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Equal Opportunities and Investing in Children: Theory, Policies and Projects

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Abstract The paper first focuses on the theoretical embeddedness of the problem, involving human, cultural and social capital theory, as well as social inclusion and exclusion theory. The second part is devoted to an overview of the respective international conventions, recommendations, and policies. Then the paper shifts to Hungarian national strategies aimed at reducing child poverty and their local implementation. Finally, the last section presents a Hungarian case study of two local development programs from a comparative perspective. The local projects are part of the national Program to Combat Child Poverty that is designed to improve the life chances of children at risk of poverty and social exclusion. The comparative analysis investigates the local programs' responses to similar problems, the types of interventions and services they provide, and the forms of human and cultural capital investment they have made. Special emphasis is put on comparing local programs across different intervention areas on behalf of the Roma from the point of view of their attempts at integration and inclusion.

Keywords: • human • cultural and social capital • social inclusion and exclusion theory • child poverty • policy • intervention

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1 Introduction

As children are the future of society, investing in children has long been a crucial element of theoretical debates, research projects, national and international policies, as well as of local and global development programs. According to a relatively new socio-political approach, a preventive and child-centred social investment strategy is liable to be more productive than one which compensates for already existing disadvantages or attempts to reduce unfair differences.

In terms of children's equal opportunities, early child development has been proven to be especially effective and profitable in the long term, contributing to better health conditions, greater school attainment, more favorable job market positions, and a lower deviance rate (see the Head Start program in the USA, or the Sure Start program in the UK).

Child poverty and social exclusion constitute a major problem around the world because the increasing wealth of developed countries does not automatically lead to the more just distribution of goods, to more equal opportunities, or to strengthening social inclusion. In the case of minorities, especially Europe's largest ethnic minority, the Roma, the situation is even more complex. The Country Reports of the European Union regularly show that the Roma are more typically characterized by extreme poverty, poor housing conditions, poor education, and lower job-market activity than members of mainstream society.

Our study is mainly based on the analysis of some key documents produced during the program – i.e., on the application documents of local projects, on complex local studies that explored the sub-regions' economic, social and institutional status, on reports about the results of sub-regional surveys, as well as on mid-term and final evaluations of the implementation of the aforementioned program. These documents rely on both secondary and primary data sources.

2 Theoretical background

The life chances of children are determined by their "capital-abilities"[1] (Foucault 2008, 229), i.e. by their acquired human, cultural and social capital. Thus, investing in children is a rational social strategy for fostering equal opportunities (Esping-Andersen 2008). Investments can be realized in several fields. From the perspective of the local development program investigated in this paper, expenditures on children's human, cultural and social capital are the most appropriate social investments.

2.1   Human and cultural capital

The topic of human capital investment through formal and informal education has inspired a number of scientists since the 1950s, among them several Nobel laureates.[2] The basic observation is that more educated people have higher earnings than less educated ones. Theodore W. Schultz (1961) argues that investing in conventionally accepted physical capital is not profitable enough without large-scale human capital investment. Human capital investment improves personal knowledge and skills so that it boosts the productivity of labor, raises individual incomes, and drives economic development as a whole. Human capital growth can be primarily realized through health-care services and education. According to this reasoning, investing in health-care, education and training is more lucrative in the long run than investing in physical capital.

Some years later, the term "human capital" was effectively and genuinely disseminated by Gary S. Becker in a book entitled *Human Capital* published in 1964. Becker provides a concise, rational-choice-based definition of the term and gives several examples of it: "*... activities that influence future monetary and psychic income by increasing resources in people. These activities are called investments in human capital. The many forms of such investments include schooling, on-the-job training, medical care, migration, and searching for information about prices and incomes. ... all these investments improve skills, knowledge, or health, and thereby raise money or psychic incomes*" (Becker 1994, 11). Becker's theoretical assumptions were tested using several empirical models. The author puts special emphasis on education and its costs and benefits are embodied in his estimations. For instance, Becker (1994) measured the economic effects of college and high-school education in the United States in the twentieth century.

