>27</sup>

During the years after the fall of the communist rule in Hungary, local governments of several smaller communities approached the Ministry in order to ask for the support of the residents of smaller communities that became unemployed and were also becoming more and more impoverished to re-establish their agricultural activity. They asked for the support of using agricultural land, agricultural machines, tools and plant propagating material.

In order to reduce poverty in smaller villages of agricultural regions, the government sought local solutions for employment that combined the characteristics and objectives of both the private and the state sector. The once long-established household plot-type agricultural production and livestock farming completely qualified for these requirements. That way, the knowledge in connection with household plots could be revived and self-sufficiency could gain importance to fill the gap that had been left in these people's salaries. Furthermore, other objectives included the reinforcement of local communities and the reduction of the increasing economic and social tension. Additionally, increasing the self-sufficiency of target groups like the long-term unemployed, people with reduced work capacities, larger families as well as the Roma people became highly important along with the improvement of their moneymaking skills using the knowledge that can be earned through household plot work.

As a result of the aforementioned and of the economic pressure that occurred simultaneously with the increase of long-term employment, the concept of the Social Land Programmes was developed with the coordination of the Crisis Management

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<sup>27</sup> Household plots (existing in almost three quarter of all rural family farms), horticulture and livestock not only played an important role in establishing self-containment, but also in production and the constant, high-quality food supply in the socialist regime. Even around the time of the fall of the regime, 1.4 million household and auxiliary plots were being operated on an area of 0.8 hectare each (on average), which numbers started to gradually decrease from that time on. (See e.g.: <http://www.parlament.hu/irom37/0291/0291-02m.htm>) The underlying concept behind this decrease was essentially the change of ownership, but another, equally important factor of this process was that at the same time with the privatisation process, the payment of full-time job salaries of a substantial number of individuals, which functioned as liquidity reserves for the household plots was also terminated. As income from agricultural production was seasonal, these families used their main jobs (industrial work or other forms of employment) to finance their horticultural activity, livestock or household plot in order to ensure its uninterrupted operation. With the loss of their regular salaries, pre-financing their household and horticultural plots as well as livestock became impossible. The social groups who lost their jobs that way became the victims of a dual loss of salary and they started to lose the skills and the equipment that would have been required to maintain the operation of their household plots and family farms.

Programme Office of the Ministry of Welfare in 1991. (Serafin 1998, Kovács 1999, Serafin 2001)

One of the key players of the 1990s politics also referred to the noticeable resemblance of the revived Social Land Programme to the public welfare cooperative programme of the 1930s. According to him, both programmes were established with the aim of providing state-organised help (be it either loans or work) for people who are not capable of living on benefits or who need to be provided with an active lifestyle instead, through which they can make a living. "The very first and at the same time the most inclusive and best-known programme was provided by Szatmár vármegye (*at the time of the productive social policy programmes of the interwar Hungary- NA- J.Cs.*) and in a similar manner, the first steps in 1992-93 were taken in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county." (Kovács 1999)

The revived Social Land Programme aimed to „use local governments’ unused lands and the disintegrating cooperative farms’ machinery so that locals can establish new organisations (foundations, associations or public benefit organisations) or so that local governments can operate the programme directly and that way, the families in need can get an opportunity to be engaged in farming, to receive assistance with machinery or seeds, get the necessary training, receive livestock to help their self-sufficiency and also to get help for monetising their unused supplies.”<sup>28</sup>

From 1992 on, the programme became coordinated by the contemporary Ministry of Social Affairs, while it became financed by the Regional Crisis Management Programmes<sup>29</sup>.

As there were an increasing number of cases where the support of the 1992 programme was demanded, the support it provided became embedded in an invitation-only grant application programme in 1993. The first few places that received support within the Social Land Programme were located in the three counties that had the highest unemployment rates after the fall of the communist regime and that had the most

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<sup>28</sup> The function of Social Land Programmes in the social policy concept of the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs. Interview with Zoltán Lakner. Newsletter Volume I Issue 1, 1999, Network Development Centre for Social Land Programmes, Szolnok (Sociologist Zoltán Lakner used to be Deputy State Secretary for Family between 1993-1994)

<sup>29</sup> Regional Crisis Management Programmes have existed since 1991 in Hungary. These programmes help with the solution of local social programs and the development of the social benefit system in those regions where long-term unemployment rates are high. In the 90s, they provided financial support in 350-400 communities of 20-25 micro-regions each year. ([1991. évi XCI. törvénya Magyar Köztársaság 1992. évi költségvetéséről és az államháztartás vitelének 1992. évi szabályairól](http://www.complex.hu/kzldat/t9100091.htm/t9100091_0.htm))  
[http://www.complex.hu/kzldat/t9100091.htm/t9100091\\_0.htm](http://www.complex.hu/kzldat/t9100091.htm/t9100091_0.htm);

dispersed settlements, namely: Békés, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén. (Bartal 1998, Serafin 1998, Bartal 2001, Szoboszlai 2001) The number of counties and micro-regions involved in the programme gradually increased throughout the 25 years that have passed since the creation of the programme. In 1993, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok county, in 1994, Baranya county, in 1995, Hajdú – Bihar county, in 1996, Nógrád and Zala county, in 1999, Tolna county and in 2000, Somogy county became involved in the programme. (Rácz 2013:140)

Between 1992 and 2010, the Social Land Programme was realised in 505 settlements throughout the country. The participating communities are located in 10 counties (out of the 19 counties in total), and are concentrated specifically in the most disadvantaged areas. Based on the number of communities that participate and the amount of the supplied resources, the counties that are involved in the programme to the largest extent are Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, being a former heavy industrial region and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg of the eastern region that also played a leading role in organising the interwar Social Land Programmes. (Rácz 2013:145)

An important stage in the development of the programme was the establishment of the network of Regional Management Organisations (RMO) that has helped in the coordination of the Social Land Programmes and in methodological development as well. The management of the county-level organisations was the responsibility of the Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok-based “Esély” Social Resources Centre, which – in order to improve the sustainability and improvability of the benefit system and the network – was helping the work of the executive organisations (mainly local governments) for the fifteen years of the programme in different ways – operating databases, research programmes, workshop studies, publications, etc. It was “Esély” that initiated the analysis and the categorisation of the observations and the summary of the results. They also played an important role in establishing the Trade Association of Municipalities Operating the Social Land Programme as the trade association of the communities that were involved. Besides its activities regarding methodology and serving as a trade association, the Association aimed to prepare for using European Union funds that were to become available after the accession of Hungary to the EU. Although the Social Land Programme was included in the 2007-2013 “New Hungary Rural Development Programme” as part of its third axis where specific objectives were expressed in connection with the Social Land Programme, the European Commission was not overly

satisfied with the proposal and considered it to be an example of the “latent support of agriculture”, and eventually did not accept to co-finance the programmes. Consequently, the final document for verification was sent to Brussels without including the Social Land Programme.

Social Land Programmes saw a gradually increasing amount of support from their establishment until 2003, and from the accession to the EU, it started to fluctuate. The annual investment of ca. 200 million Forints equalled 3-6 million Forints per micro-region per year and 0.7-1.5 million Forints per project. (RIAE 2012:73)

From 2004 on, domestic support started to decline drastically and besides the improvement of self-sufficiency skills, the participation in public employment also started to gain importance. In the second half of the first decade in the new millennium, domestic resources were rearranged to finance public employment as well. (Rácz 2009, RIAE 2012, Rácz 2013)

Throughout the 25 years of the Social Land Programme, on average 180-200 municipalities received financial support from the Ministry every year, but the composition of the beneficiaries was changing from year to year. One of the permanent factors of the programme, however, was the targeting of the programme. The population of 60 percent of the communities where the Social Land Programme was implemented was under 1,000 each. (Rácz 2013:146)

In 2014, 84 organisations received **224.291.271 HUF** of financial support in around 50 micro-regions of the country.<sup>30</sup>

#### *2.1.2 Legislative framework*

By the beginning of the 90s, the Social Land Programme became part of the local social welfare system. **Act III 1993 Section 47** entered this type of benefit into the law, and supporting family farms was defined as being a form of non-monetary benefits. To apply for the type of support regulated this way; **local governments** have to formulate a **decree** on the operation of Social Land Programmes, the requirements of becoming a beneficiary of the programme, and the obligations and rights of the participants. Afterwards, the participating disadvantaged families have to individually sign **contracts** in order to receive the benefits provided by the programme.

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<sup>30</sup> [http://www.emet.gov.hu/kozlemlenyek/szocialis\\_foldprogram9/](http://www.emet.gov.hu/kozlemlenyek/szocialis_foldprogram9/)

The types of activities that can be supported based on the law: providing products and services that can help production (e.g.: usage of land, propagation materials, chemicals, animal feed, etc.), financing the organisation of production (e.g.: renting machinery, organising sales, processing crops, storage, transport, etc.) as well as many services focusing on the participants (expert advice, training, community development, household and lifestyle improvement, supporting forms of cooperation<sup>31</sup> that encourage collective forms business, etc.)

The change in the direction of the Social Land Programme after the accession of Hungary to the EU is signified by the fact that due to the gradually increasing lack of resources, decision-makers would like to encourage becoming self-sufficient as soon as possible instead of providing long-term financial support. Cooperative Act X 2006 and government decree 141/2006 (IV.29) on social cooperatives established the institution of the social cooperative, that had multiple links to the Land Programme. This supported collective forms of business that prioritised the idea of “(self)-employment” and self-sufficiency instead of previous forms of household farming.

The encouragement of community enterprise was supposedly prioritised due to the fact that the resources of the structural funds of the EU became available for this purpose as well.<sup>32</sup> The coordination of organising social cooperatives was the responsibility of the National Public Foundation of Employment (NPFE). In the 2006-2013 funding period of the EU, within the TÁMOP grant programme, the NPFE received ca. 1 billion Forints of financial support for the operation of the NPFE Programme Bureau and the county network.<sup>33</sup> The NPFE highly contributed to the promotion and publishing of the concept of the social cooperative with its grant announcements “Szövetkezz 2007” and “Kooperáció”.<sup>34</sup> While the former aimed to create social cooperatives, the latter engaged in the professional support and the development of the established cooperatives.

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<sup>31</sup> The conditions of establishing and operating social cooperatives are regulated by Cooperative Act X 2006 and government decree 141/2006 (IV.29) on cooperatives.

<sup>32</sup> See e.g.: the programme titled TÁMOP-2.4.3-D-1-13/1 The establishment of social economy – Supporting social cooperatives (that aim to create self-sufficiency) in the convergence regions. Az önfenntartást célzó szociális <https://www.palyazat.gov.hu/doc/4054> or the following announcement: “A grant programme is to start for establishing social cooperatives with the aim of improving the situation of 800 smaller communities of the 47 most disadvantaged micro-regions. <http://www.magyarpolgarmester.hu/?site=104&c=982&menu=c02>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.szoszov.hu/node?page=1>

<sup>34</sup> See e.g.: Szokolainé Molnár, Eszter (2008): Social cooperatives support programme. Results, observations. Parola 2008/4. p. 5  
[http://www.kka.hu/\\_062568cf006c1954.nsf/0/5dadd21f4407ae9cc1257554003b1ce3?OpenDocument](http://www.kka.hu/_062568cf006c1954.nsf/0/5dadd21f4407ae9cc1257554003b1ce3?OpenDocument)

Another important law regarding the Land Programmes was adopted in 2006. The decree 19/2006 (III.4) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Development allowed municipalities that participated in the Social Land Programme to apply for the usage of land for agricultural purposes from the *National Land Fund (NLF)*. The decree stated that each individual could receive a piece of land with a maximum area of 1 hectare. Within the programme, the asset management of land could be issued for a time ranging from at least 2 years up to a maximum of 15 years. The municipalities of the communities (districts) could only receive land within their own administrative boundaries.<sup>35</sup> Due to the vague, uncertain conditions regarding ownership and incomplete registries, this form of land usage application was quite burdensome. (Terbe 2012)

During the programme that was started in 2006, the NLF issued 145 hectares of agricultural plots to 12 municipalities. In the following governmental term, almost 200 municipalities showed their interest towards the NLF-managed state land, but eventually, after the consultation with the municipalities, 76 of them received 115 hectares of land.

Although based on the permit included in the National Land Fund Act LXXXVII 2010 Section 32 Paragraph (1) Point (c),<sup>36</sup> Government decree 263/2010. (XI. 17) set the rules of issuing the ownership or asset management of land belonging to the National Land Fund to municipalities free of charge for implementing the Social Land Programme, the conditions did not become more appealing. Up until July 2011, local governments received the asset management of 132 hectares of land for the realisation of the Social Land Programme.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> With regard to the regulation, the Social Land Programme has had less favourable conditions than social cooperatives (that also enjoy the support of the EU), especially if these conditions include public employment as well. E.g.: According to the content of Act LXXXVII 2010, the conditions of granting asset management of state land are regulated by government decrees. The system of controlling has become more elaborate; this activity is performed in agreement with the annual control plan of the National Land Fund. What is even more important is that elements advocating public employment have been implemented in the system. While the municipalities that operate a Social Land Programme can only apply for land that is within their administrative boundaries, those that participate in programmes of public employment can also apply for land that is located within a 30 km radius outside of their administrative boundaries.

<sup>36</sup> [http://net.jogtar.hu/jr/gen/hjegy\\_doc.cgi?docid=A1000263.KOR](http://net.jogtar.hu/jr/gen/hjegy_doc.cgi?docid=A1000263.KOR)

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.kormany.hu/hu/videkfejlesztési-minisztérium/kozigazgatasi-allamtitkarsag/hirek/a-szocialis-foldprogrammal-is-munkara-osztonoz-a-kormany>

The area of land that could be issued within the framework of the Social Land Programmes was further degraded – causing intense social debate<sup>38</sup> – by the 2015 Act regarding the further privatisation of NLF land<sup>39</sup> that meant the limitation of the land fund that was available for Social Land Programmes. From October 2015, the plots below 3 hectares were started to be auctioned.<sup>40</sup> Between November 2015 and 30 April 2016 – despite the fact that there are tenants on a substantial area of the land who are actively farming – the government plans to sell 380 thousand hectares of agricultural land.

The privatisation of state-owned land was further advocated through the establishment of a loan programme (that is beneficial for farmers) in decree 1765/2015 (X. 16.)<sup>42</sup>, that also increased the area of land being privatised while at the same time decreased the area of land available for community use and the chances to expand the Social Land Programme.

In 2011, other aspects of the organisation of the Social Land Programme were changed. The coordination of the programme (that used to belong to the Ministry of Social Affairs) was delegated to the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice and the Wekerle Sándor Fund Management Organisation and the programme underwent fundamental changes. From 2011 on, the attempts to increase the public employment aspect of the programme became more and more powerful. (Giró 2012) The modified legal regulations on the organisation of the Social Land Programme now for instance oblige to employ at least 2 individuals per programme. Now there is also an opportunity

<sup>38</sup> See e.g. “It has been leaked how the government would issue state-owned land” „Kiszivárgott, hogy adná a kormány az állami földeket” [http://index.hu/gazdasag/2015/09/18/allami\\_fold\\_privatizacio\\_eloterjesztes/](http://index.hu/gazdasag/2015/09/18/allami_fold_privatizacio_eloterjesztes/) or

Szlavkovits, Rita: The National Land Fund has taken a sudden turn before our very eyes HVG 27/01/2016

[http://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20160127\\_nfa\\_natura\\_2000\\_foldlicit\\_szerzodeskotes](http://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20160127_nfa_natura_2000_foldlicit_szerzodeskotes), or János Lázár’s relatives also “bought in bulk” from the land HVG 25/01/2016 [http://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20160125\\_Lazar\\_Janos\\_csaladtagjai\\_is\\_bevasaroltak](http://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20160125_Lazar_Janos_csaladtagjai_is_bevasaroltak)

or The state is buying land from the revenue of state-owned land they had HVG 15/12/2015 [http://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20151216\\_Foldet\\_vesz\\_az\\_allam\\_az\\_eladott\\_allami\\_fo](http://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20151216_Foldet_vesz_az_allam_az_eladott_allami_fo)

<sup>39</sup> Government decree 1666/2015 (IX. 21) on action required for selling state-owned land to farmers within the framework of the “Land for the farmers!” Programme.

[http://www.nfa.hu/1666\\_2015\\_IX\\_21\\_Korm\\_határozat\\_a\\_Foldet\\_a\\_gazdaknak\\_Program\\_kereteben\\_az\\_allami\\_tulajdonu\\_foldek\\_foldmuvesek\\_reszere\\_torteno\\_ertekesiteséhez\\_szuksages\\_intezkedesekrol\\_news\\_183](http://www.nfa.hu/1666_2015_IX_21_Korm_határozat_a_Foldet_a_gazdaknak_Program_kereteben_az_allami_tulajdonu_foldek_foldmuvesek_reszere_torteno_ertekesiteséhez_szuksages_intezkedesekrol_news_183)

<sup>40</sup> [http://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20151013\\_Kedden\\_megkezdodott\\_az\\_allami\\_foldek\\_erte](http://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20151013_Kedden_megkezdodott_az_allami_foldek_erte)

<sup>41</sup> According to the National Land Fund Act LCCCVII 2010 Section 21 Paragraph (3a) Point (b), land that belongs to the National Land Fund and does not exceed 3 hectares in area can be sold without the announcement of public tenders or auctioning.

<sup>42</sup> Magyar Közlöny, Issue 2015/168. (10 November), p. 21470: <http://www.kozlonyok.hu/nkonline/MKPDF/hiteles/MK15168.pdf>

to link the Social Land Programme and public employment together, which has become more and more dominant in the government's programme in the past few years based on the analysis of financing and the tweaking of the legal framework.

### *2.1.3 Academic analysis*

Research and literature on the Social Land Programmes between the mid-90s and 2011 is quite diverse. One can observe a historical approach among the dimensions of the analyses, for instance (Gyáni 2004, Hámori 2006), as well as social policy or active employment policy approaches (Gayerné 1991, Serafin 1997, Serafin 1998, Jász –Serafin 1998, Nagyné 2001, Nagyné 2012, Szarvák-Szoboszlai 2001, Szarvák 2003, Bartal-Sziklai 2006, Petrivicsné 2007, RIAE 2008). The Social Land Programme was analysed as the field of cross-sectoral collaboration (Serafin 2006, Nagyné 2007), but it was studied from organisational and legal angles as well. (Szoboszlai 1998, Bartal 2001, Szoboszlai 2001, Nagyné 2012)

Around the time of the establishment of Social Land Programmes, works concerning the beginning, the characteristics and methodological peculiarities of the programmes were published. (Gayer 1991, Serafin 1998, Győri 1998, Serafin 1999, Kovács 1999, Szoboszlai 1999, Nagyné-Szoboszlai 1999)

During this period, the newsletter of the Network Development Centre for Social Land Programmes was also established (in 1999), which summarised the current news regarding the Land Programmes in order to inform the participants of the programme.

The first systematic analysis of the operation and the effects of the programme were initiated by the Main Department of Social Services of the Ministry of Welfare. The study was coordinated by Zsolt Szoboszlai.<sup>43</sup> The random sampling process involved 31 communities of counties Békés, Hajdú-Bihar and Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok. The questionnaire used throughout the study was filled out by 117 programme organisers. The results of the study (57 pages with additional appendices) were first published by the author in the study summary of the Esély Foundation Regional Resources Centre in Szolnok, delegated by the Main Department of Social Services of the Ministry of Welfare, and later on, he also published the most important results in several papers of the field and of the public life. (Szoboszlai 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003) The study group

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<sup>43</sup> A kutatás időpontjában Szoboszlai Zsolt a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia *Regionális Kutatások Központja* Alföldi Tudományos Intézet Szolnoki Társadalomkutató Osztályának tudományos osztályvezetője volt.

coordinated by Szoboszlai analysed the results based on the organisation of the programme, the constitution of organisers and participants and the type of the programme. (Szoboszlai, 1999, 2001) According to the main significances, although the programme aimed to support the social inclusion of the Roma people, the percentage of Romas among the surveyed individuals was only 30.8%. The produced goods of the programme were used by two thirds of the participants for their living directly, while in the case of Roma participants, this percentage equals three quarters. While only 10 percent of Roma participants in the programme possessed their own land, 39.3 percent of non-Romas were in possession of land of some sort. According to the observation of the author based on the study that was carried out in three counties, it could be stated that the Social Land Programme correlates with the initial objectives; it provides a framework for socialisation for unqualified, unemployed social groups.

The study coordinated by Szoboszlai was followed by further empirical analyses in the second half of the 90s as well as the first years of the new millennium. (Péter-Szarvák-Szoboszlai 2000, Szoboszlai 2001, Jász 2003, Jász-Szarvák-Szoboszlai 2003, Jász-Szarvák 2005) These studies scrutinised the social characteristics of the beneficiaries and the constitution and experiences of the organisers of the programme. Among the studies, a particular one had outstanding significance: this particular study in 2002 surveyed more than two thousand beneficiaries. The aim of the study was to examine the participants' socio-demographical traits, standards of living, migration rates as well as employment history. Researchers could also depict the plans and vision of land programme participants better. At the time of the study, 32 thousand individuals from ten counties of three regions (Dél-Dunántúl, Észak-Magyarország and Észak-Alföld) were participating in the programme. (Jász 2003, Szarvák 2003, Szoboszlai 2003) Throughout the study, researchers highlighted the effect of the Social Land Programme among Roma participants, specifically mentioning exclusion based on location and ethnicity. They also drew the conclusion that, although the Social Land Programme does not involve employment based on employment relationship (as the programmes were mainly established based on household farming and its revival), it has substantial effects regarding employment as well as the compensation for the lack of salaries. (Jász-Szarvák-Szoboszlai 2003:140-142)

At the time of the research of the Szolnok Workshop of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Centre for Regional Studies, Anna Mária Bartai was also performing her

research, which covered the topic of the Social Land Programme being an active social policy method. (Bartal 1998, 2001)

Both workshops attempted to specify the typology of Social Land Programmes. According to Rácz (2013), at one end of the spectrum in the typology of Szoboszlai (2001) are Social Land Programmes that are sensitive to market demand, that are involved in production and that are open to innovation, while on the other end of the spectrum are Social Land Programmes that consider grants to simply be a form of social benefits and that integrate those in need, who are not driven by any motivation. On the other hand, Bartal performed her typology along quite different dimensions. She analysed Social Land Programmes based on their functions and the motivations of participants. In this study, those farmers that participate in the programme solely to support their living through producing food, and those who participate in the Social Land Programme in order to generate income belong to two different types. (Bartal, 2001).

Throughout her research between 2007 and 2009, Rácz also attempted to describe the peculiarities of Social Land Programmes. Her scope of analysis includes the period between the years 1992 and 2010, as she believes that due to the substantial changes in the system of organisation and operation of Social Land Programmes in 2011, all the data available after this year would be difficult to compare to the data of the period before that time. (Rácz 2013) Rácz tried to study Social Land Programmes with two methods. For the so-called “top view analysis”, she used the statistics recorded by the Szolnok-based “Esély” Social Public Foundation (which has undertaken national methodological institutional tasks related to the Social Land Programmes since 2001). These statistics were augmented by interviews with experts that had played a role in the establishment of the professional foundations of the Social Land Programmes. For the “bottom view analysis”, she examined interviews performed in Túristvándi, a village in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county (that implemented the Social Land Programme with outstanding results) as well as local documents (decrees, rules of operation, and grant programme documentation). (Rácz 2013)

In her study summarising the results of her initial research, she observed that throughout the 15 years before, Land Programmes had been implemented in almost 500 communities (more accurately, 471). Each year, 150-170 municipalities received grants from the Ministry, but the constitution of beneficiaries was changing from year to year.

The *dominant* type of these settlements by their population is smaller village (*kistelepülések és aprófalvak*). Three fifths of the settlements having implemented the Social Land Programme between 1992 and 2007 had a population below 1.000. (Rácz 2009)

The Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok county-based “Esély” Social Resources Centre – being the national methodological institution for the Social Land Programmes – has also published analytical and methodological works since the second half of the 90s on a regular basis. (Nagyné-Szoboszlai 1999, Nagyné-Serafin-Szoboszlai 2001, Nagyné 2001, Nagyné-Varga 2006, Nagyné-Landau 2006, Nagyné 2012)

After the changes of 2006, Social Land Programmes started to delve into the idea of social cooperatives as a potential way for development. (Simkó-Tarjányi 2011, Soltész 2012, Németh 2013, Németh 2014) The 2007 study of Nagyné emphasised the same concept by analysing how Social Land Programmes could be the potential basis of organising social cooperatives. According to the author, the system of the Social Land Programme already included characteristics of social cooperatives. (Nagyné 2007).

The idea of Social Land Programmes being transformed into social cooperatives – and it being the advocated way of progress by the government – has faced quite a lot of criticism among experts. (G.Fekete and Solymár 2005, G. Fekete 2010, Rácz 2013, G. Fekete and Lipták 2014) In addition, it should also be highlighted that not all of the Social Land Programme’s elements can be implemented in social economy. Flexible forms of self-sufficiency based on household farming often require very different skills and serve different purposes than those of social cooperatives. While G. Fekete and Lipták consider the Social Land Programme to be the “cradle” of social economy in Hungary in their 2014 study, they do not think of the transformation of the Land Programmes into a combination of public employment and social cooperatives as well as prioritising self-sufficiency as being well-planned or reasonable. “The incorporation of public employment in social cooperatives can be explained with the combination of the aim of reducing budgetary expenses and establishing jobs along with its assimilability into EU programmes and the quick build up of this form of social economy due to previous programmes.” (G.Fekete and Lipták 2014:135) Although the authors explain their concerns about the process including cooperatives combined with public employment, their observations are in many respects applicable to the operation of the

Social Land Programme and its direction towards cooperation combined with public employment.

The transformation of the organisational framework and the fundamental objectives of Social Land Programmes is also risky due to the nature of the four types of the programme – according to Rácz (2013) – as Social Land Programmes can be categorised into four distinct types, three of which are unmixed, and one is mixed. The unmixed types of Social Land Programmes specialise in self-maintenance or market sales or integrative production exclusively. Mixed-type Social Land Programmes can be defined as the combination of the aforementioned types. The study results of post-millennium years confirm that Social Land Programmes dominantly engage in production for self-maintenance, which is mainly realised through household farming.<sup>44</sup>

With the increasing support of social cooperatives, Social Land Programmes have started to gradually lose their importance since 2011. (Tésits-Alpek-Kun 2012) The altered circumstances posed several new challenges in connection with the programme. The compulsory/optional cooperation of public employment and Social Land Programmes, the transformation of Social Land Programmes (which are based on household farming) into forms of social economy and its related effects, the analysis of the logic behind the expectations towards the operation of social cooperatives without external support, and the determination of the future role of the Social Land Programme regarding social groups who are not prepared for being part of social economy yet are all dilemmas that need to be settled in the future. The related literature of studies is still quite limited in the present. One of the main objectives of the current research programme is to observe the effects of the 2011 changes on the Social Land programme.

## 2.2 Previous evaluations

Many dilemmas arise in connection with the theoretical framework and fundamental philosophy of the Social Land Programme, as well as regarding the forms and details of its practical realisation. Besides the studies proving the diverse demand and successfulness of the programme, it is important to note the relevant theoretical and practical hazards, and dilemmas as well. József Serafin – an expert playing an essential role in the coordination of Social Land Programme for decades as well as being an

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<sup>44</sup> For further details on typology, see: Szoboszlai, Zsolt (ed. 2001) *Social Land Programmes in Hungary. The results of an active social policy model – 1992-2000*, p. 107.

advocate of the programme – presents the dilemma regarding the philosophy and innovative nature as follows: “The social Land Programme, based on its objectives, can be regarded as turning time back. The portrayed society reinforces a process that is the opposite of the factors of change. It forces families to initiate and expand household production in an “obsolete” manner. A substantial amount, if not most of their everyday needs regarding food could be produced using rather simple equipment, within their households or the administrative boundaries of their settlements. Household value creation does not qualify as work by itself.”<sup>45</sup> Although the expert believes that the integrative role of the Social Land Programme based on household plots and its flexibility regarding the adaptation to its target group as well as the opportunities in self-sufficiency to be necessary and practical, he also thinks it is important to highlight the potential dangers of the model. With the decreasing presence of the interference of the welfare state, there is a gradually increasing burden on families participating in household farming due to their increasing need for self-maintenance, while these activities (can) only play the role of additional income most of the time, and they cannot provide an exclusive source of income to disadvantaged regions, while they cannot directly increase employment rates by statistically significant percentages either. Furthermore, this was not the primary objective of the programme at its initial stages of development.

Judit Csoba claims in her study on the labour market and employment conditions of the Roma people that she acknowledges the need for Social Land Programmes on the one hand, but on the other hand, she also states that “... The Social Land Programmes of nowadays are highly accurate in representing the forms existing 200 years ago.”<sup>46</sup>, which poses the dangers of refeudalisation to the most endangered target groups of society. The type of work that is organised by local governments, located in community areas designated for this specific purpose and that also establishes maximal dependence among disadvantaged social groups bears resemblance to the work of medieval demesne servants in many respects.

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<sup>45</sup> For further details, consult the following work: Serafin József (2011): Land community – How can community work increase the effectiveness of the Social Land Programme? How can the Social Land Programme strengthen the community? In Szociotéka. Community work in family support Ed.: Nagyné Varga, Ilona. p. 183. University of Debrecen

<sup>46</sup> Csoba Judit: A romák a munkaerőpiacon. In Szociotéka. Munkaerő-piaci változások, leszakadó társadalmi csoportok. Szerk.: Csoba Judit. pp. 163. Debreceni Egyetem, 2011.

Contrary to these threats, Teréz Terbe (2012) reviews the dilemmas of social economy in her study titled “Socio and eco” and she states that “Some aim to establish post-capitalist forms of life which could be ways out of the general, deepening crisis that poses the threat of total downfall out of necessity (Socios), while others do the same voluntarily (Ecos).” (Terbe 2012) Through the analysis of alternative means of farming, the Social Land Programme is considered by the author to be a means of escape for local communities, self-defence against the global economy or a type of symbiosis of the community, which might be useful from an economical aspect as well as when establishing non-authoritative local communities.

With respect to this duality, it would be important to further analyse the new forms that the Social Land Programme has established due to the respective perils and opportunities nowadays.

Experts have quite different opinions on not only the theoretical framework of the Social Land Programmes, but also their practical realisation and effectiveness. According to Ferge “The opportunities in social economy are almost non-utilised, except in the case of the Social Land Programme, for example. In this case, there is no well-thought-out system of conditions, there is no planned procedure and we do not know how sustainability will be realised either. The model it represents is very different from conservative social policy, while it rather bears resemblance to the post-First World War productive social policy of Zoltán Magyary, even which was more well-planned than this chaotic concept.” According to Ferge, we should decide between “preparing ourselves and the poor for burdensome and slow change or to combat the threats with temporary intervention.” (Ferge 2011)<sup>47</sup>

Sociologist Zsuzsa Hegedűs<sup>48</sup> on the other hand considers Social Land Programmes in their present form to be maximally successful based on her observations about local governments. Her observations mainly apply to component “C” of the programme, which aims to revive the traditions of “Horticulture and small livestock farming” among Roma families without income from employment. In her studies, however, she does not talk about the instant sales and consumption of the animals that were supposed to serve as livestock, their mass deaths, drought and the failure due to lack of expertise.

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<sup>47</sup> Part of the interview with Zsuzsa Ferge in the report of Grünceisz, Kata (2011): *Accelerator training* The campaign of Zsuzsa Hegedűs against poverty. Published in Magyar Narancs 2011/41.

[http://magyarnarancs.hu/belpol/hegedus\\_zsuzsa\\_kampanya\\_a\\_szegegyseg\\_ellen\\_gyorsított\\_tanfolyam-77096](http://magyarnarancs.hu/belpol/hegedus_zsuzsa_kampanya_a_szegegyseg_ellen_gyorsított_tanfolyam-77096)

<sup>48</sup> See the part of the aforementioned study

The latest studies of the Agrarian Research Institute on the Social Land Programmes also prove that the livestock farming aspect of the programme has been the least successful so far. *“The livestock farming knowledge of the beneficiaries is extremely partial, the financing of feed purchase is very complicated and the monetisation of the end product is problematic as well.”* (RIAE 2012:73)

In her study published in 2009, Rácz also highlights the fact that *“the success of the Social Land Programme is inseparable from the philosophy of the municipalities, the mayors and their loyal representatives on social inequalities as well as their poverty management strategies.”* (Rácz 2009:22) In this regard, the involved communities are quite diverse (Velkei 2009, Alföldi et. al 2011). There are functional, succesful models as well, but there are severe efforts behind these successes as the local governments' responsibility was not the operation of a „village enterprise”<sup>49</sup>, but the provision of community services. Between a nurturing “government” and an “enterprise government” there exist many models regarding the integration of peripheral groups. Due to the lack of expertise, reasons in connection with different views on integrating excluded groups, or even the lack of equipment in these communities could be revived feudal relationships, which can take the roles of social security guarantees by the re-establishment of the welfare state. The need to analyse the government's role in the organisation of Social Land Programmes is also important because more than four fifths of the programmes are operated by governments. (Rácz 2013)

### *Summary*

The 2015 Budget Bill continues to refer to the Social Land Programme as an important tool for the social inclusion of the Roma people or disadvantaged groups of rural areas. The Bill, however, highlights the employment of the disadvantaged and improving their employability instead of its integrational factor. The method of the programme's execution is in correspondence with this idea: the means to support the living of socially disadvantaged people put the emphasis rather on the organisation of the Social Land Programme along with public employment as well as assisting the establishment of social cooperatives that engage in the production of goods instead of providing help with growing kitchen garden plants or establishing the conditions for smaller livestock

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<sup>49</sup> In 2015, the Millefolium Strategical Kft published a “Handbook on village enterprise development and its methodology“ with the aim of offering exemplary models of public employment to smaller disadvantaged communities. <http://hirlevel.egov.hu/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/faluvalalat.pdf>

farming. The aims of production are also changing. Up until now, the idea of improving self-sufficiency has been prioritised, while the local monetisation of excess products has had little importance. Despite the fact that producing goods for the markets has been marginal and the goods produced for this purpose have not played a significant role in the local market, the political aims for development – involving the assistance of organisations that participate in the production of goods in purchasing their equipment – is now emphasising the priority of market sales.<sup>50</sup>

The present changes regarding the practical execution of the Social Land Programme, however raise many concerns about the initial aims of the programme, the target group being involved, the methods of implementation, the organisational framework, the relevance of expected and achievable results, but also regarding the changing values of the programme. These concerns can only be clarified through the comprehensive analysis of the changes that have been made among the Social Land Programmes since 2011.

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<sup>50</sup> Budget Bill T/1794 of Hungary. For the parts concerning the Social Land Programme, see pages 805 and 934. <http://www.parlament.hu/irom40/01794/01794.pdf>

### 3. Needs assessment

#### 3.1 Introduction

In the past 25 years, land programmes provided services at discounted prices as well as various benefits for those socially disadvantaged individuals who did not have the means to engage in agricultural production, so that they could participate in backyard farming as well as livestock farming.<sup>51</sup> The activities to be supported included the production of goods, their marketing, the planning of sales, reinforcing cooperation within a network, and the acquisition of needed tools, equipment, and machinery as well. The main objective of the programme was to enhance the ability to achieve self-maintenance and to assist the detachment from the social benefit system.

#### 3.2 The necessities that triggered the establishment of the Social Land Programme

##### 3.2.1. Unemployment and the lack of income, especially in rural regions

Between 1989 and 1992, almost 30 percent of all jobs ceased to exist, so in other words, almost a million people became unemployed. The majority of these people consisted of unskilled individuals or those who did not have a marketable profession and these people were mainly commuters between the countryside and the city but they had to return to their home villages. Thus, the quickly increasing masses of the unemployed in the early 90s were left without income not because of structural transformation but because of the economic recession and the involuntary and general unemployment thanks to the lack of demand. (Csoba 2014, 2015)

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<sup>51</sup> On the circumstances of the establishment of the programme and its first results, see Kriszta, Jász – József, Serafin (1998): Agriculture and Social Policy. Szövetkezés 1998/1: pp. 72–84.; Zsolt, Szoboszlai (1999): The Efficiency of Social Land Programmes. Esély 1999/3: pp. 26–44.; Anna Mária, Bartal (2001): Social Land Programmes, or: Alternatives of Active Employment and Social Policy in rural regions. Acta Civitalis, Budapest; Tibor, Szarvák – Zsolt, Szoboszlai (2001): Social Land Programmes in Hungary. The Results of an Active Social Policy Model. – 1999-2000. Esély Social Public Foundation – Regional Intellectual Resources Centre, Budapest, 2001; Zsolt, Szoboszlai (2003): The Effects of the Social Land Programme in Rural Development. In: Teréz, Kovács (ed.): Rural Hungary before the EU accession. 6<sup>th</sup> Village Conference. MTA RKK – MRTT, 471-478

Table 2

## The dynamics of unemployment increase between 1990 and 1996

|                                            | 1990    | 1991    | 1992    | 1993    | 1994    | 1995    | 1996    |
|--------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Unemployment rate                          | 0.6     | 4.1     | 10.3    | 12.9    | 11.3    | 10.6    | 11.0    |
| Number of unemployed individuals           | 47.700  | 227.300 | 557.000 | 671.800 | 568.400 | 507.700 | 500.600 |
| Number of employed individuals (thousands) | 4.534,3 | 4.270,5 | 3.898,4 | 3.689,5 | 3.633,1 | 3.571,3 | 3.546,1 |

Source: 1990-1991 Registration of the Bureau of Employment, regarding the information from 1992 and afterwards, own compilation based on recruitment data of the Central Statistics Bureau (KSH)

As finding a job was hopeless, – especially for unskilled individuals living in smaller communities – individuals who had lost their job started to exit the labour market. They retired, became disabled, received benefits regarding the treatment of their family member(s), or enjoyed the support of the social welfare system. Consequently – although a slight decrease was observable in the unemployment rate between 1993 and 1996 – the number of those in employment continued to decrease as well. (Csaba 1998) The thus missing income gradually led to the impoverishment of these people and their communities. As a result, several leaders of small municipalities approached the competent ministry to ask for support to start the organisation of agricultural activity among gradually pauperised, unemployed groups as early as the 90s. (Serafin 2015)<sup>52</sup> They were enquiring about land use, machinery, agricultural equipment and the financing of propagation materials. Some experts believed that the Social Land Programme was “*functioning as a kind of successor of collective farming*” in regions with smaller villages that suffer from a lack of services, so in other words, it provided agricultural services in regions with few resources and low population that had been available for the communities’ residents in the framework of the local collective farms. (Rácz 2009) The analogy is however highlighting the aspect of collective farming regarding its ability to reinforce family farms as well as to create additional income, advocate backyard farming and self-sufficiency rather than its side concerning

<sup>52</sup>The current programme started in 1992 with the provision of support for specific cases and after the enquiries had been compiled into a framework, it continued within a closed tender in counties Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, where traditionally poverty and unemployment rates had been very high (Serafin 2015).

employment. Analyses written before 2010 on the Social Land Programme had almost exclusively stated that employment based on the very idea of the employment relationship was not an inherent element of the Social Land Programme as these programmes were mainly based on household economy and its revival, but the project also had a significant impact regarding income replacement and activation. (Bartal 2001, Jász and Szarvák 2001, Szoboszlai 2003a, Szoboszlai 2003b, Jász and Szarvák 2005, Rácz 2009)

In 2010, the programme underwent a fundamental transformation. Compared to its previous functions such as promoting agricultural self-sufficiency, providing additional income and assistance in integration, due to the government's shift in their social and employment policy, the new direction of Social Land Programmes started to focus on the aspect of employment. Besides backyard farming in a traditional household environment, programmes combined with public employment gradually started to gain more and more presence. The support system treated household, backyard programmes and the associated public employment separately, paying special attention to these. (Giró 2012, Serafin 2015) The rules concerning the combined Social Land Programme and public employment required the employment of at least two individuals per programme. In 2011, fundamental changes were introduced regarding the organisation of the Social Land Programme. The management of the programme was delegated from social affairs to Wekerle Sándor Fund Management, resulting in a gradual decrease in its social, supportive and self-sufficiency aspects and an increase in the aspect of employment, emphasising the employee status. The diverse necessities presented and catered for by the programme over the first 20 years have gradually become mono-dimensional in the past 5 years and the focus has been shifted to catering for needs of employment.

### *3.2.2 The crisis of family farms which provide additional income*

Household farming, traditionally available in nearly three quarters of family farms in Hungary along with backyard and livestock farming have not played a significant role in self-sufficiency only, but also in the production of goods as well as the continuous and high quality food supply, even during the socialist regime. (Gábor- Galasi 1981) At the time of the introduction of the new regime in 1990, the 1.4 million household and

subsidiary household plots were engaged in production on 0.8 ha on average.<sup>53</sup> The role of informal farms (mainly household plots) – despite the fact that few studies focus on the current situation of household plots (Smith-Wallestein-Evers 1984, Smith-Wallerstein 1992, Timár 2002, Sik 2006) – was significant in ensuring the quality of life of those families who lived in the countryside in the socialism, similarly to other systems that provided limited resources in a formal farming environment.<sup>55</sup>

According to Böröcz (2000, 2014), as a result of general economic crisis or the peripherisation of certain regions and social groups, or due to the formal system fading into the background or not functioning properly, informal economy will start to gain more significance. In this case, the state often intervenes and offers to support the informal increase of wages. A similar situation happened in the case of providing special support for household farms, especially in the 70s. After the collectivisation, members of the collectives were mainly producing to cater for their own needs in household farms, but the system also allowed selling the surplus goods. (Schindele 1986) Rural food trade was established which played a central role in supplying cities.<sup>56</sup> Household farms did not only have noticeable economic significance, but an important community building role as well, as they provided an opportunity to represent individual and community interest at the same time.

The magnitude of household economy started to fade drastically during the period after the fall of the socialist regime. The underlying processes behind this decrease were essentially the shift in ownership patterns, the reorganisation of markets and the regulatory system of agricultural production becoming more severe, but the fact that at the same time with the privatisation process, incomes from full-time employment –

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<sup>53</sup> <http://www.parlament.hu/irom37/0291/0291-02m.htm>

<sup>54</sup> “In 1972, nearly half of the total society, while in 1981, 41 percent of them (4.5 million people) were involved in household and subsidiary household farming, while a decade later, only 4 million people participated in small scale production.” (Bognár 2009: 18)

<sup>55</sup> “Small-scale peasant farming continued after the collectivisation of the agriculture, mainly based on the backyard farms of collective farm members. The exact sizes of the farms had been regulated by the law from square one. According to the Model charter of 1951, *“each family which is about to enter a collective farm and which has a separate household is entitled to keep 2,878 – 4,316 m<sup>2</sup> of their land for household farming purposes. Who does not possess land at the time of becoming a member will receive a plot allotted from the collective area... In 1953, the extent of livestock farming was also regulated: each household farm was entitled to have one cow, one or two calves, one or two sows with their piglets, three or four fattening pig, five sheep or goats, and an unlimited number of chickens, rabbits or bee families.”* (Schindele 1986:68)

<sup>56</sup> In the mid-70s, household production had the highest significance in Hungary out of all socialist countries according to 1974 data of the Central Statistics Bureau. In the case of the 17 goods with special importance, small-scale production constituted 16 percent of total gross production in Bulgaria, 15 percent in Czechoslovakia, 11 in East Germany, 31 in Romania, 21 in the USSR, while a remarkable 35 percent in Hungary (based on prices in rouble). (Dr. Misi-Dr. Markó 1977)

serving as the liquidity reserve for household farms – ceased to exist equally contributed to the situation. As incomes from agricultural work were only temporary, those living in the countryside used their incomes from industrial work or other forms of employment to sustain their household farming activities. The support of individual farms (contribution to cultivation costs, planned sales, etc.) by the cooperatives during the socialism was missing from the overall production. The increase in cultivation fees was not followed by the increase in acquisition fees and the fact that cooperatives cease to act as integrators substantially contributed to the decrease of the importance of household farms. (Harcza 1996, Bognár 2009)

According to the mayor of the municipality of Tormás, *“the previously well-functioning household farming started to diminish significantly due to the lack of support. Poorer families were not able to settle the costs of machine work (ploughing, disc harrowing, soil preparation) on their own. Their motivation was hampered by the lack of professional coordination and positive feedback as well as the absence of community activities. Consequently, several of the plots were left uncultivated. The realisation of this led to the decision of reviving backyard cultivation and small-scale livestock farming. Thanks to the experiences from the previously well-functioning programme and the resources from the grants, the idea of a Tormás without uncultivated land has again become a reasonable objective.”*<sup>57</sup>

In the smaller villages of agricultural regions, the problem of increasing poverty is handled effectively by the revival of the previously long-established household agricultural production and livestock farming. With the aid of the Social Land Programme, the relevant know-how for household farming could be revived among disadvantaged families and as a way to replace missing income. The idea of self-sufficiency could also be promoted. The inheritance of traditions between generations however does not work anymore, the know-how required for production can be passed on through training and continuous professional support, which is possible in the framework of the Social Land Programme. The organised conveyance of production know-how is also important due to the fact that residents of the respective community are typically “newcomers”, who have not participated in agricultural activity before, and in many cases, who have not received either elementary or vocational qualification.