Cultural capital is used in a broader sense than human capital, so that in a way sociological cultural capital concepts have colonized human capital ones. Thus, human capital and cultural capital theories are semi-overlapping approaches – although Bourdieu warned us not to confuse the two (Bennett and Silva 2011). Cultural capital theory was first introduced by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron in 1977. Some years later, Bourdieu added sophistication to the initial theory by differentiating between economic, cultural and social capital. In the latter's understanding, cultural capital is basically institutionalized in educational qualifications (Bourdieu 1986, 242–243).

Cultural capital exists in three different forms; namely: *"in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), ... and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee"* (Bourdieu 1986, 243). Cultural capital depends on the field or system of social positions in which the person is embedded.[3] It is embodied cultural capital which is the most difficult to transmit

and may become a part of a person's habitus.[4] Thus a person's position basically depends on the amount and quality of capital they possess, personal habitus, and the related field.

2.2   Social capital

A long-debated concept, social capital was probably first thematised explicitly by Lyda J. Hanifan in 1916 (Putnam 1995).[5]

According to Bourdieu (1986, 248), social capital is the sum of actual and potential resources which are related to group membership. Bourdieu (1986) gains everlasting merit for his formulation of capital conversion theory. While economic capital is the fundamental form of capital, at different costs all three types of capital can be mutually converted. Bourdieu discusses the multiplication effect of social capital, as an individual can positively benefit from the members of their social networks.

In this paper, social capital is used in the same sense as James S. Coleman (1988) uses it: *"... social capital inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors. It is not lodged either in the actors themselves or in physical implements of production".* In addition, social capital serves as *"a resource for persons"* (Coleman 1988, 98). In Coleman's theory there are three main forms of social capital; namely, obligations, expectations and the trustworthiness of structures; information channels; and norms and effective sanctions. Coleman (1988) puts special emphasis on social capital within the family and outside it and argues that social capital plays an essential role in school performance; i.e., in the creation of cultural capital.

The opportunities and life chances of children are predefined by multifarious capital abilities and access to diverse sources of capital. Besides investing in the more obvious elements of children's human capital (improving health status or educational attainments, etc.), the local development programs we investigate are aimed at developing the psychological and social well-being of children through improving personal and social skills and competences such as authenticity, self-confidence, self-consciousness, self-reflection, ambitions, interaction, persuasion, adaptation, coordination, cooperation, etc. These characteristics can be regarded as inevitable parts of cultural capital and are undoubtedly related to the social capital a person possesses as well. On a community or societal level, social networks and social capital correlate with social integration, inclusion and exclusion.

2.3   Social exclusion and inclusion

Social exclusion is a much broader concept than poverty because it may refer to active or passive capability deprivation (Sen 2000) of a series of: private or public; material, immaterial or abstract; subjective or objective goods, spaces, services, relations, rights, chances, etc. (authors' own definition based on Mathieson *et al.* 2008).

In the present sense, social exclusion was first used by Jean Klafner in 1965 (Allman 2013) and René Lenoir in 1974, although its roots may date back to the social cohesion and solidarity theory of Émile Durkheim [1893] (1997) (Mathieson *et al.* 2008), the theory of Adam Smith (1776) or even Aristotle (Sen 2000). In the 1980s, the European Commission started to use the rhetoric of social inclusion to counter exclusion (Allman 2013). Emphasis on promoting inclusiveness and inclusivity is still easily detectable and persists within the policies of the European Union.

The renewed academic popularization of the concept of social exclusion started with Amartya Sen. Based on Sen (2000, 5–6), the right approach to poverty leads through social exclusion and stresses the relational features of capability failures. According to Sen's argument, an excluded population is produced (e.g. due to long-term unemployment) which can lead to skill and/or motivational loss, loss of freedom, and/or social relations, psychological harm, clinical illness on a micro level; as well as loss of output, and the creation of gender and/or ethnic inequalities, weakening social norms on a macro level (Sen 2000, 19–22). In contrast, inclusive tendencies are indicated if excluded individuals and/or groups are being involved and genuinely integrated into the welfare system, education system, or labor market. Active labor-market positions, school attendance, or other – e.g. civil, voluntary – activities are vital elements for ensuring social inclusion.