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<sup>57</sup><http://www.emet.gov.hu/userfiles/hirek/interjuk/szoc fp/20150707 szoc fp2.pdf>

### 3.2.3 The transformation of the demographic and social structure

Organisations<sup>58</sup> applying for the Social Land Programme are mainly based in communities with a population below 1.000-2.000 (including a substantial amount of villages with a population under 400), where this programme – besides public employment – is the only means of local employment and activation. (Jász-Szarvák 2005) The reason behind the trans-governmental support of the programme is the increasing and deepening poverty among smaller communities and the Roma people living there.<sup>59</sup>

The original goals of the Social Land Programme also included the assistance in decreasing local disadvantages, increasing local social and economic welfare as well as the strengthening of employability.<sup>60</sup> This was also important as in most of the communities involved, there was a significant level of under population as well as population ageing on the one hand, and on the other hand, the problem of a segregated community arose, along with the potential settlement of peripheral groups who lacked land, belongings, qualifications and farming culture and the living of whom was only provided in the framework of passive benefits.

In the smaller villages participating in the program, specifically those with a population between 200 and 499, there was a 1 percent increase in the population between the years 1990 and 2011<sup>61</sup>, while among communities with a population between 500 and 4999 there was a population decrease. In communities with a population between 500 and 999, the population figures of 2011 were equal to just 86 percent of the 1990 figures. (Harcza 2014:27)

Due to the aforementioned factors, the programme has mainly had social characteristics from square one – alternative social policy programme aiming to enhance self-

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<sup>58</sup> In the 90s, municipalities, Roma minority governments and civil organisations were entitled for application, but since then, the list of potential applicants have been expanded: currently public benefit organisations, social organisations participating in prominent public benefit activities, governmental partnerships and micro-regional partnerships can also apply for grants.

<sup>59</sup> *"Poverty and social exclusion rates show that Hungary has seen a decay of the situation since the start of the crisis, especially among children and Romas. While in Europe, the percentage of those potentially suffering from poverty or social exclusion has decreased, 33.5 percent of Hungarian society still experiences problems like these. Between 2008 and 2013, the percentage of children suffering from poverty and social exclusion increased from 33 to 43 percent (compared to 28 percent, the EU average). Poverty is very common among the Roma: 81 percent of them are susceptible to poverty."* European Commission (2015): National report of 2015 – Hungary's detailed analysis on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances {COM(2015) 85 final} Brussels, 2015.2.26. SWD(2015) 36 final  
[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/cr2015\\_hungary\\_hu.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/cr2015_hungary_hu.pdf) 56. oldal

<sup>60</sup> [http://www.emet.gov.hu/hatter\\_1/szocialis\\_foldprogram/](http://www.emet.gov.hu/hatter_1/szocialis_foldprogram/)

<sup>61</sup> Mainly due to higher number of children in the Roma minority families already living there or moving there.

sufficiency and reduce the dependence on welfare – rather than focusing on economic objectives. This tendency can also be perceived through the embedment of its organisations (EMMI)<sup>62</sup>, in the constitution of the target group but also in the low amount of resources being used. The Social Land Programme – as the earliest supporter of efforts towards the improvement of local economy – has become a well-known means to activate peripheral groups over the past 25 years.<sup>63</sup>

The Social Land Programme – having been started as a test programme in the early 90s – was also ratified as a benefit in kind in 1993 in the act on social administration and social benefits.<sup>64</sup> Article 47 Paragraph 4 of the act also declared that the provision of ***benefits that help farming that caters for family needs*** should be regulated by the communities in local government decrees. The rules, format and values of the benefit process should be registered, as well as the rights and obligations of beneficiaries and the consequences of violating these obligations.

In the framework of the Social Land Programme, besides the improvement of agricultural production culture, another goal was to strengthen local communities and to diminish the increasing social and economic tension that accompanies the decrease of passive benefits. Within the target groups, besides the long-term unemployed, individuals with reduced work capacity, or large families, improving the self-sufficiency of the Roma has gained special significance and also, through the acquisition of knowledge that could be used in household farming, the enhancement of skills for generating income has become more important.

The fact that due to the ageing population, increasingly higher areas had become uncultivated by the millennium also contributed to the objectives mentioned above. It was especially larger plots that posed a difficulty towards older generations regarding their cultivation. The programme – based on necessities on all sides – contributed to the

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<sup>62</sup> EMMI=Ministry of Human Resources (Hungarian acronym). While public employment, which takes up most of the budget available for active labour market policies and which involves more than 200 thousand individuals belongs to the Ministry of Interior, the Social Land Programme – budgeting a much lower amount – belongs to the EMMI, that is responsible for social issues (as well). A severe problem is caused by the fact that the programmes are working in the same field, but they are following two separate strategies and the specific elements of the programmes are not in agreement.

<sup>63</sup> Although the Social Land Programme is coordinated by the Ministry of Human Resources – State Secretariat for Social Affairs and Inclusion on a national level, locally it is the local governments who provide the programme's framework of operation as they are obliged to enact local decrees that regulate the operation, adjusted for local characteristics.

<sup>64</sup> According to Act III of 1993 Article 47 Paragraph 3, types of support that cater for the needs of families and that assist farming can be land use, agricultural services and benefits, equipment and current assets required for working, along with the provision of consultation and training

idea of unemployed residents of the community who did not have any income participating in agricultural activity on previously uncultivated areas – often on plots belonging to their own house. The organisation process was also boosted by the issuing of FVM (Ministry of Agriculture) Act 19/2006. (III.14.)<sup>65</sup> on the rules and procedure of providing agricultural land or forests free of charge or handing over the asset management of it for the purpose of implementing the Social Land Programme. It provided an opportunity for local participants to organise the cultivation of plots belonging to the National Land Fund<sup>66</sup>. Further improvements could not be made to the programme, however, as the communities involved were suffering from a lack of land, which meant that no more plots could be added to the Social Land Programme and the National Land Fund – that played a central role in this process – could not be further increased.<sup>67</sup> As a result of the low-efficiency lobby of small rural communities, in most cases the lowest quality land was allocated for these communities from the National Land Fund, and despite the obvious and diverse success of the programme, the budget of the Social Land Programme was not increased significantly. With regard to the funding of the programme being identified as the active social policy method of social inclusion<sup>68</sup>, the amounts being allocated to the involved communities within the tender are not proportional to the respective necessities derived from their demographic and social structure.

#### *3.2.4 The transformation of the welfare model*

Productive social policy and an activating welfare state have become one of the dominant issues of the last few decades' professional debates. The model that would transform the welfare state's functions of caring and providing rights into activating,

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<sup>65</sup>This decree was modified by Government Act 263/2010. (XI.17.) on the rules of providing free ownership or asset management of land belonging to the National Land Fund for municipalities with the purpose of implementing the Social Land Programme, but the fundamental elements remained the same.

<sup>66</sup>Act LXXXVII. of 2010 on the National Land Fund declares that plots belonging to state property can be handed over to municipalities for asset management with the purpose of cultivating the land in the framework of the Social Land Programme.

<sup>67</sup>"Within the programme, a total of 217 hectares are being cultivated on a national scale in 2015." – stated Katalin Langerné Victor, the vice state secretary for social inclusion.

<http://www.farmit.hu/uzletvitel/2015/08/08/megduplazodott-szocialis-foldprogram-resztvevoinek-szama>

<sup>68</sup>The national act supporting the Social Land Programme and the amount of funds had to conform to Commission Regulation 1408/2013/EU of 18 December 2013 on the use of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union Articles 107 and 108 regarding minor amounts of funds in the agricultural sphere, so that the funding cannot be regarded disguised agricultural financing.

advocating self-sufficiency and prioritising individuals' responsibility over collective responsibility has become a central element in almost every field since the crisis of 2008, regardless of the underlying political interests. The public employment programme – having been introduced widely as a means to deal with the impact of the crisis on employment – is being implemented more and more widely among employers as temporary income replacement. (Csoba 2010, Koncz 2012, Fazekas et al. 2014 )As a result, poverty rates in Hungary have stopped to increase or deepen since 2013-2014. (Gábos et. al. 2014) The transit effect of public employment is not present however. The rate of the transition to the open labour market is only around 10 percent. (Csoba- Nagy 2012, Cseres et. al. 2015)On the other hand, the state public employment model including a gradually increasing budget cannot be financed in the long run. This is why it would be of great significance to have welfare models that could become independent from the support of the state and that advocate self-sufficiency and self-maintenance, e.g.: the Social Land Programme, that could ideally combine activation with a high degree of self-sufficiency and long-term sustainability within the framework of household farming. The changes in the welfare model over recent years however do not reinforce the active social policy characteristics of the Social Land Programme. As early as the time following the 2004 accession of Hungary into the EU, a change could be perceived in direction of the objectives and conditions regarding the Social Land Programme. Due to the diminishing national resources, decision-makers were suggesting that the participants of the programme become self-sufficient as soon as possible.<sup>69</sup>It was partially Act X. of 2006 on cooperatives and Government Regulation 141/2006 (IV.29.) – that was closely connected to the land programme – on social cooperatives that established the framework of this. These regulations advocated joint business forms that prioritised (self-) employment and self-sufficiency instead of the improvement of employee's skills and the support of household farming. Furthermore, while the National Social Inclusion Strategy – having aimed to recover the country from the crisis of 2008 – promised to organise complex programmes regarding employment policy as well as to use active labour market policies that are specific to the target group

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<sup>69</sup>As the structural funds of the EU did not support the Social Land Programme – as it had been considered the disguised financing of agriculture – thus the financial background of the program was still provided by national funds.

and each individual<sup>70</sup>, the period was characterised by the gradually increasing dominance of public employment programmes<sup>71</sup> and the drastic reduction of passive benefits.<sup>72</sup> The reduction of passive benefits was not accompanied by the establishment of new inclusive services, the resources allocated to active labour market policies were also decreased and the use of active policies other than public employment (courses, consultation, training for employment, etc.) was radically diminished. (Makay-Blaskó 2012, Bakó et. al. 2014, László 2015)<sup>73</sup> With the reorganisation of the institutional system of the labour market, the service elements previously existing in the system became insignificant, the experts left the system and their past service responsibilities were transformed to authoritative tasks. (Fazekas-Neumann 2014)

The reason behind the radical decrease of active policies and the wide expansion of public employment was the government's intent to improve the statistics of the individuals in employment by any means – but primarily through making public employment (which can be considered inexpensive in its initial phases) widespread. (Csoba 2010, Strauss 2012, Fazekas et. al. 2013, Bakó et. al 2014.)

Among these circumstances, local governments acquired a significant role in involving groups of employees in the Social Land Programme who were living in the communities and were not yet prepared to be engaged in sole proprietorship, so in other words, who were not capable of establishing or running a widely preferred social cooperative, or in the organisation of alternative farming programmes – that strengthen self-sufficiency – e.g.: household farms. (Kelen 2012, Fekete-Lipták 2014, Tésits 2014)

### 3.2.5 The social and labour market integration of Roma people

Social Land Programmes were established in 1992 with the objective to help socially disadvantaged families of critical regions who did not possess the assets for agricultural

<sup>70</sup> [http://www.kormany.hu/download/1/9c/20000/Magyar%20NTFS%20II%20\\_2%20mell%20\\_NTFs%20II.pdf](http://www.kormany.hu/download/1/9c/20000/Magyar%20NTFS%20II%20_2%20mell%20_NTFs%20II.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> Act CVI of 2011 on public employment and the modification of acts related to public employment or other issues

<sup>72</sup> Within public employment, on average there were 219,958 individuals in employment as of June 2015, having affected 37.8 percent of registered jobseekers.

<sup>73</sup> Active policies were included to a lesser and lesser extent in the toolkit and in 2014, they made up less than 20 percent of the funds allocated to public employment. Bakó, Tamás; Cseres-Gergely, Zsombor; Kálmán, Judit; Molnár, György; and Szabó, Tibor (2014): People on the Verge of the Employment Market and the Budget. <http://www.parlament.hu/documents/126660/133966/MTA+KRTK+KTI+A+munkaer%C5%91piac+perem%C3%A9n+1%C3%A9v%C5%91k+%C3%A9s+a+k%C3%B6lts%C3%A9gvet%C3%A9s+jav%C3%ADtott.pdf/ba01c982-873e-416c-8b7f-c6684fe55db8>

production at all, or only to a lesser extent, as well as to create the opportunity for small-scale household production (Serafin, 1997:3).

Thus, the land programme was originally not aimed at Roma integration. The social and labour market situation of the Roma however became quite unfavourable after the collapse of the socialist regime (Szuhay1995). On the one hand, 40 percent of them were living in the same small disadvantaged communities that were targeted when the Social Land Programme was established.(Ladányi-Szelényi 1998, Virág 2010, Virág 2015) On the other hand, in 1993, nearly 50 percent of Roma individuals in their active ages was registered as being unemployed, while among the total national population, the unemployment rate was only 13 percent. Only 29 percent of Roma males between the ages 15 and 59 were working (compared to the 82 percent employment rate in the previous regime), while out of the total population, 64 percent of males in their active ages were employed. 15 percent of Roma females were in permanent employment, while regarding the total population. This figure was equal to 66 percent (Kemény 2001, Csoba 2002, Kertesi-Kézdi 2011). Thus, it is not a coincidence that the participation of Roma families has been relatively high since the establishment of Social Land Programmes. The inclusion of the Roma in the Social Land Programme could be considered to be part of a type of conscious integration policy as in the early 90s, *“many were optimistic about the fact that the greatest opportunity for the rural Roma to make a proper living would be a kind of “representation”, and agrarian support programmes, for instance the Social Land Programme of the Ministry, or the agrarian programme of Autonómia Alapítvány (Autonomy Fund) could provide substantial help in this cause... Initially the Ministry also believed that beneficiary families of the Social Land Programme will be able to make their farms self-sufficient or marketable in due course...” (Zolnai 2001:1)*

The answer to the question „to what extent did the Social Land Programme contribute to the social integration of the Roma in its first decade of operation?” can be found in the very first systematic analysis of the programme’s impact.<sup>74</sup>The research group states in their research summary that, even though the programme primarily aimed to support the integration of the Roma, the percentage of Romas among the surveyed individuals was only 30.8. Out of the programme’s participants, 10 percent of Romas and 39.3

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<sup>74</sup>The analysis took place in 1997, having been requested by the Ministry of Welfare – Department of Institutional and Social Services. See the results of the analysis in studies of Szoboszlai from the years 1999, 2001, 2002, and 2003.

percent of non-Romas were in possession of their own land. The goods produced in the programme were used directly for self-sustainment by two thirds of all participants and three quarters of Romas. (Szoboszlai 2001)

The following study in the spring of 2002 – during which more than two thousand beneficiaries were asked among participants of the Social Land Programme within a survey study – showed that almost 50 percent of the surveyed people were of Roma descent. (Jász 2003, Szarvák 2003, Szoboszlai 2003a)

Following the millennium, it has been highlighted in the wording of the grant programme announcement that the programme aims to contribute to *“the improvement of the existence and living standards of disadvantaged people, mainly Romas...”*, and accordingly, it is compulsory to name a Roma organisation in the application as a cooperating partner. The funds of the Social Land Programme, based on the government’s classification by objectives to be supported, can also be seen under the title “activities and programmes assisting the social integration of the Roma” in 2014. In 2014, the government of Szügy, for example, applied for the Social Land Programme for the third time. 30 Roma families participate in the programme and they raise and breed the received chicks. According to the applicants, the programme serves a double purpose in their communities: on the one hand the educational preparation for work and on the other hand the improvement of the living standards of those in need.<sup>75</sup>

Although the bill preceding the 2015 budget<sup>76</sup> still describes the Social Land Programme as an important tool in the integration of the rural Roma and disadvantaged groups, the draft highlights the employment of disadvantaged people and the improvement of their employability instead of the skills development and integrative aspect of the programme. (Váradi 2015) The method of implementation also represents this direction. The assistance in the existence of socially disadvantaged individuals is gradually focusing less on the cultivation of kitchen garden plants or the provision of the conditions required for small-scale livestock farming. There is an increasing emphasis on the organisation of the combined Social Land Programme and public employment and the support of the establishment of social cooperatives (that engage in agricultural goods production). The goal of production is also changing. Before, the enhancement of

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<sup>75</sup> [http://www.emet.gov.hu/eredmenyek/szocialis\\_foldprogram/](http://www.emet.gov.hu/eredmenyek/szocialis_foldprogram/)

<sup>76</sup> Bill T/2141. on the establishment of the 2015 central budget of Hungary <http://www.parlament.hu/irom40/02141/02141.pdf>

self-sufficiency was the central objective and selling the surplus goods on the local market was quite insignificant. In the 2015 grant programme announcement, there is a greater emphasis in the framework of community production on the production and use of local, marketable, healthy goods containing no preservatives. The participation in market production requires special skills and conditions that most Roma families do not possess. This modification poses the potential threat that after the strengthening of the market production and employment elements of the programme – having been established to integrate peripheral social groups and the Roma – exactly those will be excluded from it who originally established the programme.

## **4. Theories of change**

### **4.1 Introduction**

There are various ways that a theory of change can be understood and elaborated. In this report, TOC is understood as a map of assumptions which inform planned interventions within all stages of initiative. (Vogel 2012). Based on the analysis of the project documentation and interviews with key decision makers and project leaders, this chapter endeavours to construct a framework that links together the context, long-term changes, anticipated processes, and assumptions about how the change would occur. The authors of this chapter believe that there is no consensus about the potential that such project means, and also want to highlight the differences between the logical framework that decision makers have on various levels, i.e. decision-makers preparing the call and the local governments executing the projects. In achieving this, we adapt on the Program Theory Evaluation model and chain of assumptions described by Wiess (2000).

This TOC will be researcher-driven, since it will build on the assumptions inferred from key documents and interviews with stakeholders. Decision makers and leaders of the Social Land Programme did not create explicitly their own theoretical framework neither they took part actively in designing the present one.

## 4.2 Existing theory(ies) of change

The aims and tools of the Social Land Programme is under constant change by policy makers. Recently, its focus was moved from integration and increasing low living standards to increasing employability among people with multiple social disadvantages and supporting the creation of social cooperatives and local self-sustaining communities. The Theory of Change of the program is implicit, can be inferred from the goals of the call for proposals and the supported actions. The implications of this lack of clear logic model, is manifest in the various forms of implementation and in the differences between the program priorities of call and that of the representatives of the local projects. The program's long term goals (increasing employability) are too optimistic especially of compared to the very limited costs per participants (ca. 100 EUR per participant) and the one-year duration of the project. Therefore, it is highly questionable, to what extent these goals are **plausible** or **doable** (because of the lack of resources and inappropriate conditions). Social Land Program has never been able to reach self-sustainability and always needed external transfers. Without land, means of production, capital, is illusory to expect such positive outcomes. Local leaders were aware of this and it caused tensions between the two levels: policy and local.

The other implication of the lack of TOC is the low level of **testability**, the lack of potential indicators or measurement dimensions to assess the success and long-term impact of the projects. Usually, the project's success is indicated mostly on the basis of low attrition rates by the organisers or occasionally by calculations of the production. The real desired output of the project can be measured only using soft indicators.

## 4.3 New theory of change

### 4.3.1 Methodology

The methodology of the research is described in Methodological Framework in detail. For developing the new theory of change, the following data and methods were used:

- Review of programme documentation (Social Land Programme calls, bids, and local decrees)
- 10 interviews with key informants and local decision makers. For the analysis of the interviews, Nvivo software was used with multi-level and axial coding

process applied. In the development of nodes, a mixed strategy was used, the project goals listed in the recent calls were used as a core coding tree and also free-coding was used for collecting other relevant information regarding the key research topics of the research.

- A process of validation: to assess the extent to which the goals of the project described in the call are valid, we used the interviews prepared by the stakeholders (see above). This analysis allowed us to describe such variation of the TOC that is different from the one that can be inferred from the original call.

#### *4.3.2 Background*

Social Land Programmes were organised to help the disadvantaged rural population, especially Roma people by reviving household economy culture. In rural areas, after the system change in 1989, with the transformation of socialist cooperatives, land ownership was highly concentrated and in 1993, the overwhelming majority of previous cooperative members lost their livelihood and land property. In addition to this, because of a counter-urbanisation processes, a migration started in the 90's from urban to rural areas; highly disadvantaged (mostly Roma) people bought properties in poor rural municipalities, where the labour opportunities was already decreasing, and, as a result of it, impoverishment processes were started; more and more people had to rely on welfare transfers (mostly passive ones) from the local municipalities and the state. In its original form, as a grass-root movement, Social Land Programme aimed at providing additional income and contributes to self-maintenance. After 2010, with the gradual transformation from welfare to activating model, Social Land Programme (together with the extended public employment programmes) started to focus on increasing employability, promoting joint business forms and self-employment among the target group members and also creating local economies or "entrepreneur municipalities". (For more details see Section 3).

#### *4.3.3 Long-term outcome*

In the call (2014) the aims of the Social Land Programme are listed as follows:

- tackling local unemployment and promoting employability especially among groups with social disadvantages

- decreasing black (illegal) work

And the program also contributes to:

- mitigating territorial disadvantages
- supporting local economic and social welfare and creating sustainability
- activating beneficiaries and increasing their level of employability
- increasing the living standard and livelihood of persons with disadvantages, especially Roma people
- developing a planned production and marketing process, including ability for self-sufficiency, marketization and sustainability
- through the cooperation with local minority governments, civil and church organisations, non-profit economic associations, social cooperatives, the Social Land Programme increases cooperation and solidarity in the local society.

The Call clearly reflects the processes described in Section 3 of the present report. The core and most desired outcome of the project is supporting the socially disadvantaged target group members in making steps towards **employability**. On community level, these goals also include moving steps towards self-sustaining activities including organisation of cooperatives and forms of local economic activities. The call in 2016 is even more explicit in this by formulating to new goal “local resources are used in community-aimed production”. Other goals, such as decreasing **territorial disadvantages**, increasing **living standard**, **cooperation in the local society** are also present but with less emphasis.

#### *4.3.4 Intermediate outcomes*

In the call (2014) the aims of the Social Land Programme are listed as follows:

- supporting the beneficiaries in developing work experience in household economy and horticulture
- supporting household farming or starting animal breeding

Mayors frequently mentioned, on the other hand, such outcomes as:

- tidier settlement
- increased public security

#### 4.3.5 Multiple theories of change

The goals described in the call are markedly different from those of the interviewees of our research – project leaders, mayors, notaries organising and executing the programme. They were sceptical about a big part of these desired outcomes; therefore, measuring the success of the projects based on these goals and outcomes would mislead the evaluation since key persons executing the project propose other outcomes and chain of actions and regard the project successful on other grounds. Therefore, in the present evaluation, we endeavour to describe two theories of change in order to reflect this mismatch.

One of the most important differences was that the majority of the interviewees did not share the call's optimistic expectations about the beneficiaries being able to reach the labour market or being able to make profit by selling their products on the direct market in a short period of time. *"We should not forget, these people were squeezed out from the competitive sector, so they cannot work in such a competitive way, cannot produce in a competitive way, because they have already lost."* (Zsáka, expert interview No. 1). They also stress that the present project does not provide enough support for making such a large step: *"From 30.000 HUF [ca. less than 100 EUR], nobody should expect a miracle"* (Felsődobsza, expert interview No. 1).

Usually, they emphasize smaller steps towards employability, such as **time consciousness**: *"INT: To what extent is the project able to help them to take them closer to the open labour market or to prepare them for that?"*

*RES: I don't think it is. Only very indirectly. It helps them to bring a system into their life (and not really the chicken but especially the pigs), because the animal needs to be fed, and possibly always at the same time. Every evening, they have to be closed. So, he cannot wake up in the morning whenever he wants."* (Jászladány, expert interview No. 1).

Learning **new skills** and empowerment were also generally regarded as success: *"...and when the father came to me, and ask to tell him what is the difference between the cock and the hen, does it have a crest or not, why does it matter... So, we had to teach them these things, because they had no knowledge about these issues."* (Jászladány, expert interview No. 1.)

Psychological developments are also frequently mentioned such as increased **self-confidence**: *"They were not confident enough in the beginning, that they are able to do this. This was now for many people. Especially for those Roma people, that moved to the village and had no experience."* (Kőtelek, expert interview No. 1), or even **proudness**: *"It is not me anymore who goes to visit them, but there are still people to come to me and say that 'our chicken are beautiful, if you have time, come to take a look at them'"* (Katymár, expert interview No. 1).

All experts agreed that **producing food** and improving the **living standard** are key points of the project *"This is a great material support for these families. This means 600 lunches, 20 for each family"*, but reaching **self-sufficiency** would be too illusory: *"If we could solve the problem of feeding a family of 6 members like this, then I would say, we found the Philosophers' stone"* (Felsődobsza, expert interview No. 1.).

Important goals that motivate local leaders to join the program is **giving good example for the next generation** and passing on positive model within the family: *"And if he got used to it than he could make his children get into the habit of doing that and the next generation could be brought up like that. This is a problem with the present generation, who are in their 20s and 30s, that they have not seen their parents working or cultivating the land."* (Zsáka, expert interview No. 2.)

Another frequently mentioned key outcome of the project was the tidier **physical environment**, that is *"Wherever they have animals, the garden should be tidy. That cannot be abandoned, one cannot let the chicken into the weed. There one has to fight against rats and all other kinds of rodents. And they have to defend it from the street dogs. So, everything has to be in order."* (Jászládány, expert interview No. 1.)

Respondents did not regarded **cooperation** between local actors to be a plausible output. In this, they frequently referred to the Roma minority government, with whom the reported conflicts and debates. *"there is always an initiative from up, they describe it as aim, also in the Social Land Programme, and emphasize on various forums, conferences,, I am sure it works at several sites in the country, where it works, but I have never seen any of them."* (Kőtelek,expert interview, No. 1.) It has to be noted that cooperation with other institutions (Family Help Centers, House of Chance, civil organisations) was smoother. y

### *3.3.6 Assumptions and Justifications*

The logic of intervention builds on the following assumptions:

- The projects can recruit such volunteer participants who has enough facilities for starting the activity (land, place for the livestock, tools for horticulture) and also want to take part in the project
- The support in kind together with training, mentoring and the prospect of profit (food) gained as a result of the activity can motivate the participant to execute the project. Sanctions can be hardly applied in the case of this target group which has little income.
- The project activities change the mentality of the participant to such extent that it significantly raise his or her employability.
- Local governments are motivated to start social cooperatives and invite other actors (including previous land program beneficiaries) into them.

### *4.3.7 Interventions and outputs*

- Recruiting participants – at the beginning of the project, usually executed in the form of a call for bids, and based on eligibility criteria, the beneficiaries are selected
- Training for participants – at the beginning of the project, 20 hours
- Mentoring for participants – during the project activities mentors from the project visit beneficiaries regularly, to give advice and to check whether the conditions of the agreement are implemented.
- Agricultral/animal farming activities executed with vegetables, crop, meat and eggs produced.

### *4.3.8 Inputs*

There are some additional inputs that are critical for the delivery of the policy/programme, but that is hard to identify with our research sample, mostly because SZOFOSZ is such a network, where leaders of the municipalities are highly committed to execute the program and were the ones who started its development in the 90's. Therefore, the sample is quite homogeneous in the sense that these projects are usually successful and the village or town leaders support it with the strongest terms.

Nevertheless, we can suppose with confidence, that without commitment from the mayor and staff members of the local government, the project can hardly be successful.

The other aspect is whether the local government can provide further support – community land (like in Zsáka), social shop (like in Szécsény), facilities for intensive horticulture and organised integrated production and marketing system (Rozsály). With these, participants can work in a more effective way and have a real prospect of entering the market.

#### 4.3.9 Program Logic

##### Program logic 1. In the call for proposals

Project is started

- Local actors join the project

- The cooperation develops

Project publicises the opportunity to join, recruit participants

- Disadvantaged people meet the eligibility criteria

- Interested and motivated people apply voluntarily

- Those applicants are selected that meet the eligibility criteria.

Training is organised

- The learned skills are enough to start the activities.

The project provides continuous support for the beneficiaries

- This helps to motivate participants

- This controls participants to obey the rules of the program.

The participants execute the activities

- They produce food for their family

- Their living standard increases

- They gain work experience in household farming

- Their activities become economically sustainable

- The community accepts them

Their mentality is changed because of the project

- They start to produce goods for the market

- They have enough land to produce goods

- They join social cooperatives

- There are social cooperatives to join

- They are closer to entering the labour market



## Program logic 2: Local experts

Project publicises the opportunity to join

- Disadvantaged people meet the eligibility criteria

- Interested and motivated people apply voluntarily

- Those applicants are selected that meet the eligibility criteria.

Training is organised

- The learned skills are enough to start the activities.

The project provides continuous support

- This helps to motivate participants

- This controls participants to obey the rules of the program.

The participants execute the activities

- They produce food

- Their living standard increases

- They gain work experience in household farming

- They develop time consciousness, owner mentality, understand the use of work

- The community accepts them

- The environment is more tidy

- Public security is increased

Their mentality is changed because of the project

It has to be noted here that our interviewees – mayors, notaries, project coordinators – were more aware of the unrealistic goal setting which caused tension between the two levels – national and local. They were more sceptic about the extent to which a local government can be self-sustaining, cooperatives can be revived and the target group of the project can change mentality to such extent that they can exit to the labour market, cooperatives or start to produce goods to the market. Their goals did not change from those from the previous decade – increasing livelihood, making little steps, and improving the social and physical environment of the settlement.

## 5. Process evaluation

### 5.1 Introduction

In the development of the dimensions for the process evaluation, we focus mostly on those features of the Social Land Programme that are related to social innovation:

- Targeting: which social groups are participating in the social programme? How effective was the targeting the program? The indicators of this dimension were: family size, the level of the education and employment and the ratio of the participating Romas. According to our hypotheses the social program was targeting the mostly discriminated social groups of rural area, which don't have the possibility to participate in any kind of social integration program (except the compulsory public employment program).
- Voluntariness: in contrast to the majority of the activation programs, in this one, the local governments and families have to apply for the opportunity. We tried to describe the method and condition of the selection, the form of motivation and control on the participants. The idea of volunteering can be discovered on two levels: on community level and on target group level. In our analysis we will focus on the expectations and goals of both levels: why they want to take part in the program and what were their expectations related to the Social Land Program, and is the social perception of the volunteering present in the target group.
- Acting: the recreation of the traditional household economies that are forgotten in the disadvantaged segments of the society is also one of the main innovations of the program. It was embedded in the process to develop the key competences and the professional competences of the target group during the program, to increase the standard of living of the families, to strengthen the economical independency of the target group. But the main goal was to activate the participants and decrease the social dependency of the disadvantaged social groups. We also focused on the services of the programme: what they are thinking about this kind of support.
- Flexibility, variety: according to the needs, skills and resources of the target groups the program can cover a range of elements from self-sufficiency to goods production. We collected the reflections of the experts from local community and those of the target groups too: what kind of "profit" did they mention during the interviews?

- Bottom-up organisation, in contrast to the top-down coordinated public employment programs. The initiation of the project, the chosen activity and services, the distribution of the resources, the mobilisation the own contribution, the organisation of civil self-support group in the form of a civil association was the competence of the local communities, and actors, who was initiated the projects. In this chapter about the analysis of special roles of the different actors, we wanted to highlight the key persons and organisations of the process.
- Profile change: entrepreneurial municipalities instead of provider municipalities. This is a new model of local communities in Hungary: we collect reflections according to the economical independency of the local community. Are they prepared for this new challenge, is it possible to reach full economic sustainability in a disadvantaged small community? Which kind of other programs and process has impact on this profile change?

In the process evaluation, we examine the implementation and the execution of the program, focusing on the potential reasons of the success and failures of its implementation mechanisms. Therefore, according to the goals of the project, we endeavour to explore those factors of the implementation that are evaluated as successful and unsuccessful.

#### *The sample:*

In the impact evaluation, we execute a research on 2 target groups:

1. Group of families taking part in the program
2. Leaders of the local governments applying for the program with success

The leaders of the SZOFOSZ (National Professional Association for Representing the Interests of the Settlements Operating Social Land Programme) agreed to take part in the evaluation and the data collection. Therefore we had the opportunity to collect information in 8 communities. The project staff members and the students of the Department of Sociology and Social Policy collected information with questionnaire in 153 families and made 48 semi structured interviews in this 8 community.

The questionnaire contained closed questions and attitude scales.

The main dimension of the questionnaire and interview was:

- the social-demographical structure of the family
- the motivation of the participating in the program,
- the selection, activity, process and products in the program,

- suggestions and critics according to the targeting and organising the program,
- expectation and satisfaction in the Social Land Program
- the future of the program

The second aim of the questionnaire was to identify key persons among the participants of the Social Land Programme (opinion leaders), who would be subjects of **longer semi-structured interviews** about characteristics of the local power structure.

We prepared further 10 face-to-face individual semi-structured interviews with the experts of the local communities and the Social Land Programme and organised 2 focus groups with the leaders of the communities.

The individual interview and focus group research focused on the aims of the program and the evaluation of the achievements. The further research dimensions of the expert interviews were:

1. Which circumstances and/or variables effected (negatively or positively) the original goals of the program
2. Potential alternatives of the development of the program

For the analysis of the questionnaire we used SPSS, and for the analysis the semi structured interview the NVIVO softwares.

## ***5.2 The execution of the Social Land Programme in practice***

In the chapter concerning the operation of the Social Land Programme, we will first demonstrate the members of the target group, the method and criteria of the selection process, and then the activity being carried out. Within the process analysis, we discuss the supportive services and the role of control and sanction in motivating the participants. Through presenting the breadth of those who implement the programme and outlining their role, we aim to highlight to what extent the execution of the programme is dependent on the government or in some cases, a charismatic person. The process analysis will be concluded with the schematic analysis of those environmental influences and competitor programmes that define the operation and success of the land programme. Regarding the specific subchapters, we aimed to highlight those elements which demonstrate the innovative nature of the programme or its differences compared to standard integration programmes.

### ***5.3 The Target Group***

One of the main factors of a programme's success is proper targeting, i.e.: providing support for those, who were set as the initial targets by the supporters, as well as for those, who are the most suitable targets for the instrument in order to decrease their disadvantages and to improve their living standards.

The main target group of the programme according to the awarding authority of the tender is the group of disadvantaged individuals, specifically focusing on Roma individuals at the time of the announcement of the programme.<sup>77</sup> Proving the success of targeting is especially difficult in the case of the Roma, as it is not allowed to register ethnicity in official databases. As a result, we can only rely on the approximations of experts or leaders and the self-categorisation of surveyed individuals. In either case, we will be left with data that represent an educated guess rather than reality.

Furthermore, in the call for tender, it is not specified which target group is aimed to be supported within the group of disadvantaged people (e.g.: large families, people living alone, senior citizens, those who take part in public employment, individuals without any income, etc.), however, most local governments designate families who are raising 3 or more children as the main beneficiaries in the local legislation concerning the regulations of the land programmes.

The mayors and experts who were asked said that this target group was the group that – according to the consensus of local society – needed to be supported. On the other hand, the constitution of the group of participants was much more diverse in the 2015/2016 year (after the recruitment and selection process). Before analysing the composition of the participants, we will demonstrate the methods for informing the target group.

### ***5.4 The recruitment of participants in the Social Land Programme***

It tells a lot about the objective of the programme and the organisers' values regarding the programme who they aim to inform and how they choose to inform them about the opportunity of taking part in the programme. Concerning the used methods, one

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<sup>77</sup> [http://www.emet.gov.hu/\\_userfiles/felhivasok/szocialis\\_foldprogram\\_paly\\_kiiras\\_2016\\_jav\\_20160705.pdf](http://www.emet.gov.hu/_userfiles/felhivasok/szocialis_foldprogram_paly_kiiras_2016_jav_20160705.pdf)

significant factor is how long they have been organising the programme in a specific community and what kind of knowledge and experience the target group has in connection with the programme. Considering all of these factors, we can identify three fundamental methods when it comes to recruitment:

- a) providing information through flyers
- b) the voluntary application of the target group (subscription)
- c) the target group being approached by the organisers; in rare cases, the target group being appointed

a.) Informing people through flyers was mainly present in communities which had handed in their first tender application for the Social Land Programme relatively recently, so they were considered relatively new participants, thus society did not know much about this form of support. (Kőtelek 2015, Jászladány 2014, Zsáka 2005).

*"We announced it, the flyers were distributed throughout the community, it was displayed on billboards, and people were able to apply voluntarily."* (Zsáka expert interview No. 1)

In Kőtelek, the community's notice board was used to display the announcement, while flyers were also sent out to inform the local population about the programme. This method is typical to those communities who have taken part in the programme for a longer time.

b.) In most places, people had anticipated the programme, so when they received the news about it starting again, they applied started applying on their own.

*"Many people give it a try. One could say that almost everyone is applying."* (Felsődobsza, Man with maturity exam, 50)

*"... I'm telling you honestly, when I had not received anything because I am not eligible to receive benefits, I came here and talked to the mayor and asked if there is any programme I could apply for and he said that the land programme was to be launched and he would sign me up. "* (Magyargéc, woman with 2 children having moved in, 50)

*"... In the first year when I was here, I don't know why, but went to the office... they told me there is this land programme and that I could apply... Thank God, right then I was enrolled in that land programme and I got a goat in the first year."* (Katymár, man with 8 grades of primary education, in his 50s)

c.) Approaching people in person was present in those communities, where besides the local government, civil organisations or minority governments also played a

significant role in recruitment and the selection process or where – in certain cases – the minority government itself also applied for the organisation of the land programme. In the case of programmes with a briefer history, it was also more common to have personal recruitment with the involvement of government employees as well as the mayors.

*“I was told by the local government that there was this programme and that people could apply for it. So I had to fill out this form... I had to hand in an application form.” (Zsáka, woman, 26)*

*“The Children’s House is the other scene, which is a new idea as many times, families enter the programme through that.” (Katymár expert interview No.1)*

With regards to all forms of recruitment, it is ***extremely important to emphasise the voluntariness of participation***. Unlike other employment programmes in the community – i.e. public employment – there is no pressure involved and if anyone refuses to participate in the programme – being an extremely rare case as there is competition when it comes to the application process – there are no sanctions imposed. There is in fact some kind of competition among the potential future target group in order to be enrolled in the programme and to receive support.

*“...I don’t think they are too concerned, this is your decision at the end of the day... I decided if I want to participate or not, that’s why I’ve been told the terms and conditions, so if I don’t want to take part, they understand that and then there will be someone else who has also applied.” (Kőtelek, woman in her 30s with 8 grades of primary education)*

*“They send out the document, and then if they say “I can do it” then they can do it. And if they don’t want to do it... so it is not forced on us at all. Not on anyone. If you want to work, you work, if you don’t, you don’t.” (Felsődobosza, man having moved there from Budapest, in his 50s)*

Voluntariness on the other hand has quite peculiar effects on the composition of the group of participants.

*“...The younger generation does not insist on land as much, they have got used to being able to purchase anything in the store, any sort of junk is given to them is optically pleasing, which is true, but they can buy it, and they do not have to do anything in specific. If I consider agricultural work, it is by nature such kind of work that could be interfered by anything during these one-year periods from beginning to end. It is possible that one has*

*tried it but due to their previous failures, they do not want to take part in it anymore. [This is the reason why only 4 individuals are under the age of 30 out of 30 people, while the others are between the ages 50 and 60.] (Zsáka expert interview No.2.)*

As a result, it is extremely important within the programme to motivate the younger generation and to educate them, as agricultural activities do not appeal to them and they have no qualifications or experience regarding the execution of these activities that are important from the perspective of self-sufficiency, as well as horticulture.

### **5.5 The selection of participants**

The call for tender does not specify the scope of potential participants of the programme. It only requires the applicants to be disadvantaged. As a result, the participating local governments can specify the conditions of the selection themselves, which are then legislated in local regulations. This level of freedom is beneficial for many reasons as the communities can select the households to be supported based on their unique characteristics. This aspect is different from the “universalism” of other active instruments that are designated to boost employment in many ways, and it gives way to articulate **local characteristics**.

The criteria of the selection had two basic types. The first: what form of eligibility was preferred by local decision-makers at the time they began participating in the programme; the second: what type of activity did they aim to engage in within the programme and what essential conditions did that have.

*“The inhabitants are so poor here that we could have involved everyone in the land programme, but we had to come up with something due to the 30 families so that they would not shout at the mayor like: “why was I not involved.”(Magyargéc expert interview No. 1)*

In the first type of selection method the most commonly accepted group was that of families raising children.

*“those who we included in the land programme, ...we had been meeting within family care and child care services for years... in 2014, 43 people applied, there were 43 applicants and we were supporting 30 families... most of them were raising children under the age of 14.” (Jászladány expert interview No. 1)*

*“.. back then if someone enjoyed child protection services, they received it... as far as I know, now if you have a younger child, you can take part in the programme, so there is no need to*

*have a child protection document.” (Panyola, woman in her 30s, raising her two children alone)*

There are places though, where people without any income, single people receiving low amounts of benefits, and senior citizens with lower pensions were also eligible to take part in the programme.

*“...[we involved them in the programme] based on eligibility, we supported extremely poor as well as many single people..., but also families with many children. As I have already mentioned, there are so many children, families on average have 5 or 6, but it is not uncommon to have families with 8 children... and the elderly with low pensions. The joy of... as they had never received anything from the local government or the state... At first we tried to go for large families only, but when they were not willing to do anything at all as they didn’t want, they didn’t do anything... and weeds took over their place, then we decided to exclude such people from the programme...” (Felsődobsza expert interview No. 1)* This is how the elderly with low pensions and single people were accepted into the programme the following year, but not only in this community, but for example in Jászládány, too...

*“...One [of the conditions] is that they have to be unemployed, or at least registered in the job centre as a jobseeker, so at least one person in the family. If not, they are required to raise a child and to be entitled to be issued a child protection discount, so they are required to have low income. These two are the main conditions, being the essential ones. So this has been amended with the possibility to involve pensioners and disability pensioners, and I believe that’s it.” (Jászládány expert interview No. 1)*

Besides the support of families, senior citizens with low pension and single people, the Social Land Programme has taken up the responsibility to integrate another group in a significant percentage of the communities, which group is that of the so-called “outsiders”. Out of the scrutinised 8 local governments, in 5 cases – both in the expert interviews and the target group interviews – this issue was present: since the millennium, as a result of the change of the population, after the youth had moved away and the older generations had passed away, many houses were left empty, which were occupied by “strangers” from other cities or communities. In Kőtelek and Jászládány, people talk about Tiszabő as a deterrent, and they are worried about their community becoming “ghettoised” like Tiszabő as a result of the change in the population and the fact that Roma people have settled down there. *“One part of the youth is gone, while the*

*other part has adapted the mentality that outsiders have brought.” – tells an expert living in Kőtelek about the situation.*

However, the arrival of outsiders caused issues in other communities, too.<sup>78</sup> In Katymár, for example, from 2002, the outsiders – not having any agricultural inputs or income – started to dismantle the empty houses...*“...they removed everything they could sell, so what was left was waste and rubble. ...This triggered great opposition among locals. (Katymár expert interview No. 1)*

The tension between locals and “outsiders” has mainly manifested in the distribution of work and income. *“The older generations of gypsies in Zsáka, there is no real issue with them, but the newcomers are causing many problems. They are avoiding work; we tried to get them involved in various public employment programmes, but we had hardly any success... There are some reliable individuals among them, and people who are willing to work, but their level of education is very low, unfortunately. Many of them have not even completed 8 years of primary education. There is one worker, for example, who has only made it through 3 grades at primary school.” (Zsáka expert interview No. 2)* The groups that – due to their low level of education – are not able to take part in employment and that are accustomed to enjoying passive benefits triggered a lot of opposition among traditional local residents. The integration of the newcomers was not so effortless. In many cases, locals criticised the fact that “outsiders” are not able/willing to work and as a result, they set a bad example for locals, too. That is why in many places, management has set an objective of involving these people in the programme, so that they could obtain food and integrate in their communities.

*“Yes, well, back when we started this programme... we wanted to boost, reach and support the newcomer families’ integration. One part of it was that, mothers who were at home with little children could come together [in the Children’s House] in the morning, or also fathers, who were out of work at the time, so that they could get to know each other, learn from each other or from experts, who were responsible for helping them. Besides us providing some support for their families’ survival, we taught them these things [as part of*

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<sup>78</sup> A peculiar group of “outsiders” can be seen in Rozsály, for example. A few families migrated there from Satu Mare (that is 20 km away from Rozsály). Besides the fact that the two places are located on opposite sides of the border, they chose the little municipality with a few hundred inhabitants as their new home.<sup>78</sup> Locals started to worry when the strangers appeared. Their concern was that the new residents might not be able to integrate in the community, which might hinder the state of previously formed communities there. However, as the “outsiders” were not of peripheral groups, most of them retained their jobs or income generating activities in Satu Mare, so their integration was much smoother than in the case of the before mentioned communities.

*the land programme]. Either horticulture or smaller livestock farming. On the one hand because of a more healthy diet, on the other hand for reducing the outgoings of the families. And really, the Children's house made it possible for them to work as a community. So they discussed every morning how their peas are growing, what their vegetables look like, how they feed their chickens, that they look so lovely, etc.” (Katymár expert interview No. 1)*

During the selection, the question emerged: how many times could one participate in the programme and what is the extent of the turnover among the beneficiary families. A great advantage of the programme compared to short cycle supportive services is that it does not specify the period during which one can enjoy this kind of support. The duration of support is on the one hand, determined by the successfulness of the tenders, the amount of supplementary resources available for the government, which can help increase the number of participants or sustain the programme in years without actual external support, but it is also influenced by the number and characteristics of applicants, too.

*“...as no one else is applying, we do not exclude them just because they have been in the programme for many years...” (Katymár expert interview)*

The current conditions of tendering do not allow the increase of the number of families, and the local governments cannot provide the necessary own contribution for such a large-scale investment. This way, the model experiment – having been proved to be successful – is spreading much more slowly than it would be needed, or – through the increase of the amount of grants – it would be possible.

The other criteria for the selection, is related to *the activity that is being performed*. As the selection of local governments was determined at the time of planning the study so that almost all of them opted for the previous component “C”, being small-scale horticulture and small livestock farming, thus, we analysed the criteria for these two activities.

*“Everyone wanted to [participate], but there are certain conditions regarding that. One is if you have land or not. If one does not have a garden, it is difficult to provide seeds for them... Even if they do, but they have not prepared it, as we have determined in the tender that only those can apply who have ploughed or dug up their garden. So if one has not done so, we can give the seeds to them, but they won't be able to plant them among the weeds... So preparations have to be made. We went there, took a few photos of the area,*

*documented it and after this, who was eligible was [enrolled in the programme] during the following selection process.” (Felsődobsza expert interview No.1)*

The participation criteria regarding small scale livestock farming were very similar.

*“...so that the animal housing would be nice and tidy... if they went there and there was no housing, even if they were eligible... if they did not have the proper housing, they were not accepted...” (Jászladány, woman with 5 children, 55)*

*“.. the household was supposed to be closed, they had to have a proper place, where they had enough water, there needed to be a roof above them, so there were such conditions...” (Jászladány, woman with 3 children, 43)*

In some municipalities, certain expectations were set in connection with the livestock farming activity:

*“They gave us the 25 chickens, then they gave some feed, fodder, with the condition that we have to retain 10 pullets along with 2 roosters... and this spring we were required to provide 50 eggs in exchange, so these were the requirements. Well, it was like we had to give them the 50 eggs in two instalments; 25 in one week and the other 25 two weeks later. So it was not a burden for anyone, really.” (Kőtelek, woman in her 60s)*

This condition would be the basis of the continuity of the programme and its sustainability without external support. In fact, the government used incubators to hatch the supplied eggs and thus, used it to produce most of the initial stock of the following programme period on their own.<sup>79</sup> Feeding the animals afterwards was a major issue; producing the required feed would have required an amount of land, which governments do not usually possess.

Considering all the criteria for the selection process, we can state that – even though the Social Land Programme set the objective of socially integrating the most disadvantaged individuals – there are still groups that cannot be involved in this programme as under the present circumstances, they are not eligible for participation due to the missing conditions.

In Jászladány, for example, people were reluctant to accept individuals from the Roma neighbourhood into the land programme as they had no land, relevant experience and the provided animals were not safe. According to experts, the success of the project would have been at risk for many reasons in this location.

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<sup>79</sup> A further question would emerge: how many times can the existing stock reproduce? In many cases, after 2 or 3 generations pass, the stock becomes unable to reproduce, so it is inevitable to refresh the stock both in the case of plants and animals. This implies the need for further resources.

We found out about another municipality that 80 people signed up to the programme. 45 of them were accepted into the programme with the local government using its own resources, too, but there were applicants who had to be rejected. *“...unfortunately a minimal percentage [of the applicants] was left out because of their income status, as [the income of the whole family] exceeded the requirements of the tender. Most of them though because they do not possess anything at all.”* (Zsáka expert interview No. 1)

A minimal amount of own contribution is needed for livestock farming and horticulture, as the participants advance the costs that emerge during the growing season. A great percentage of the excluded individuals were among those Roma people who had been designated by the government to enjoy special support.

### ***5.6 The Romas in the land programme***

Since all but one of the examined communities have relatively high Roma populations, one might ask the valid question if – according to the original programme announcement – it is mainly the Roma who participate in the Social Land Programme, and if it could be determined whether the Social Land Programme is mainly an initiative that primarily aims to stimulate the social and labour market integration of the Roma. The reason why it is difficult to answer such a question was explained by two experts as follows:

*“I am not even supposed to think about them being Roma or non-Roma. ...I have always said that you should not think like this... since I was elected the mayor, I have always said that there is no such distinction, I have been striving to get rid of this kind of mindset (i.e.: ‘Roma or not Roma’)... when the inhabitants consist of 50 percent Romas and 50 percent non-Romas... non-Romas have also fallen behind... many have fallen back to the extent that they are not ploughing, not working, they are on the dole, drinking, visiting the bar on a regular basis... so there is no difference between gypsies and non-gypsies.”* (Magyargéc expert interview No. 1)

*“The Hungarian who lives like gypsies, so who is not working, is on the dole, dirty, their household is neglected, etc. is also considered a gypsy, regardless of the fact that they are a true, absolute Hungarian. The gypsy who takes good care of their household, has livestock, is involved in trade, or has a job, their household is tidy, then they are not treated as a gypsy. They know the gypsy ethnicity of this person on a subconscious level, but treat them the same way as an “indigenous” Hungarian citizen.”* (Kőtelek expert interview No.1)

It is extremely difficult to determine in a community where the population categorises peripheral individuals among gypsies based on lifestyle rather than ethnicity or self-categorisation what percentage of gypsies participates in the social land programme. Out of the 153 surveyed people 42 (15 men and 27 women) considered themselves to be of Roma ethnicity, which is 26.9 percent of all participants. Based on the approximation of mayors who participate in the programme, in most communities, at least 50 percent of all land programme participants consists of gypsy people.<sup>80</sup> While in Kőtelek, it is the long-term Roma residents of the community who work in the programme – as the newcomers could not have been involved so far – but in Katymár and Jászládány, they intend to use the programme for the integration of newcomer Romas.

The people having been invited in the land programme *“...were not sure if they could do this until the end, or, so it was a new thing for many people. It is especially the newcomer Roma inhabitants, who have no previous experience, who are like: if they could do it or not, if it is good for me or not. Many cannot measure how useful this is for them. And they said that well, they should give them the money instead. But we do not give the money to them.”* (Kőtelek expert interview No. 1)

Uncertainty is in many cases justifiable when it comes to work as in the case of gypsies, neither the required equipment, nor the qualification or know-how needed for agricultural production *is available*.

*“But honestly, it is ridiculous when we have to teach a gypsy how to plough. But really, this is often the case as they don’t know how. They can’t do it, especially the new, young generation, they are too young to know. These people are quite difficult to deal with. It is possible that they have never worked at a proper workplace, they cannot make it through all 8 working hours, they want to escape, “I want to go home”, “I need to take a wee” “I need to go to the toilet”, “I have to go to the dentist’s”, “I’ve got to pop in the dentist’s”, “I need to change the kid’s nappy”, do I need to say more?”* (Magyargéc expert interview No. 1)

The lack of the culture of production or key skills needed for work are problems that are not only characteristic of the Roma youth, but also of non-Roma youngsters who grew up in pauperised families, who are often considered – because of their lifestyle – to be gypsies by the public.

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<sup>80</sup> The reason why the leaders of the municipality choose to use the term ‘gypsy’ is that they believe that people belonging to this minority do not speak other languages besides Hungarian. For being called a ‘Roma’, they think one is required to know and use the Lovari language.

The advantageous nature of the programme is demonstrated by the fact that according to the interviewed experts, the new, 2016 applicants were people of younger ages than in the preceding years. *“They could see positive examples in the community, well, those who aim to achieve self-sufficiency have ...slightly ... better living conditions, so they don’t have to worry as much day by day.” (Magyargéc expert interview No.1)*

If we summarise the characteristics of the target group and the selection process, we can state that almost everywhere, families who were raising children enjoyed the highest priority, but also a high percentage of senior citizens with lower pension, people who are living alone and do not receive any income, and newcomers was accepted into the beneficiaries of the Social Land Programme. It is also quite prominent that women are almost twice as likely to be accepted into the programme compared to men (women – 63.3%, men – 36,7%) It seems like the conservative family model can also be visible here: males have to make a living within the private sector, while woman, being the people who play a primary role in taking care of children, can enjoy community support in a higher percentage. A widely used strategy among the municipalities is that males work in public employment, while females – dealing with chores around the house – participate in the Social Land Programme.

The targeting of the programme can be considered effective based on the initial targeting, as 62.7 percent of the participants are single parents or couple parents who are raising children, while an additional 16 percent is the extended family where children are being raised as well. Only 8.3 percent of the participants are people who live alone and 11.5 percent of them consists of married couples not raising children in their household. In 34.4 percent of the analysed households, more than 5 people live together, in 43.2 percent of them, 3 or 4 people, in 15 percent of them, it is 2 people, while in 8.5 percent of the households, one person lives alone.

60.3 percent of the surveyed people have completed 8 grades of primary education or even less, 28.2 percent of them have some type of vocational education, 7.1 percent has passed their maturity exam, while 1.3 percent (i.e. two people) has higher education. The statistics also show that mainly people with less favourable labour market statuses and those who had hardly any chance to be employed in the open labour market were included in the programme. Out of all participants, only 12.5 percent is involved in the primary labour market or as employees (10.5%), are self-employed or farmers (2%). Most of them participate in public employment (57.2%) or they are in an inactive status

(receiving pension 13.8%, maternity allowance 6.6%, social benefits 9.2%). The income of those in an inactive status is – with the exception of pension – under 100 euros, which is not even a quarter of the subsistence level. All these factors justify participation in the programme, and for a family to join in activities that help self-sufficiency in order to improve their food supply situation and their living standards.

### **5.7 The activity performed within the Social Land Programme**

#### **Land programme – without land?**

The Social Land Programme – as its name implies – is a form of integration related to agricultural activity. It includes both fundamental branches: crop production and livestock farming as well. Whether it is one or the other that is being focused on depends on what traditions still exist in the community regarding household agriculture and what amount of land is available for working on at the participants or the organising local governments. The land involved in the programme and the involved real estate, according to the call for tender, has to be the property of the applicant or they have to have an agreement with someone for using it, for at least two years from the start of the project's execution. The greatest problem of those local governments who enter the programme is that except for a few cases (Rozsály, Katymár), the government does not possess significant amounts of land.

*“We have got no land. So the municipality does not possess any land, that is more or less substantial and of also, suitable to be worked on. We didn't have any in 1994, either, but back. Then it was all unused. ...when the cooperative had closed, we were left with 1600 hectares of land, ...and then no one was cultivating it. We ploughed and created a land programme wherever we wanted to. We produced a lease contract, so we did not even have to pay rent for it... I had a look at the land, like, say, land with registry number 101, I would check who the owners were, I looked up 5 or 6 owners, who had approximately the size of land we would need, then I would sign a lease contract with these people.” (Mg expert interview No. 1)*

Neither land leasing, nor land acquisition is easy these days. But neither is impossible as the example in Katymár shows, where the municipality now owns 40 hectares of land.

*“There are no factories, no employers who would create jobs and they would not even come here. So we tried to save... the house deconstructions and old houses/households that are in*

*really bad condition, so that the municipality offered the heirs who... have moved from here to take control over their houses and... even clean up the place... and remove the rubble if they hand over their rights of possession. So the costs of the lawyer was covered by the municipality, and... we have quite a lot of plots inside the municipality which have been acquired this way.” (Katymár expert interview No. 1)* Although in these places the formerly unemployed locals are involved in public employment, but the acquired horticulture skills are gradually implemented in their own households, which is supported by the municipality through seeds and using machinery.

In the recent years, however, with the appreciation of land property and the formation of location-based support, it is more and more difficult to acquire land or even to lease land to work on. The reduction in the size of land involved in the land programme was also triggered by the fact that previously publicly cultivated areas or community land leased to individuals are gradually becoming part of the meanwhile launched Start public employment programme and the land programme is becoming limited to the land outside of the municipalities.

*“-How was it possible to acquire land?*

*-... this was the area of land, but it was being leased, so the cooperative paid rent for it, and then we requested it back. So we were not providing it anymore. Well, we don't have too much land, there are 2.8 hectares available, where potatoes and things like this [are grown]... it is hard, we don't have enough land. State land is now nearly impossible [to acquire], the municipality cannot get it. Two years ago – we didn't even know – there was a municipality-owned road, and they had spotted from the satellites that there was lots of ragweed surrounding the road so we were disqualified from the programme for two years. ...Now because of 22 ragweed plants, the municipality was disqualified, if we had been able to participate, we could have gained an additional 4 hectares of land... Now we are growing oil pumpkins where we had to let the land rest. ...so then we could plant potatoes in that area, so that we would not have to lease, as we were leasing a piece of land for 200 thousand forints in order to be able to grow potatoes. ...” (Fd. expert interview No.1)*

As they were not able to expand their own territory through tendering or purchase, the municipality used its own budget to lease certain areas, if there was land available and if the budget was able to cover the costs of leasing. In most cases, though, instead of community farming, it is rather the gardens that are supported. These are mainly gardens ranging from 360 to 1079 square metres where it is encouraged by the

organisers to grow cultivated plants that would contribute to the food supply of the families.

There are places where it is required to dig up the garden before being accepted into the programme and to make it suitable for cultivation; there are cases when the municipality uses its own machinery to plough the gardens and prepare the soil for sowing.

Thus, support manifests in different forms in the different communities. What is the same in all municipalities is that participants all receive a bag of seeds. The significance of this is considered by many to be the fact that families with extremely low income do not have the sufficient capital after the winter has passed to finance the horticultural needs of the spring season (soil treatment, tools, seeds, pesticides, etc.), so they do not even begin cultivating the gardens, even if there is land available around their house for cultivation. The neglected gardens, untidy households not only tell about the missed opportunity of food production or the disorderliness of the respective residents, but they also diminish the image of the community and the location substantially. This also contributed to the fact that the reestablishment of horticulture and the revival of household production have been prioritised within the land programme.

The basic seeds are provided: vegetables, green beans, green peas, pumpkin, patty pan squash, and rarely sweet corn seeds are included in the seed package.

The seed package is identical in most municipalities and it is approximately worth 10.000 Ft. There are cases, though, where the package is assembled according to the needs of the participants.

*“First of all, they receive some seeds, based on their own preferences. So I have never agreed with the idea that I give them a package and they just take it. We always ask them about their needs in advance.”* (Katymár expert interview No. 1)

There are places where the provided grants cover the acquisition of needed tools as well, especially in the case of new participants. This is in many cases also necessary as the size of gardens does not allow the use of machinery, while the families' budget does not make it possible to purchase manual tools.

*“So basic tools... shovel, so that they can dig it up, they should have a rake, a hoe, because, well, without these, it would be strange to get started. They had no sprayer, so they needed to buy a backpack sprayer to have one... there are no cattle in the village. Pigs can be found at one or two families. ...So there is no manure fertilisation, thus, we provide a minimal*

*amount of artificial fertiliser along with a little plastic tank ... and over-the-counter plant protection products. So insecticide and fungicide substances.” (Felsődobsza expert interview No. 1)*

The support of horticulture and the effort towards the revival of plant cultivation has to face many other obstacles beyond the above mentioned ones.

### **5.8 The irrationality of organisation and the principle of gradual gradualness**

*“this project... is national, so it [is a programme that] has been announced by the Ministry... the problem is that it is always announced around this time. At the end of May... So what kind of agricultural thing can you start at such time? (Jászladány expert interview No. 1)*

*“The problem with Social Land Programme tenders is that they are announced without taking the agricultural cycle into consideration...The fact that they tell you if your application was successful or not in July and they have you sign the contract around the 20th of August, well after that you can only grow frost flowers... Well, that is the reason why we participate in livestock farming.” (Kőtelek expert interview No. 1)*

Even though most of the surveyed beneficiaries were satisfied with the received support in the land programme, most of them were complaining about the seeds. (21 out of 153 surveyed individuals). They had concerns about the composition of the seeds, or their quality or the delayed distribution of the seeds. Besides the low amount of support and such form of issuing, thus, the municipalities take up a key role in ensuring the continuity and successfulness of the programme.

Those local governments which decide to take part in the programme supporting crop production advance the financial support through their own contribution in order to sow the seeds in time and the risk the investment providing there is an unsuccessful tender. This unpredictable tendering system has some benefits besides the many drawbacks, as the municipalities have been financing the system for years now – due to the circumstances – and in many cases they ensure the sustainability of the programme in unsupported periods. They believe that this form of support is much more useful than monetary benefits.

In the case of livestock farming – especially chickens – time management is a little more flexible than with crop production, which is, according to the organisers, partly due to the fact that the first stage of integration programmes is rather the encouragement of

chicken farming instead of assisting crop production as it might provide quicker results. Jászladány – having just joined the programme – also chose to support chicken farming.

*“We have distributed 30 ready-to-lay chicken, along with as much feed as would approximately be needed to raise them till their slaughter weight... it was also medicine and the costs of the vet included in the project, being approximately 30 thousand forint per family.” (Jászladány expert interview No. 1)*

*“first we gave the initial amount of feed, so it received fodder three times. First the initial feed, then the raising feed, then after the chickens have grown, it got ... hen feed, that was intended for adult animals. When we finally ran out of [the supplied feed], then they bought the needed fodder from their own money.” (Kőtelek expert interview No. 1)*

There are communities where it is not the fodder itself but the area required to produce the fodder that is provided by the municipality.

*“The municipality provided 2.5 hectares of corn field for the residents – cultivated by 8 individuals – in order to produce the needed fodder for livestock farming.” (Zsáka expert interview No. 1)*

Such amounts of fodder, however, would cater for the needs of bigger livestock rather than those of chicken. Gradualness is very important regarding the development of the programme as an early shift between the various production levels may pose serious risks.

*“We are just launching the duck programme. It is a bigger animal, so it will yield more meat if they can make it through. On the other hand, ducks are like, if I don’t cultivate my garden, I will let them in and they will feed on the plants. The image of the village is instantly improved! And if they get used to me having chickens, hens, ducks, next year, there could be a goose programme, after that goats, sheep, this should be okay, and if it is going well, then we can launch the pig programme. You should not get it started too early, as in the neighbouring village... they had launched a pig programme, which was about giving 2 pigs each for 10 families along with some feed in order to raise them. They could eat one of them, but they were supposed to propagate the other and two of the offsprings were needed to be resupplied towards the municipality, well, they ate all 20 pigs. It was too early. There was no chicken programme before... You should not think this large-scale for the first time already. You need to progress step by step.”... This way, we could increase the numbers by 5-10 families year by year, and if this number kept increasing, then we could*

*experience a significant improvement in the standards of living.” (Kőtelek expert interview No. 1)*

Bigger animal bigger investment and bigger contribution on your own part. That is why people always begin with smaller animals and poultry.

*“...in most cases, the chicken works well, like i.e.:ready-to-lay chicken, but we have had ducks before, there was one year when we bought goats, there were years when we bought pigs, so it is changing a lot and it is really based on their needs. There was a little problem with pigs. They were so determined, but most families did not manage to fatten them. So... this would also be an investment, but buying the feed was not facilitated by the programme.” (Katymár interview No. 1 - excerpt)*

Thus, when it comes to the formation of self-sufficiency skills, most of the time the programme elements concentrate on poultry. Larger livestock farming – with the exception of goat perhaps – does not fit in the Social Land Programme because of the higher costs and the income level it requires. If a family does reach the level of income which makes it possible to think about larger livestock farming with more confidence, they mostly exceed the income level that is determined by the respective municipalities as the programme’s requirement i.e. the sign for their disadvantaged status. Of course, there are always exceptions!

### **5.9 The lack of production culture**

The lack of cultivating gardens has been getting more and more prominent over the past 20 years. In less-populated communities, the household gardens have seen a decline in horticulture that used to prosper before the fall of the communist regime. This can be traced back to 3 reasons according to the interviews: first, the spread of cheap mass-produced goods, which are far behind household-produced vegetables or poultry when it comes to quality, but they have proved to be more inexpensive and more reliable/safer for low-income households than home-produced goods that are susceptible to weather and other conditions. Second, the younger generation that stayed in the community despite the fact that many had moved elsewhere had not acquired the necessary production skills in their childhood, or in the case of the second generation, there was no chance to master agricultural production skills from other family members through trial and error and learning. Third, around the millennium, due to the increasing

migration from and to the community, the newcomers (who had come from various cities) completely lacked the knowledge and experience needed for agricultural work. As a result of all of these factors, the programme has been amended with the compulsory element of training, but many communities provide other services – mentoring, advice from the vet, crisis support, etc. – for the success of the land programme.

*“In the neighbouring community, the mayor has got agricultural qualification, so we asked him to come over and have a lecture for the participants. The project makes it possible to finance the services of agricultural experts as well as mentors, but we did not receive the full amount, so we could only provide this as social activity. ... there were two mentors among the public workers who were supervising. Of course we chose ones with insight on chicken farming. It is nothing special, really, back in the day, everyone had ducks, geese, hens, chickens, so we thought it would be best to do this on our own.” (Kőtelek expert interview No.1)*

The budget of the programme in most cases is not sufficient to cover the costs of support services. However, as – especially at the initial stage of the programme – the organisers consider these an important part, they usually find a way around – for example in the above mentioned case with the involvement of public workers – so that training, mentoring and advice is available to the participants. In the case of livestock-oriented programmes, having a vet available was really helpful in the programme. In Katymár, for example, *“they brought the little vitamin package for the chickens, at the time of distribution, they told the families what they could or couldn’t do. If they have this illness, if they have that illness, what should they do. Same for the goats. So... this kind of advice was present on their part as well” (Katymár expert interview No.1)*. But other municipalities also had vets available. They had the doctor’s number written down, so they could call them free of charge, if there was any issue.

This complementary service means a huge advantage compared to competitor programmes, which only provide the seeds or the breeding animal, but they do not really care about how participants use the “initial capital”. The surveyed people in many cases talk about the “Minden gyermek lakjon jól (Make all children eat enough)”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> The „Minden Gyermek Lakjon Jól Alapítvány”(MGY LJ) ( “*Make All Children Eat Enough Foundation*”) was established in 2010 and this project has been operating since 2011 on a national scale, part of which was to supply seeds and smaller livestock to different microregions’ families in need, which was called the „Mini Household” programme. The programme is coordinated by Zsuzsa Hegedűs, being the manager of the foundation – and since July 2010, also Viktor Orbán’s chief advisor of social inclusion and conflict management issues.

programme as a counterexample, which in their opinion just degrades the success and reputation of the initiative launched by the land programme.

*"The idea was perfect. They brought out the day-old ducklings and the feed. They sold it in an instant. So we did not really see the reason in that... Then they handed out a seed package, they said it was organic... But people didn't even know what to do with that... Make all children eat enough... they brought the day-old chicks with big lorries and gave them to families with children. ..." (Felsődobsza expert interview No. 1)...* but after handing them out, the supplies were not supervised by anyone. They did not ask if there was enough space for livestock farming, if people had any feed for foddering, or if they had the required know-how for taking care of the animals. Based on the judgement of the mayors, this was (also) an especially harmful initiative from the perspective of the land programme and hardly anything was accomplished from it. *"..it is not, say, 120 families, ...but only 15, who get it. We created the tender so that we see the opportunity for 15 families to receive it. And we won't believe that the fox stole it or the rat ate it. So that is, why it is [done] small-scale. So we can actually supervise everything." (Felsődobsza expert interview No. 1)*

In the land programme, the training of participants has been organised in every community. In Jászládány, for example, there was a 20-hour training session. One part took place at the time of signing the contract, while the other part when they already had the animals and the feed available. The training in Zsáka also consisted of many parts. *"We had this course about different plant cultures ... the formation of a kitchen garden, plant care, plant protection, gardening tools, their maintenance, as well as taking care about smaller animals, animal health, and household management for the participants." (Zsáka expert interview No. 1)*

*"Yeah, sure, it is in every year. ... this XY said such clever things about livestock farming, said such things that you would not know before. .." (Panyola, woman in her 30s, 2 children)*

Besides the training, in most places, there is a mentor who helps so that the programme would be successful.

*".. there was this school... but there is one more person, who controls you, so how much fodder, how you should give it to them and what, how you should feed them, and how you should make this whole activity profitable." (Zsáka, woman, 26)*

It was mainly younger participants who embraced the training and mentoring service, as they do not have previous experience regarding agricultural production. Besides general farming know-how, the training in many cases included household management knowledge.

*“...what they can store for the winter, as we talk about this at the sessions, also, we discuss, if you have a freezer, what you put in that or how you can pickle anything or to preserve fruit/vegetables. And this is also why the Children’s House is beneficial. So that here, you can watch it in practice, and not only watch, but try it yourself as well. Because there have been beetroots preserved, and here... we actually did it with them.” (Katymár expert interview No. 1)*

For the long-term participants of the programme, the trainers try to incorporate some new material in the courses, as they already know the basics, so they need the new know-how. This form of the training – the theory being combined with practicality – has proved to be extremely useful, primarily among the youth. Older participants – who have been accepted into the programme e.g.: due to their low pensions – were not as excited about the participation in the compulsory training as they believed that they could not be taught anything new regarding agricultural work.

#### **5.10 Mentoring – control – sanctions**

*“Adults are exactly the same as children, except they need bigger size shoes.” (Rozsályi)*

Besides the training courses, different forms of communication have been created in the different communities. What is an advantage of the programme compared to different types of programmes is the continuous “attention”.

The participants have reported in all analysed communities that the organisers would visit the gardens/animals more or less frequently and they documented the process with photos. This form of monitoring and visiting could also be considered to be strict control of the activity of the programme. Surprisingly, however, most people considered this the presentation of results and the potential chance for having the excellent work acknowledged rather than a way of being controlled. The meetings also provided an opportunity to share their experience regarding production/farming or to ask questions from the “inspectors”. Actually, there were many occasions, when participants asked for the “inspection” themselves:

*“...the request was that we go and have a look as the previous management promised that they would go and check on them, but they could not get to it, so they did not go, did not visit them...there were also people among them who sold it, and the locals said: why give them anything if they sell it? But those who were serious about it wanted to prove themselves and they requested to be visited...this was the requirement for further support as well, otherwise the people of the village would have generalised and would have considered the continuation of the programme useless...They even posed for a photo and they showed what their garden was like, what the poultry were like and this has stayed the same. So as it has settled like this, and it has been accepted, no one has had any objections, they have accepted it, they knew it was like this. And this way, they also protected themselves in a way. The point is not to supervise, but to help them. I always say that it is like helpful supervision. So a little bit of attention, that they would mostly need, anyway. Because they like if they can show that yes, they are doing it right.” (Katymár expert interview No. 1)*

The supervision in Jászládány is also considered by the participants to be the traditional care and communication rather than “control”:

*“Yes, and if I only want to ask, or I want to see if there is any sort of problem, issue, hardship. And then they would tell me and we have a chat, I also ask if their children and family are okay and you know, their general well-being. If I see that they are a bit more tired, then I would ask if there is any problem with their health, or, say, if I notice that they are not behaving as usual than I ask about that, too.” (Jászládány expert interview No. 1)*

Out of the asked 153 participants 66 would not change anything regarding the proposals towards the development of the programme, while in 87 cases when someone wanted to propose changes in regards to the programme, in 19 cases, they wanted stricter control or more frequent visits. What is the reason why the participants were more positive about the supervision by the organisers, and, in fact, they proposed it themselves? Why are they not afraid of being checked on? Because during the execution of the programme, the organisers have not been focusing on sanctions. They have learned, as a matter of fact, that among the target group of the land programme, sanctions – in this programme, but also in general – have little or no significance.

*“... sanctions are not so efficient in this environment. I know this because sometimes what we do at untidy households is that we tell them if they don't tidy up, then we will fine them, but they just smile at us. Anyway, if you fine them, what would you deduct it from? You*

*know, they don't have any income that could be frozen. But on the other hand, in the case of the chickens, it wasn't like "the money has to be paid back". Anyway, this group that we're talking about will not plan half a year ahead, they don't think like: what if they call me to account. Instead, they think: if I slaughter it, I slaughter it, but they did not do this. This was a huge success for me. I swear, I was expecting much worse results." (Kőtelek expert interview No. 1)*

So the organisers quickly learned that they will not succeed with the use of sanctions. The risk of being fined or having to reimburse the costs would not have served as deterrents as no one would have the financial means to cover these. The denial of access was the only sanction, i.e. if someone had not lived up to the expectations stated in the contract, they could not participate in the programme in the following year.

*"the cover story for selling these supplies – so for selling the feed with the chickens and everything for 3.000 Ft – was that they were being raised at X or Y under contract..... There was a woman, who told me regarding the 10 chickens that she had sold them for 3000 Ft because she could not pluck chickens, as she came from the city. I asked her, she told me she came from Budapest from the 10th floor! Turned out that she was actually from the outskirts of Polgár (a small town)." (Zsáka expert interview No. 1)*

However, no sanctions were made, but they did not accept them in the programme the following year. What was far more effective than any kind of sanction was the positive motivation due to the organisers finding out who was the most skilful and reliable with their work in the land programme and these individuals were then involved in further programmes as well as in public employment. This alone was a serious motivating force as this provided stable income and future prospects.

*"There was a time when ... and there was a group when they received these things, they sold them, traded them for money, so they did not use this opportunity, but they abused it. This was handled in the beginning with the idea of them becoming less likely to be involved in the programme in the following year. So there was a committee and we decided if we accept or decline their application. But usually they were not accepted. After this [with the passage of one or two years], they were granted the opportunity to apply again, but this somewhat deterred them from wasting it [the opportunity] again. I don't know whether this is right or lawful... but the point is that I believe that [this programme] is really about what it is supposed to be, so that we teach them, we help them, and that there is a product of this whole activity." (Katymár expert interview No. 1)*

According to the contract between the participants and the municipality (or the executing organisation, like for example the minority government), the beneficiaries would have had to reimburse the funds if they had not abided by the points of the contract by their own mistake. The requirement regarding the garden was its continuous cultivation, and regarding the animals it was to maintain the stock for a certain amount of time (it was not allowed to consume or sell them) and certain municipalities also specified what the participants had to do in return: they were required to supply eggs or part of the offspring towards the municipality. In the case of newly started programmes, even the organisers were concerned about the programme being effective or not, and whether the participants would abide by the contract.

*"I was sure about half of them consuming them after having reached slaughter age, but I was wrong. Okay, there are these 2 or 3 families who were a little problematic, but even they had a certain stock, except their number not reach 12. They had learned from it. I didn't think that we should turn to any sort of sanction, and... we did not want to deter people with these 2 or 3 families." (Kótelek expert interview No. 1) s*

The advantage of the programme is identical with its drawback. In the case of the most peripheral groups, usual forms of punishment and sanction have lost their significance. The belongings that could be taken away from them are non-existent due to their status characteristics. So in this case, only positive motivation could work efficiently. Small steps, little risks, minor successes. This is the key to the motivational system of the programme. And one more thing: social interaction is highly present in this system. People are competing with their neighbours, their friends, fellow locals... if they have something, they want it, too... and they do not want to fall behind!

### **5.11 The organisation of the project and its main participants**

If we study the list of supported organisations in the case of the Social Land Programme, we can see that it is mainly municipalities who are the main applicants. Although according to the call for tender, civil organisations could also apply for the programme, this is much less common. Regarding the analysed communities, it is also mainly the municipalities who play the most significant role, but in two instances, minority governments were also accepted into the programme (Katymár, Magyargéc). The

municipalities' power has been changing ever since 2010<sup>82</sup>, their field of activity and roles have changed significantly. The demand for municipalities organising and guaranteeing the standards of living and employment of local residents has been gradually increasing.

*“Administration – we have to forget it... I think it has become an insignificant part of the local government system here or the fact that you only perform administrative tasks... the notary is now responsible for everything ranging from tenders to managing public employment. They are not only responsible for rules and regulations. Trust me. It might be possible that they want to take these away from local governments... that is why they have created the new administrative districts... lots of... tasks have been taken away from local governments. ...80 percent of my energy is used to deal with employment.” (Magyargéc mayor)*

Employment tasks are in most cases concentrating on the organisation of public employment, but recently a new challenge for municipalities has emerged: the establishment of a “self-sufficient” or “self-sustaining community”. As part of this, municipalities are acting like businesses, they are participating in production. So far Rozsály has been the most successful in this journey where a “self-sustaining community” is for many reasons the farthest destination. In this community, a well-operating, integrated system has been created which can produce the most basic goods to cater for the residents. On the other hand, this would be nearly impossible without the production tool that is well managed by this system, being 85.5 hectares of land. The municipality joined the Social Land Programme among the first few in 1993, and throughout the years, besides having created a farming system that is centred around self-sufficiency, it has managed to acquire the machinery and equipment needed for sustaining the system, mainly through having applied for grants. The community now has all the needed equipment (combine harvester, tractor, etc.) for community farming. From the crops produced in the area used for community cultivation, they cook 400 portions every day that would cost around 100.000 HUF every day. This has become a locally used resource by now. Besides vegetable production, a herd of pigs has been established and a slaughterhouse was built so that the community could supply itself with meat.

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<sup>82</sup> After the change of government that took place in 2010, the two-thirds government of FIDESZ allowed the modification of the 1990 act on local governments. As a result, the role and power of municipalities have changed significantly over the past five years.

Many other municipalities are experimenting with this integrator role. In Katymár, the municipality is organising chili production in the household gardens of those in public employment. This means an additional 40.000 – 300.000 Ft per year for each household, but municipalities have also had ca. 4 millions of income from this activity. Besides this, *“...we have a big garden, where we grow strawberries and jam is being made. We have a pasta factory that has also been established... from tenders, and it has certain areas where they can make jam... we incorporate this in our social benefit system so that each year, pensioners get a... package in which,... there are various locally produced goods, including pasta, jam, garlic, paprika powder, and almost everything else [that they produce themselves]. Families with children also get a package like this every year before Christmas.”* (Katymár expert interview No. 1)

Kőtelek is also organising agricultural production through the use of previously abandoned gardens outside of the municipality's administrative borders. *“We received gardens outside of the municipality where fruit and grapes are being grown. We produce wine for the village for the autumn events.”* (Kőtelek expert interview No. 1) At the same time, 3-4 hectares of sea buckthorns, but these have not turned productive yet. In this system, the municipality plays a key role in improving the employability of individuals and families without any income of their own, as well as their integration in community production systems. One of the best tools of this, its “practice field” is the Social Land Programme, where the principle of gradualness can give way to the improvement of competences and employer attitudes, even in the case of peripheral groups. The agricultural involvement of the municipality has many obstacles, however. The most important out of these is whether they have the necessary tools (land, machinery) and know-how or not.

There are places where the necessary know-how is available for the execution of the Social Land Programme as well as the other agricultural tasks of the municipality, for instance in Zsáka. At the start of the land programme, *“I chose an agronomist and I chose a technical expert. One is more knowledgeable in one of the fields, while the other is more knowledgeable in the other field, and the administrators of the office are suitable for carrying out employment-related tasks, and they could operate this aspect, the administrative one.”* – says the mayor. There are places where the formation of management – due to the lack of qualified staff – was much more difficult and this way, another burden was put on the employees of the municipal council, who are generally

not supposed to be mainly responsible for organising employment programmes. *"I wrote the tender, one of my colleagues helps me in the execution, she was coordinating the mentors. She gathered their photos, the reports, she was the one who collected the eggs, she organises the allocation of the incubator, and the financial department is responsible for accounting for the project and they were sorting out [the financials of the project]. Then the Farming Supply Organisation brought the fodder, measured it, distributed it."* (Kőtelek expert interview No. 1)

There are places where the land programme's management activity did not fit in the regular office hours, so they were dealing with this in their free time. *"I was the one who dealt with each and every second of this. There was back then a young guy who was an agricultural engineer by profession, who was otherwise a tender rapporteur at the office, and I got him –we were friends – to take this project and do it in his free time, so basically it was the two of us who carried it through, day by day, with really hard work."* (Jászládány expert interview No. 1)

According to the study, the communities' mayors or sometimes deputy mayors or notaries play key roles from the perspective of formulating and managing land programmes, as well as the related activities that are not actual parts of them. Most of the 153 surveyed people named the mayor to be the person that does the most for the land programme. This charismatic role is on the one hand long-established in the community, but on the other hand, it gives way to several other questions.

*"... the mayor really does everything to make things progress.."* (Rozsály, man, 52)

*".. he has lots of responsibilities. .. he goes there on a daily basis, tells people their tasks ... then he goes around once more to check if everyone is at their place and working..in many places there are these brigades and there is an employee..not here... so in those places, the mayor has a little less responsibilities.."* (Magyargéc semi-skilled worker, in her 40s)

The passion, know-how, and work capacity of the mayor are extremely important in the organisation of the land programme. Being overworked, having to make decisions on their own and a lack of proper staff is present in many more communities.

*"It is so hard to find the second step, so the middle manager for these projects. It is a serious problem in Kőtelek, for example. ...there is no one who would stand next to them and tell them how to do it, who stays with them and works with them... we just can't find these people.."* (Kőtelek expert interview No. 1)

It is due to the disadvantage of the community that there are very few people who would be suitable for a middle manager job, being qualified, experienced and charismatic enough. This problem is especially present with the most recently participating communities of the programme. After a while, the Social Land Programme generates the management that is skilled and experienced and thus, the coordination and the division of work will become more stable.

Where the size of the community allows the operation of a differentiated institution system and the presence of experts in local professional organisations, it is possible to delegate a substantial workload to the employees of the professional organisation regarding the organisation of the programme. For example, in Jászladány, the organisation of the land programme and having it adopted by the council was proposed and prepared by the employees of the Family Support Service, who then also played a significant role in its execution. However, this kind of distribution of tasks among the administrative units is rather an exception when it comes to the studied municipalities.

*"In the first year, we basically performed a core assessment for all applicants over just one day, where the whole apparatus of the family support service was available... And then we got together here and discussed what we experienced at each place, where we would need to go back, what were the answers of people, what were the things we wanted to make them aware of, so this was team work. And we would, like, prepare the proposal for the social committee together, as the committee decides about who will eventually get [the support]. But in fact, based on the suggestions of professionals who are in contact with the families." (Jászladány expert interview No. 1)* Following the selection, the employees of the family support service followed the steps of execution as well and they stayed in contact with the participants.

As a summary of the qualities of the managing organisation responsible for the execution of the Social Land Programme, it is important to note that in most cases, there is no operative team that is independent from the local government. The programme – due to the magnitude of the tender, the limited resources that are available, and the recently established need for the economic involvement of local governments – is in most cases embedded in the system of the municipal government, and is executed through the use of conditions that are available there. In the execution of the programme – except for a few instances – the mayor plays a key role, in many cases being the one and only decision-maker. This centralised role could on the one hand be the strength,

organised character, dynamism of the programme, but on the other hand its vulnerability as well.

#### **5.12 The involvement of the Roma minority government and civil organisations**

The Roma minority government participates in the programme's execution as an individual applicant in the case of two municipalities (Katymár, Magyargéc), while in all the other municipalities; it is acting as a compulsory consortium partner. The organisation, involvement, and effects of minority governments are very contradictory in the different communities.

*"We expected proper cooperation from the Romas, so that we have a connection and that we have an opinion. We don't want to decide who can participate in the programme, that is absolutely decided by them, but we have agreed that we would be invited as well. (Katymár expert interview No. 1)* The cooperation, however, is stalling, and many are starting to criticise the professional and ethical attitudes of the organisers.

There are places where one of the leaders of the Roma government is the formal leader of the community, but this role and his influence is due to the fact that he is a central character in the community when it comes to moneylending.

*"Well of course, the Roma government is a mandatory partner, but I am telling you that we are being unsuccessful, ...as we would need immense resources in order to make them... suitable for ...participating in such a programme, for example as organisers. ...if one is using their supposed or real power... to hold others in check, then they should not enter a programme like this." (Jászládány expert interview No. 1)*

In the execution of the Social Land Programme, minority governments in most communities take a role in communication, recruitment or the selection process. In many cases, the representatives are beneficiaries themselves or they are responsible for middle management duties. Even though minority governments were formed back in the 90s, the professional and organisational development of these organisations has retained those initial conditions in many aspects.

Although the professional development of the Social Land Programmes is due to a national civil organisation (SZOFOSZ), the supporting civil organisations have mainly appeared recently in the analysed communities. The established civil initiatives

(Katymár Rainbow Island Children's House<sup>83</sup>, Rozsály Municipality Welfare Service Local Foundation<sup>84</sup>) are not proper NGOs, as either their founder or their operator is the local government or one or more of its key members. Although the studied municipalities have seen incredible progress with regard to civil society and the improvement of community life in the past two decades, these organisations are not involved directly in the organisation of the land programme.

### **5.13 External influences, competing programmes**

Besides the difficulties regarding management, many external factors affect the progress of the programme. One of the biggest problems is posed by the passive benefit system of recent years, being the low level of motivation of the target group towards the involvement in activities regarding self-sufficiency.

The Social Land Programme – as having been analysed above – aims to improve the food production of families and as a result, their living standards through the support of horticulture and household economy. Some elements of the social benefit system – e.g. the free or extremely low-cost mass catering for the children of disadvantaged families – in many cases hampers the motivation for becoming self-sufficient and the extension of the land programme.

*“They got used to it, they got used eating for free a long time ago... they have never paid for it..not even as early as nursery school ...” (Felsődobsza expert interview No. 1)* The free mass catering for children is ensured by the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 modification of Act XXXI of 1997 on child protection and family guardianship administration, according to which, free catering has to be provided by child care institutions in the case of chreches or nursery schools if a child lives in a family where – according to the statement of their parent(s) – the monthly income per capita does not exceed 130 percent of the compulsory minimum wage (decreased by income tax, employment tax, social security and pension taxes). The actual boundary of being eligible is a net amount of 95.960 Ft in 2016. From 1 January 2016, the law has been modified in a way that municipalities have to provide free catering for disadvantaged children even in the time of school holidays. As warm lunch cannot only be catered at the schools, but also through the delivery to the

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<sup>83</sup> <http://gyerekesely.eu/szivarvanysziget-gyerekhaz-katymar/>

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.rozsaly.hu/alapitvany.php>

families, in many cases, this means the basis of the food supply of disadvantaged families. The formulating **poverty trap** is clearly visible for the municipalities' leaders as well as experts, who have in many cases spoken against the issue.

*"... it is an extremely big issue that ...many think, it is a given that they are fed by the local government free of charge...Holiday time catering has also been introduced, which not does not have to be applied for by the municipality, but it is legally obliged... that at the time of school holidays, we have to feed those who are eligible for child protection discount. And then in the summer, in the winter, during holidays, we have to supply them with food all the time..." (Magyargéc expert interview No. 1)*

The obligatory nature of mass catering – especially in those communities where most families are disadvantaged, so their children automatically become beneficiaries – just reinforces the idea for locals that food is not important, it is free you don't have to work for it. Leaders of municipalities on the other hand believe that it is not this passive solution that makes people highly dependent that is the best solution for managing child poverty and families disadvantaged situation. *"They think that, one should not try to solve the problem instead of the people. First, they should try to solve it on their own. If they cannot, then they could intervene and help from that time on, but if they don't do anything up until that point in time, why should we help them in advance? The municipality would like them to be self-sufficient, so that they won't expect the help of others at all times, like, enjoying certain benefits, or that one might come here and help them externally, or that they buy it somewhere, but instead, if they can produce it for themselves, then they should do so..." (Felsődobsza expert interview No. 1)*

Another obstacle for the further development of the land programme is the **lack of resources** in the involved municipalities. The amount of funds available for the land programme – despite the need for such programme and its efficiency having been studied by many impact assessments – has not increased significantly over the past 25 years.<sup>85</sup> The municipalities do not possess any own resources for the operation of the programme. *"... tax is deducted from the municipality and we get very little back...it is not like we manage the village from the reimbursements, as there such a high amount of reimbursement does not exist. Tax is gone. Before, 100 percent of personal income tax had stayed in the municipality, now we do not even have a single penny. Before the vehicle tax*

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<sup>85</sup> In 2016, it is still only 130 million Ft available for the execution of the social land programme, while the budget of public employment is 340 billion Ft.  
<https://palyazatmenedzser.hu/cimke/szocialis-foldprogram/>

*fully stayed there. Now it is only 40 percent of that. Before, 100 percent of business tax had stayed there, now 25 percent of it is taken away.” (Kőtelek expert interview No 1)*

The municipalities have to submit their application of the funds needed to operate the integration programmes – due to the lack of their own income and a clearly defined normative central funding system. What types of funds are available in each case and with what conditions can one apply is not visible in most cases, so it cannot be planned. In every year, it is always after the adoption of the current central budget act when it becomes certain whether there will be an opportunity in that year to apply for grants and if yes, to what extent and with what conditions it is possible to fund the land programme. As a matter of fact, there are certain **competing programmes** that, having been accepted into them, can serve as excluding conditions in the case of – certain components of – the land programme. One of these is the -- before mentioned – “Make all children eat enough”, the other being the Start public employment programme.<sup>86</sup>

*“...the situation had changed so that... we had applied for the “Make all children eat enough” programme before this call for tender was announced for the Social Land Programme... And it excluded the chance to participate in both.” (Zsáka expert interview No. 1)*

*“we chose Start [Start public employment programme]. We could help the families more than we could have, had we chosen the part of the land programme that grants little money. ...That way we might be able to help the family more, as through the public employment salary, we can add more to the family budget than we could if we applied for the land programme only....” (Magyargéc expert interview No. 1)*

The objective of the Start public employment programme is the expansion of employment and not only the improvement of living standards; its participants are, as a matter of fact, proper employees and in return for their work, they get a public employment salary.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> The Ministry of Interior launched sample programmes from 2011 for disadvantaged micro regions according to Government Decree 311/2007 (XI. 17.), as well as the municipal governments of disadvantaged communities according to the appendix of Government decree 240/2006 (XI. 30.) on the index of municipalities that are infrastructural or socio-economically lagging behind or that are suffering from unemployment of a far bigger extent than the national average. The micro regional start work exemplary programmes are basically the types of longer-term public employment programmes that have been named exemplary programmes, but they are focusing on special tasks regarding the improvement of municipalities. The further rules in connection with employment are included in Act CVI of 2011 on public employment and the modification of public employment and other laws.

<sup>87</sup> The public employment salary is 79 155 Ft gross in 2016, the guaranteed public employment salary, if the employee has vocational qualification as well, 101 480 Ft gross. The significance of public employment salaries

The Social Land Programme that does not mean the involvement in employment and it only has a complementary role to the income of each household, in many ways has an undesirable position in the competition in a municipality for different funds. However, due to the many (before mentioned) advantages of it, the majority of disadvantaged communities attempts to organise the programme, in many cases – because of the missing tender funds – even through the means of their own contribution

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is further enhanced by the fact that the social benefits system was changed on 1 March 2015. Instead of general benefits regulated by social laws the municipal benefit system was adopted, where the community encourages the participation in public employment instead of passive benefits.

## 6. Impact evaluation

### 6.1 Introduction

The first systematic analysis of the process and the impact of the program was launched by the Ministry of Welfare in 1997. These were followed by further empirical studies at the end of the 90's and the beginning of the new millennium, mostly executed by the researchers of the Regional Research Center of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. (Péter-Szarvák-Szoboszlai 2000, Szoboszlai 2001, Jász 2003, Jász-Szarvák-Szoboszlai 2003, Jász-Szarvák 2005)<sup>88</sup> These studies analysed the social features of the beneficiaries and the composition and experiences of the organisers. The research conducted in 2002 has a great prevalence in them, since it included a survey with 2.000 respondents. The aim of the research was exploring the socio-demographic profile, living conditions, migration indicators and employment history of the participants. Besides these, the researchers gained an insight into the plans and the image of future of the participants.

### 6.2. The methodology of impact evaluation of the Social Land Programme

The impact assessment of the Social Land Programme was based on the interviews with experts (10) and the target group (50) as well as the 153 surveyed households. The factual elements of the results of the qualitative analysis have been summed up in the economic/financial chapter of the programme. In this chapter, we have focused on those direct and indirect effects that played a role in the development of the involved individuals' skills and abilities and the formation of their mindsets.

We have examined the effects among two target groups:

- 1.) we have examined the **direct impact** on the target group (the individuals who participated in the land programme as beneficiaries) – (individual level)

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<sup>88</sup> Besides these studies, Bartal Anna Mária studied the social land programme as active social political tool (Bartal 1998, 2001). A research executed between 2007 and 2009 offered a detailed account of the characteristics of the land programmes (Rácz, 2013). The Esély Szociális Forrásközpont (Chance Social Resource Center) as the national methodological center of the social land programmes, has been publishing analytical and methodological papers since the second half of the 90's. (Nagyné-Szoboszlai 1999, Nagyné-Serafin-Szoboszlai 2001, Nagyné 2001, Nagyné-Varga 2006, Nagyné-Landau 2006, Nagyné 2012).

- 2.) we have examined the **indirect impact** on the organisers and the municipality (organisational level)

### 6.3 The direct impact of the Social Land Programme

#### 6.3.1 The improvement of living standards due to the produced food

Most of the participants of the Social Land Programme joined due to their intentions of achieving a better quality of life (68.7%) or because they wanted to improve their self-sufficiency (6.7%). They were certain about the fact that participation in the programme will not supply their living needs, but they also knew that it could have an important role in adding to their income. Their expectations regarding the improvement of their living standards have become real according to the survey the participants filed in as on a scale of 1 to 5, 61.4 percent of them marked the 'completely satisfied' option, while 23.5 percent marked the 'rather satisfied' option. 88.2 percent of them said that they would participate in the programme once more. What is the key behind this incredible satisfaction? The answer can be found in the interviews.

*"Well this is definitely a great amount of help for me. What we have received, I will now sow. I have planted potatoes in half of my garden, so if it turns out to be successful, I can definitely store those till next spring." (Panyola, single woman with two children, in her 30s)*

*".. this is the 25 chickens, that would be slaughtered anyway... this is so much. If you think about it, that means 25 daily portions. Or if you have a look at the eggs. So if the yield is 5 eggs a day, that is a lot. So this really helps our survival." (Jászladány, woman in her 40s)*

*"[the yield is enough for] one year. I plant it in spring and it will last till next spring. (Jászladány man in his 50s and his wife)*

*"The yield will last until next May for me, and I have produced it..." (Katymár woman with 4 children, in her 30s)*

*„Basically we are talking about 25 alive animals, which is not that much on a yearly scale. But there are families, for whom it means double the amount of their previous annual meat consumption." (Kőtelek expert interview No. 1)*

There are people who got started, have developed their farm and now they can cater for their family's required food supply without any external help. *"...they are incubating for themselves, so over two years; they have tripled their chicken stock. There were people who*

*bought ducks from the local market for example, so... they are creating a little family farm basically..." (Jászladány expert interview No.1 - excerpt)*

Based on interviews' material, for those who have got a garden it is vegetables and potatoes, and for those who are focusing on animals, it is poultry that can last almost through the whole year. Of course, they have to add a lot to these in order to cater for the food supply of the whole family, but the food having been produced through the received funds does not require the payment of additional costs. Probably this is the reason why most participants would also join the programme in the next year.

Besides the quantitative yield, we have to say a few words about the changes in quality.

*"...unfortunately what I saw in the nursery regarding children was that they are not really familiar with fruit and vegetables. So there were cases when we provided fruit trees. Exactly for this reason, so that they would try to cultivate the garden a little bit from this perspective, too. I would rather say that it contributed to healthy eating.... Regarding the quantity, they can acquire much more quality foods within the land programme. In the case of meat, eggs, or even vegetables." (Katymár expert interview No. 1)*

Even though the quantity of the produced food is also very important, the beneficial impact of the programme did not only manifest in the catering for the families.

#### *6.3.2 The development of confidence/self-image*

Throughout the interviews, the interviewees were proud to tell about their achievements. Many told that they taught the special skills and tricks to the younger participants and that their garden produced the most beautiful vegetables. Some even bought incubators in order to ensure the breeding of the poultry stock by themselves. They were able to share the yield with their neighbours and their adult children who had already moved from home. It was mainly the eggs and vegetables that were said to be enough to give some to others. Those families that had been dependent on others before now became the ones to give away their goods. The revival of reciprocity has transformed the roles of the programme's participants in their community. We have already mentioned with regard to the supervision that the programme's organisers had been expected with the genuine confidence of farmers instead of the submissive behaviour of those who are being controlled.

*"... I really feel that the fact that I had taken photos...for years, I had talked to these people, had seen what they were doing, and this all served a purpose. It was important for them,*

*too, to show that they could do this and they could take the opportunity rather than abusing it. So that it is not useless and it is not without a purpose.” (Katymár expert interview No. 1 – excerpt)*

#### *6.3.3 The change of the dimension of time*

Those in deep poverty do not plan ahead. Their dimension of time is very narrow and daily survival is the only factor that determines their field of activity. Through the involvement in the programme, these boundaries have broadened to an extent. They were obliged to meet the deadlines according to the contract: such as soil management or the establishment of the conditions required for livestock farming before certain deadlines, the adaptation to the growth cycles of crops or the breeding season of animals, and the pace of cultivation gradually widened the timeframe. It might be true that based on the interviews, the activity did not exceed a period of two hours per day, but even this way, there were certain boundaries for the everyday activity. Especially livestock farming, feeding, taking care of them was an activity that required daily attention. This was mainly significant for those who had participated in the programme for the first time. 10 percent of the participants failed to succeed in this, but the other part was already planning the following year. On the one hand, they had made a statement that they would like to participate in the programme in the following year as it means an incredible amount of help for them to produce this much food. The conditions of that – which was quite clear to them – was to meet the requirements of that year. The planning had then begun, and they started to think about how they could succeed in the programme.

According to experts and participants, the ability to plan ahead and to execute what you need is formed in the participants within two years. The requirements for self-sufficiency after that time will be the availability of resources that make it possible to buy feed, as well as the substances needed for cultivation (seeds, sprays, soil treatment products, etc.). In the case of a family that does not have any income or reserves – especially in a spring season following an extremely cold winter period – sometimes this is exactly what makes or breaks the achievement of their goals.

#### 6.3.4 Passing on a positive model within the family

“As the problem with today’s generation, who are in their 20s or 30s is that they have never seen their parents work or cultivate land... So this generation should be able to show their children that this could also be achieved.” (Zsáka expert interview No. 1)

In the case of families suffering from multi-generational unemployment, a significant result of the land programme was shift from the socialisation to passive benefits to the passage of the model of value creation and self-sufficiency towards the children living in the family. The passage of the model was even present in cases where the children were not directly involved in the everyday activity connected to the land programme, but having seen its process and having realised (consumed) its result, they learned what benefits horticulture had.

*“...wherever there were children, almost everyone stated that their children love the animals, they feed them and they collect the eggs as well... So this alone is a great achievement in my opinion.” (Jászládány expert interview No. 1)*

*“...And they learn a lot. Have there been unexpected results? I believe yes. ...when I went back to the nursery in 2002 ...it was extremely sad to hear a child talk about them stealing this or that from certain gardens. And when I got into this whole land programme, then what I had in mind was that it would be great to see that these children don’t learn this from their parents ..., but rather like we go with mum and dad and feed them or we are mincing, ...and that we slaughter [our own animals] instead of stealing from the neighbour. So this was absolutely measurable for me, because when we finally got round to the point where these families got into the programme and they were raising animals and cultivating their gardens, and then the children came and told me about this and we had a chat, because ... they were doing it with their children. ... they are feeding the baby goat together and they are getting rid of weeds together and working together. And I believe that the biggest impact of this is on children as when they see this at home, then they will follow this model as an adult as well.” (Katymár expert interview No. 1)*

Among the interviewees, there were more who told that they would create a small garden for children where they could cultivate plants or take care of smaller animals. Throughout the interviews, children were also proud to tell about the results.

#### 6.3.4 Impact on employment

*“Jobs without national support – the government will not be able to do that.” (Felsődobsza expert int. No.1)*

Out of the direct effects of the land programme, the lowest results were measurable in this field – the impact on employment. Among the impacts of the social land program, we could measure the smallest impact in the field of employability. Of course, because this is not exactly the direct goal of the programme and the used funds would not be sufficient for the potential expectations regarding employment. The amount of goods and animals produced in the horticulture is not enough to cover the establishment of self-employment and farmer activities.

*“As a result of the programme ... they produced the vegetables for themselves, but whoever had been a pensioner, was still a pensioner.” (Zsáka expert interview No. 1)* – says one of the experts, responding to our question about the expansion of employment. They also mentioned that the land programme did not only aim to improve the living standards of individuals in their active ages. Pensioners with low income or old people having some sort of income could also be included among the beneficiaries.

Other obstacles have emerged regarding the establishment of self-employment and becoming farmers. *“...the process of one officially becoming a farmer involves a lot of paperwork, we are aware of this, we have helped with it as well. We have had TÁMOP programmes where we included this as an indicator and people have signed up [for being farmers], but it was not sustainable for everyone ...it will end, if you don’t hold their hands for, say, years.” (Katymár interview No. 1)*

The complexity of the administration related to self-employment and the lack of the continuous presence of the supporting organisation makes it extremely difficult for the target group to step out of their established boundaries. Although in the case of temporary work, a special, often illegal form of “self-employment” is successfully formed and it is deeply rooted in agricultural regions, the establishment of formalised systems of self-employment requires more time than 1 or 2 years. With garden cultivation being strengthened or the establishment of the partner’s stable income, this could also become possible in a few cases. The model spreading on a larger scale depends on the integrator role of the municipal government or the activity of agricultural integrators in the region. There has to be, as a matter of fact, a safe, well-organised market for the goods produced as a farmer. Local markets in these communities with mainly less than 1000 inhabitants are not suitable for farmers to generate a stable core income. They definitely have to reach out to other markets, too, which is usually impossible without external help.

The available land, the lack of capital, and the lack of stable income mean further obstacles on the road to becoming a farmer. These experiences are also remarkable as in early 2014, such a type of Social Land Programme was introduced where the employment aspect gained a significant role. This was the land programme combined with public employment. The goal of this programme was to establish a livestock farming/breeding project that primarily produced the food items that would cover the supply for the mass catering facility.<sup>89</sup> The amount that was intended to support the programme was 120 million Ft in 2014.<sup>90</sup> Within this programme element, the applicants had to commit to the legal obligation that within 15 days after having received the official decision on them being granted the support, they would hand in their request regarding the support of their public employment to the job centre of their administrative region. The applicants were able to hand in requests regarding the support of the costs within public employment according to Government Decree 375/2010. (XII. 31.) Article 4, (3), and within that range, especially for the public employment salary and its costs. In return for his support, applicants were required to sustain employment during the winter period as well, which is not an easy task in the case of agricultural activity. The call for tender, for this reason, suggests the use of plastic tunnels or greenhouses for meeting the employment requirements of winter cultivation. Another requirement in this unique form of the land programme is that in the case of the crop production programme, the employment of 3-6 individuals has to be guaranteed per hectare. According to experts, this requirement can only be met in this special form of the land programme, being combined with public employment, as in most cases the ratio of the area and the employed staff, and the amount of income that can be earned in the given location would not guarantee operation within market circumstances. The chances of having employment without support are considered by local leaders as follows:

*“Well the problem is that being competitive in the private sector with municipal governmental public employment, I believe, has got very low chances. This is due to many factors, one of these, in my opinion, is that the conditions for effective production are not*

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<sup>89</sup>[http://www.emet.gov.hu/\\_userfiles/felhivasok/SZOC\\_FP/szoc\\_fp\\_14/palyazati\\_kiiras\\_szoc\\_fp\\_14\\_modositott.pdf](http://www.emet.gov.hu/_userfiles/felhivasok/SZOC_FP/szoc_fp_14/palyazati_kiiras_szoc_fp_14_modositott.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> It was only 71 645 000 Ft in 2015 and 45 000 000 Ft in 2016 that was available for funding this programme element.

[http://www.emet.gov.hu/\\_userfiles/felhivasok/SZOC\\_FP/szoc\\_fp\\_15/palyazati\\_kiiras\\_szoc\\_fp\\_15.pdf](http://www.emet.gov.hu/_userfiles/felhivasok/SZOC_FP/szoc_fp_15/palyazati_kiiras_szoc_fp_15.pdf)

[http://www.emet.gov.hu/\\_userfiles/felhivasok/szocialis\\_foldprogram\\_paly\\_kiiras\\_2016\\_jav\\_20160705.pdf](http://www.emet.gov.hu/_userfiles/felhivasok/szocialis_foldprogram_paly_kiiras_2016_jav_20160705.pdf)

*present, also, we should not forget that the individuals that we employ have been excluded from the private sector itself, so they are not able to work or produce as efficiently as those in the private sector, because these people did not live up to the expectations of that sector.” (Zsáka expert interview No. 1)*

Thus, the form of Social Land Programme that is not supported by public employment has an indirect effect on labour market integration rather than a direct effect. Entering the programme does not only provide opportunities to improve one’s employment abilities and essential skills, but the participants can also show themselves, and their results, which can be a chance for them to be selected into a programme/position that is longer-term and is closer to market circumstances.

The most significant advantage of the land programme that is rarely present in other integration programmes is that it makes starting the improvement of labour market skills and “becoming an employee” possible on various levels and being suited for the criteria of the participants, ranging from intensive support to the individual execution of tasks. This preparation, theoretically, has no set time frame as it is not limited how many times one can participate in the land programme, so there is a possibility for long-term, gradual improvement.

#### **6.4 The indirect impact of the Social Land Programme**

##### *6.4.1 Changes in the community image*

One of the triggering factors of the programme was to tidy up the neglected environment – garden, yard – of families living in deep poverty. The neglected environment had not only posed aesthetic issues, but also potential problems regarding health and public safety. The untidy conditions around certain houses resulted in the spread of rodents and other vermin that carry diseases; while uncertain ownership conditions caused an increased number of thefts. It seemed impossible for individuals of the community to escape this situation, as when they had tried to participate in crop cultivation or livestock farming, it was possible that people stole from them or their work turned out to be useless because of the pests. One of the indirect effects of the programme that is often praised besides the tidy looks of communities is the creation of proper ownership circumstances and the increase in public security. This has not been

achieved through top-down control (permanent police present, the introduction of sanctions), but through the bottom-up motivation system of the land programme.

*"...where there are animals, the household needs to be in order. It cannot be unkempt, because a place covered with weeds is not suitable for chickens. There, they also have to fight the problem of rats and all sorts of rodents...simply, it has to be tidied up. Also, these people are so creative, because they have no money, so they think... they will create a makeshift [fence, and the animal housing for the livestock] from wooden pallets, some chicken wire, or whatever they have at home. (Jászladány expert interview No.1 )*

This was extremely significant in those communities where people were living together in communities similar to segregated districts, and there was no form of production present around the deteriorating houses and their gardens. The establishment of gardens, and the revival of horticulture served the satisfaction of those involved and their environment. *"The living standards were just increased if they produced vegetables for themselves, and this also gave them a sense of achievement as well as improved their confidence... Well, regarding the village, there were not as many uncultivated areas, and people tried to do something, those, who had never done anything before... there are some, who are still working on it, even without any funds, on their own."* (Zsáka expert interview No. 1)

#### 6.4.2 The improvement of community cohesion

The community building role of the Social Land Programme has been confirmed by the people asked in many aspects. On the one hand, we could see the reconstruction of the aforementioned reciprocal systems. One type of economic systems where money is substituted with something else is barter, which makes it possible for participants to turn up at the community's "market" with the goods they have acquired or produced. This market is rather to be considered a virtual place where the exchange of goods and goods, or goods and services takes place – instead of goods and money. As in the case of barter, the values of compensation are not controlled in a reliable manner, so these values are formed by the constant and mutual communication of the parties. This constant communication strengthens involvement in the community and contributes to the improvement of the community's cohesion. (Polányi 1974)

*"There is some kind of community building force of this [the land programme]. Because it creates... a shared topic. Many told that they heard it from each other..., like, give it a try, it was so good for me last year."* (Jászladány expert interview No. 1)

*“Another interesting part of it is that they would often teach or give advice to each other, so that was also a success. Children’s House families had this kind of cooperation, so that mothers on maternity leave would take care of one garden, then the garden of the other. So it kind of helped building the whole community.” (Katymár expert interview No. 1)*

The community building power of the programme was especially needed in those municipalities where the cultivation activity also served the involvement and **integration of newcomers**.

*“There were families or Roma women who had, like the most beautiful gardens ever, and they were really proud of this and there were some locals who gave very positive feedback to them. So they were really happy and they acknowledged that they are really good and they said that they had done the neighbour’s garden, they had sown it, they finished working on it, and they also said that they were gathering seeds, so that they would not have to ask for that many in the following year, because we could not give supplies [of seeds] for two gardens each. ...I believe that the families who used this opportunity well, ...accepting them was easier as they saw it, ...they realised that they could work, too and they could produce everything they needed.” (Katymár expert interview No. 1)*

*“Yes. People look at those differently who have 20-30 chickens in their yard, and the garden is nice and tidy than those who have their place covered with weeds, the neighbours are complaining, like ... the seeds of weeds contaminated their garden, so they could not keep it tidy, either, or they would visit their neighbour to ask for an egg, but they would never return the favour. Those who can keep their household tidy, have animals, and cultivate their garden are accepted by locals, but if someone behaves in a total opposite way, they will stay outsiders... in the community forever.” (Kőtelek expert interview No. 1)*

The initiative and effort that was manifested in the land programme by the community was also visible to newcomers, who described the changes as such:

*“.. the community will become a little more work-oriented..”- said a newcomer man in his 50s in Katymár*

#### 6.4.3 A change of mindset in the environment

Regarding the change of mindsets, the programme had results in many areas. First, we will analyse the changes that happened among the leaders of the programme, and second, we will demonstrate the programme’s impact on the community.

Even today, a paternalist approach is quite significant among disadvantaged communities. This, on the one hand, is determined by the forms of behaviour inherited

from the socialist era, but on the other hand, the welfare system following the fall of the socialist regime also got people in need accustomed to receiving passive benefits. Active labour market policies, or integration model projects were mainly part of pilot programmes, but despite their proven successfulness, active, systematic, and bottom-up integration had not become part of the welfare system. When the toolkit of paternalism had proved to be useless or the resources had depleted, sanctions became prioritised as an alternative. In most cases, though – with the lack of alternatives (it is useless to withdraw benefits if there are no other sources of income) – these had no real result either.

The Social Land Programme means a new element within this mindset as after the initial support, it requires immense activity, independency and problem-solving ability from the participants. The municipalities' leaders had been worried whether the target group could live up to these expectations or not. Many had believed that the target group was not suitable for livestock farming and they could not meet the requirements specified in the contract.

We had seen some concerns in the case of municipalities that were relatively new participants of the programme.

*“ ... We did not expect that out of 30 families, 28 would complete the project perfectly. This was beyond our expectations. We said that if half of them could do it, we would be great. But this was an excellent result.... The excitement, the way they were incubating the eggs. Our two incubators are reserved up until August.” (Kőtelek expert interview No. 1)*

*“I am so glad that we have managed to convince the mayor and the committee to invest in this... if we provide 8-10 thousand Ft worth of seeds, it is certain that they will produce more, rather than us giving them the money, like, here is 8 thousand forints. This way, their garden is cultivated and they can consume something fresh, every day.” (Kőtelek expert interview No 1)*

Results show that, even with an error rate of ca. 10%, the cultivated gardens and small livestock farming programmes do work. This had a great impact on the mindset of local leaders in the sense that they would have to rely on the municipality's resources and the activity of local disadvantaged individuals to a bigger extent than previously. The diminishing governmental funds for disadvantaged municipalities further enhanced the process of revealing local resources and the significance of self-sufficiency.

Another fact that helped shift the mindset of local leaders was that the programme providing a structure of activities tailored to the abilities and skills of the participants, as well as a form of support triggered much more satisfaction among the participants than passive benefits. As passive benefits were considered “acquired rights” by the participants, the acquisition of these did not result in pride, or a boost in confidence, such as in the case of the land programme. Besides these, the programme created higher transparency and legitimacy in the community. Who cultivates their garden, who deserves the funds, the community possesses this information and keeps up-to-date.

*“horticulture is operated by the municipality on their own budget, and then from this [land programme funds] we rather provide livestock. It is more visible. We think it is essential that the neighbours can see that there are 25 or 30 chickens and then those can be slaughtered, Sunday will come, the kids come back, and you can give them food.” (Kőtelek interview No. 1. - excerpt)*

Due to the land programme, the mindset of local residents changes as well. This is implied by the fact that among the proposals regarding the enhancement of the land programme, many people suggested the expansion of the group of participants (7.8%), while others wanted to see stricter conditions for participating (11.5%). Although there were a few at the start of the new programme who would have preferred money instead of non-monetary benefits (seeds, breeding animals, services), and 12.4 percent of the surveyed households suggested receiving a higher amount of funds, most of the people were satisfied with the programme (85%), and 48.7 percent of the answerers would not change anything in its current form. The shift in the mindset of locals is well illustrated by the following expert interview parts:

*“....it was a kind of change of mentality among them...., if it is worth to cultivate the garden. Because [previously] it had become more and more common to say: it is not worth it. They went to the shop and could get everything relatively cheap. The problem is, from these salaries, they cannot even buy cheap things.... So.... somewhere they learnt it. They acquired lots of knowledge just by doing it themselves... In the land programme, we support them with giving them the needed seeds, plants, and then they plant them and cultivate them.” (Katymár expert interview No. 1)*

*In what aspect(s) can you see change among the participants? – we asked during the interview.*

*“First, in the family’s available supply, second, in their preparedness and attitude towards work. Towards getting experience in how to take care of livestock. Also, this is beneficial, their work will pay off, and they start to look at it less like ‘how could I get 5-10 thousand Ft social benefits every month’, their activity is not focused on this, but rather on ‘I can produce this for myself, and I will, so I don’t want to get 5 thousand from the government, I could not really do anything with that amount.’” (Kőtelek expert interview No. 1)*

#### 6.4.4 Improving the self-sustaining skill of the municipality

*“...no one should expect wonders from 30 thousand forints...”(Felsődobsza expert interview No.1)*

The self-sustaining community has become the central concept of many disciplines. You can see it in rural development, social policy, employment policy, but also in the case of wording environment protection strategies. Self-sustainment in welfare politics means that a given community becomes self-sustaining with the coordination of the local government acting as a community leader and with the use of local natural and economic circumstances as well as human resources. The idea of a self-sustaining community emerged mainly in those micro-villages where due to the disadvantaged economic and social circumstances, the then existing framework – that was mainly relying on passive benefits – could not fully cover the costs of living. The transformation of the social benefit system from 1 March 2015 placed a heavy burden on municipalities: they were required to care for peripheral individuals without income through municipal benefits. The most often mentioned, most disadvantaged communities in professional forums and the media in North-Hungary, Szatmár-Bereg and Zemplén also started to head towards self-sustainment as a means of trying to find a way out from their hopeless economic and social situation. The crisis due to the decrease or lack of state and private income was intended to be dealt with by the municipalities’ leaders through the use of the community’s resources as well as the activation of its members. According to the expert interviews, the establishment of self-sustaining communities is a long process and many factors have to manifest at the same time. Rozsály, one of the models for self-sustaining communities has been experimenting with the development of a self-sustaining economic model for approximately 20 years. Within the creation of this model, one of the most important elements was the Social Land Programme. They joined

in the programme as early as at the time of the announcement of the first call for tender in 1993. Since then, during these almost 25 years, they have been improving certain elements of local production, and having tried almost all forms of the programme (horticulture, asset acquisition, service development, the establishment of a social shop, etc.) The Social Land Programme provided a great foundation for the establishment of production culture, and the development of essential skills needed for the participation in community farming, but could not have been further improved, providing the assets required for community farming – in this case being land – had not been available. Rozsály is using mainly 90 hectares, and Katymár is using 40 hectares for their activity. Municipalities that have participated in the land programme or those we have studied do not possess such amounts of land. Accordingly, the land programme has contributed significantly to the improvement of the community's self-sufficiency – even through the smallest element of the programme, being the revival of horticulture – but according to experts, no self-sustaining community can be based on this programme element alone. However, the revival of the production culture meant an excellent foundation for the development of new programme elements that are significant with regard to self-sufficiency and employability.

*“Yes, because the municipality just started that, before then, it had not used its own land, but rented those out instead, and then we started [to cultivate the municipal land within the land programme], there was half a hectare of potatoes, half a hectare of dry beans and half a hectare of sorghum. And after that it started to grow. We contacted the kitchen at the school about what plants they would need, what plants they would actually use, which ones we could reasonably grow in the Zsáka area, and we tried to produce those, using trial and error. After a while, it became stabilised and we knew what to produce and how much to produce.....(Zsáka interview No. 1)*

As it is shown in the example above, the Social Land Programme in the case of many communities meant a good foundation for the establishment of further elements of community farming and the creation of the public employment exemplary programmes. Among these, the Start public employment exemplary programme (established in 2011) plays a significant role, as well as the “Social Land Programme combined with public

employment” that was announced in 2012 as a new element in the Social Land Programme.<sup>91</sup>

*„...the agricultural Start work, that evolved from this Social Land Programme... yes, it was based on this, it started from the same area of land... Back then it was 1.5 hectares, now we have 3 hectares that we cultivate.” (Zsáka expert interview No. 2)*

Thus the Social Land Programme could be the basis of further projects and investments, but the improvement of the programme itself or the establishment of the conditions of self-sufficiency within the programme has to face obstacles in many cases. *„...these families, most of them live in small houses. There are no additional buildings, they don't know where to set up a heat lamp or anything.” (Jászladány expert interview No. 1)*

The difficulties regarding the expansion of the Social Land Programme have been further increased by the changes in law with regard to the organisation of the land programme. In the call for tender – that is announced in every year – the amount of support that could be issued to each participant was limited in 2011; this also decreased the number of families that could be potentially involved in the programme.

*“If the legal possibility that allowed us to carry through the concept that we came up with had stayed untouched, we would be much further than we actually are. But I cannot say this. The involvement of 30 families, this is nothing. I am sorry for saying this... The background of this is that at the time when we had the opportunity to run a pig farm with 80 sows, when we could cultivate as much land outside of the municipality as we wanted, we could involve as many families as we wanted, but when these sanctions appeared, along with Start work, or the idea that I could not apply for the programme, except for the 30-family version, well you cannot do this at the same quality level.”(Magyargéc expert interview No. 1)*

Regardless of the legal changes and regulations, the Social Land Programme still plays an important role in the improvement of the municipalities' self-sufficiency, and in the improvement of the programme's beneficiaries' living standards.

*„...we really need this little boost in every year, as it is not that big, they don't receive such a large amount, it is only a few thousand forints' worth of package. Still, if, say, they do not have a job in March or they just don't have the money for that, then they will not buy seeds... for 7 thousand Ft, so they will not have a garden basically. There are a few who*

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<sup>91</sup><http://kozfooglalkoztataskormany.hu/download/b/43/e0000/K%C3%B6zfoglalkoztat%C3%A1s%20Magyarorsz%C3%A1gon%202012%E2%80%932013.pdf>

*plan ahead and collect the seeds for the following year, but this is not that common. Even I don't buy it, or save it. There are a few things where we might as we know it is good and it has worked out so far, but we can't acquire all seeds with this method, collecting it from the ground, so you need to buy some in the store. And we provide support for this exactly.."* (Katymár expert interview No. 1)

The programme aiming to support the families' self-sufficiency has been gradually developing its self-maintenance elements, which on the one hand provide an opportunity to expand the target group, while on the other hand, for the establishment of new programme elements and activities.

*"... Within the programme, we have bought two incubators, these are already reserved up until August, so people are taking it, they hatch eggs for themselves, too. ...., I consider this to be a great thing. Someone who can, first of all, achieve self-maintenance, can be expected to produce more. Whoever cannot sustain themselves will not be able to produce excess. Thus, if we can get the people to cultivate their gardens, so that they can provide the supply for their families, and to have livestock, also because they and their family can consume it, if this starts to work, sooner or later it will enter the market as well."* (Kőtelek expert interview No. 1)

The Social Land Programme "Asset acquisition and development sub-programme" provides an opportunity for acquiring assets which could be used very efficiently during cultivation (agricultural machines, equipment), and it also contributes to the marketing of the agricultural products.

## 7. Economic evaluation

### 7.1 Introduction

The present evaluation aims at providing an analysis of the cost-effectiveness of the Social Land Program. For this, data were collected from 3 Social Land Programs, Panyola, Magyargéc and Jászladány, and will present the data in detail from Jászladány.

### 7.2 Cost-effectiveness evaluation

The Social Land Programme is a particularly low-cost form of intervention. According to the call for proposal (Call, 2014), each village or town could apply for an amount of 500.000 to 1.200.000 HUF without own contribution needed.

Further limitations were:

- at least 10 families need to be involved into the programme,
- in case 10 families are involved, 300.000 HUF can be spent on agricultural goods, 100.000 HUF can be spent on training and 100.000 on mentoring
- in case 11-20 families are involved, 330.000-600.000 HUF can be spent on agricultural goods. 100.000 HUF in training and 150.000 on mentoring
- in case 21+ families are involved, 630.000-900.000 HUF can be spent on agricultural goods, 100.000 HUF on training and 200.000 HUF on mentoring.

The project allows maximum 30.000 HUF support per family in kind, which is a relatively small amount, less than 100 EUR for a one-year period. Services (training and mentoring) are also provided in the value of 10.000-20.000 HUF (depending on the number of participants).

All of the examined projects (Magyargéc, Panyola and Jászladány) applied for almost the maximum support, 30 participants and 1.100.000 HUF. Which included 30.000 HUF direct support in kind (animals, seeds, fertilizers, petrol for the machines) and services and other costs in the value of 200.000 HUF.

The local governments are not expected contribute in cash, however, by providing occasionally transportation of goods, writing the proposal, they also contributed in

kind. This will not be included in the costs of the project, since a great part of the (petrol for machines) were covered and for the rest (e.g. transportation with horse chariot, use of veterinary occasionally, etc.) there was no information.

However, own contribution from the participant was expected in the form of offering work, tools (like shovel, hack) and pen for the animals. The value of it varies among projects. In case of Jászladány, where only chicken were distributed, the contribution in work was relatively low, approximately half an hour a day in average (preparing the pen for the animals, building and maintaining a fence, let the animals out from the pen, feed them, close them for the night and clean the pen every month). Own contribution might happened in Jászladány when beneficiaries had to prepare the proper place for the animals – whitewashing the walls or buying material for the fence – it varied between families. The majority managed with material found at home. Other costs appeared in thse families where they kept the chicken for longer than 6 weeks. In this case, they had to invest in feed.

The costs of the workforce was not included in the calculation of expenditures for two reasons, first, gaining experience was one of the goals of the project and also because in household economy projects calculating the labour force as cost is unrealistic, because not working time is used for it but typically time in between other activities. Chicken feed was also provided by the project, participants did not have to invest in it. The following table summarizes the costs of the project in Jászladány:

*Table 3*

The cost of the project in Jászladány

| Item                       | Quantity | Cost per unit (HUF) | Total (HUF) |
|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|-------------|
| <b>Training (occasion)</b> | 2        | 39.370              | 78.740      |
| <b>Mentor (month)</b>      | 10       | 7.874               | 78.740      |
| <b>Employer fees</b>       |          |                     | 42.519      |
| <b>Medicine (pocket)</b>   | 1        | 30.000              | 30.000      |
| <b>Chicken (pc)</b>        | 900      | 380                 | 342.000     |

|                                    |      |       |           |
|------------------------------------|------|-------|-----------|
| <b>Chicken feed – starter (kg)</b> | 180  | 145   | 26.100    |
| <b>Chicken feed – medium (kg)</b>  | 1800 | 131   | 235.800   |
| <b>Chicken feed –finisher (kg)</b> | 600  | 102   | 61.200    |
| <b>Chicken feed</b>                | 900  | 115   | 103.500   |
| <b>Transportation (occasion)</b>   | 1    | 51400 | 51.400    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                       |      |       | 1.100.000 |

This might be extended with the labour force provided by the beneficiary, which would be 30 minutes a day per person, that is 2 days a month and calculated with the cost of a working day in the agriculture (5.000 HUF/day) and also the execution of the project 10 months) it is 100.000 HUF extra cost per person – almost 3 times more than the investment from the project (30.000 HUF in kind and 6.666 HUF in service). Thus the expenditure per person is 36.666HUF (or 136.666HUF if calculated with labour force).

If we calculate what the participating family receives for this investment (36.666 HUF), the balance is positive:

- 20 chicken consumed (10 was kept for eggs), means 40-50 kg meat in the value of 30.000 HUF
- ca. 600 eggs per year in average (calculated by the project coordinator) in the value of 21.600 HUF
- still 10 chicken alive and producing eggs
- all the positive impact of the project participation including
  - skills learned
  - increased self-confidence and self esteem
  - time-consciousness
  - involvement in production
  - healthy food produced
  - positive model transmitted to the next generation
  - improved cohesion in the local community

- increased employability

An important feature of the project in Jászládány and Kőtelek was the purchase of an incubator in which beneficiaries could use to hatch eggs and thus produce chicken for the next season. The popularity of the incubator (participants needed to book it in advanced and it was already booked for 3 months immediately after the purchase) proves the success of the project.

In other locations, like Panyola and Magyargéc, animal farming was mixed with horticulture, seeds were also given and participants could produce (mostly vegetables and potato). According to the estimations of the bid in Magyargéc, vegetables in the value of 40.000 HUF were expected to be collected. The bid from Panyola detailed the expected outcome as follows:

- 28-30 kg potato (2.800-3.000 HUF)
- 25-30 kg onion (3.500-4.200 HUF)
- 10-15 kg carrot and parsley, (3.100-4.650 HUF)
- 8-10 kg peas (3.200-4.000 HUF)
- and besides this 20 chicken were distributed (43.200-48.000 HUF)

Producing vegetables can also have an advantage that from certain products, the yearly quantity was produced, and it was also noted that it doubled the consumption of vegetable and thus contributed to a healthier diet.

### **7.3 Conclusions**

The social land program indeed provides cheap and innovative solution to support the highly disadvantaged target group. The cost effectiveness evaluation shows that minimal contribution is needed and through the efforts of the beneficiary, which is key point in achieving the desired project outcomes, financially measurable results are generated. The mayors frequently mentioned that occasionally, they substituted the project support in order to be able to include more participants or to be able to launch horticulture (which was difficult to do in the framework of the project because of the mismatch between the execution period and the vegetation period). For instance, in Panyola, the local government financed the participation of 15 extra beneficiaries.



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## **The settlements of the case study**

### ***Felsődobsza***

It is a settlement with the decreasing and ageing population of 935 persons in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, near the Slovakian border. The rate of Roma population is increasing, currently it is 45%. From the children in kindergarten, around 40-45 belongs to the minority out of 51 children. The settlement is characterised by poor families with many children, labour opportunities are mostly restricted to public employment. Many of them worked before in the industrial companies of Miskolc. The rate of persons working for local cooperative was low the settlement was more a kind of “sleeping town”. The school of the village was renovated for 230 million HUF 5 years ago, but the children are disappearing from it. They joined the Social Land programme in 2012.

### ***Jászladány***

Jászladány is a municipality of 5800 inhabitants in the southernmost part of the Jászság region. The Jászság can be divided into two parts of opposing level of development. In Upper Jászság, there are 3 relatively developed towns with industrial parks: Jászfényszaru, Jászberény, Jászárokszállás. The capital of Jászság is Jászberény with 30.000 inhabitants. The Lower Jászság consists of old rural-agricultural villages: Jászladány, Jászkisér, Jászapáti. Historically, the economic productivity of this region was always lower. Since the source of living has always been agriculture, with the decline of this sector, the gradually declined, and in the last years, household plots also shrunk. The ratio of Roma population is high in the villages of Lower Jászság. In the settlement of 5800 inhabitants, there live 2.500 Roma people – according to experts’ estimations (ca. 40%). In the kindergarten the rate of Roma children is in 85%. The school (of 400 children) maintained by KLIK,<sup>92</sup> is attended by only Roma, in the school maintained by the Catholic Church, a part of the 200 children are Roma. They joined the land programme in 2014.

### ***Katymár***

It is a settlement near the Serbian border with 1837 inhabitants. A significant part of the population lives and works in nearby cities or abroad, especially in Austria and Germany. For

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<sup>92</sup> In 1 January, 2013, the majority of schools maintained by local governments were transferred to the Klebersberg Institution Maintaining Center in Hungary.

the sake of facilitating job seeking abroad, a professional training was organised on the settlement, the participants received European care assistant qualification. In the last 5 years, more than 1000 participants finished the course from the settlement and nearby villages. Thanks to this, they can undertake legal work abroad, especially in elderly care. However, the majority of the inhabitants stay at home and take part in public work programmes. Until 2002 only Croatian and Serbian minority groups lived in the village, with Roma people started to move to the villages at this point. The leaders of the village estimate their rate to be 5-10%. They joined the land programme in 2005. For 3 years, the Roma Minority Government has been the coordinator and applicant of the project.

### ***Kőtelek***

Kőtelek is a settlement with 1600 inhabitants and limited work opportunities. The rate of Roma people living in the village is 30%. The situation of the village is well characterized by the fact that according to the notary of the village, no new houses were built in the last 25 years. People with qualification leave and those who move into their homes are such persons who cannot make a living in the city. *“What can be stolen, what can be turned to money, who can give a bigger punch”* – according to the local expert, these were the main motivations of the immigrants. *“If one spent a few years in prison, he is particularly respected. It is hard to change.”*(Kőtelek, expert interview No. 1). The joined the land programme in 2015.

### ***Magyargéc***

A settlement with 880 inhabitants in Nógrád county. The rate of Roma inhabitants is 40-48%, but it is 90% in the kindergarten and 80% in the school. The local government is the main employer. The number of participants of the public work programme organised by the local government is 80. Besides the local government, the Roma Local Minority Government also applied for public work programme, and employed 35 persons in the programme coordinated by themselves in 2016. They were one of the first to join the programme, and they have been organising the horticulture and livestock programme since 1997. Since the settlement has only limited land, they focus on gardens.

### ***Panyola***

This is a small settlement of 642 inhabitants in the Szatmár region. In the settlement, there are no Roma people, but a big number of poor families live here due to territorial inequalities. The inhabitants of the village find job in nearby towns, or exploit the opportunities in the village (distillery, seasonal work). They joined the land programme in 2012, where they

support families with 3 or more children and old persons living alone. The village has very little land (4 hectares) and they execute the public work programme on it. In the land programme, participants execute horticulture and livestock farming. The local government invests own resources into the program to increase the number of beneficiaries.

### ***Rozsály***

A settlement of 814 inhabitants situated in the Szatmár region, close to the Romanian and Ukranian border. The rate of Roma population is in 20%. They were one of the firsts to join the Social Land Programme and tried out all of its components. It is one of the few settlements which own large land property. This is due to the fact that after the system change, the leaders of the village did not privatize the land and agricultural machines of the cooperative and developed a special form of community agriculture. Due to this and the continuous developments, the settlement is regarded as one of the “self-sustaining villages” which does not only produce food for its own public meal service but thanks to numerous innovations, inhabitants can produce for the market. Horticulture (vegetables and fruits) offers the largest income for families and the community, especially the intensive cucumber production.

### ***Zsáka***

The number of inhabitants living in this settlement close to the Romanian border is 1619. It is an agricultural cul-de-sac village. Its land property structure is concentrated, on the lands of the village there are 5 large extensive farms of hundreds of hectares. They produce crop and oleaginous seeds. Traditionally, animal husbandry was typical for the village. The village is surrounded by large pasture-lands and territories under natural protection. There is no labour-intensive agriculture production therefore employment is always a problem. 25% of the active aged inhabitants have no job. Besides this, immigration is also a problem, the rate of it increased in the last years. The rate of Roma population is 30%. They joined the land programme in 2011.