Social exclusion may lead to less opportunity to possess the social capital necessary for a successful life. The labor market, educational or territorial exclusion may limit interaction between those who are excluded and the majority, making it more difficult for the former to access some useful information channels, to acquire the appropriate behavioral patterns and social norms, as well as to gain the trust and recognition of others. Moreover, the existence of social exclusion, especially in the form of racial discrimination, affects the value of possessed capital, as well as *"the efforts by individuals to activate their capital, the skill with which individuals activate their capital, and the institutional response to the activation"* (Lareau and McNamara Horvat 1999, 3).

Consequently, tackling (child) poverty and breaking the cycle of disadvantages can be done only by going beyond material security and ***inclusively*** investing in children's human, cultural and social capital. In accordance with *Europe 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth,* this conclusion leads us to the next chapter.

3   Respective international conventions, recommendations and policies

Children's rights and their well-being have been the focus of international interest for many decades. Proclaiming that there is a particular need to strengthen care of the child, the League of Nations adopted the *Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child* in 1924, and the United Nations General Assembly extended it in 1959. After another thirty years, the next milestone was the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child,* adopted in 1989.

In the European Union, as part of the Social Investment Package (2013), the *Recommendation for Investing in children – breaking the cycle of disadvantage* is a European Commission policy response to child poverty and exclusion, adopted on 20 February 2013. It advises member states to *"organize and implement policies to address child poverty and social exclusion, promoting children's well-being ...".* (Investing in Children 2013, 6). The Commission recommends that Member States develop integrated strategies based on three pillars; namely, access to adequate resources, access to affordable quality services, and the right of children to participate.[6] The main channels/measures for tackling the above-described aims are family support and benefits, quality childcare, and early childhood education. The Recommendation also highlights the issue of social inclusion: *"The most successful strategies in addressing child poverty have proved to be those underpinned by policies improving the well-being of all children, whilst giving careful consideration to children in particularly vulnerable situations ... such as Roma children, some migrant or ethnic minority children, ... as well as children within households at particular risk of poverty, such as single parent or large families ..."* (Investing in Children 2013, 5).

In order to guarantee the inclusion of children of ethnic minorities, especially Roma children, the European Council formulated 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion[7] (Council Conclusions on Inclusion of the Roma 2009). From the point of view of the *Recommendation for Investing in children*, two of them are particularly relevant: Explicit but not exclusive targeting (Principle No 2) and Aiming for the mainstream (Principle No 4).[8] *Explicit but not exclusive targeting* defines *"Roma people as a target group but not to the exclusion of other people who share similar socio-economic circumstances". Aiming for the mainstream* means that the main goal of all Roma-related policies should be to integrate the Roma into mainstream society, while Roma integration should be mainstreamed into national policies instead of being handled as a separate issue.

To achieve their objectives, all related documents promote the mobilization of various financial and non-financial EU instruments – inter alia, the European Social Fund, which also finances the Hungarian Programs to Combat Child Poverty, among others.

4   Hungarian national strategies aiming at reducing child poverty and their local implementations

Twenty per cent of Hungarian children live in income poverty; this proportion is essentially the same as the average for the EU28 countries (21%). Considering other indicators, such as the labor-market position of parents and material deprivation, we observe that poverty or social exclusion affects 34% of children in Hungary compared to the EU average of 26% (Eurostat 2016).

In Hungary, child poverty is highly concentrated in the most deprived regions: in these areas not only is the number of people living in poverty higher, but the accumulation of disadvantages is also significantly greater than in other, better-off areas of the country. The proportion of students with multiple disadvantages[9] is 20% in the most deprived northern and north-eastern counties of Hungary, while less than 1% in the economically most developed areas, including the capital and Western Hungary (KSH STADAT 2016).

In 2007, realizing the need to reduce child poverty and promote equal opportunities for children, the Hungarian parliament unanimously approved the *National Strategy to Combat Child Poverty* ("Child Strategy") which determines the main areas where intervention is needed to improve the situation of children. The national strategy corresponds to international conventions and recommendations with special regard to the United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) and *Millennium Development Goals* (2000). The major development objectives identified in the Child Strategy were to improve the situation of families with children in terms of income, employment and housing conditions, and to improve the quality and availability of education, social and health services targeted at children. It also formulated several horizontal objectives, such as reducing the disadvantages of localities, improving the living conditions and alleviating the segregation of the Roma, strengthening children's rights, and promoting cooperation among sectors. In 2011, the Child Strategy, originally designed to last 25 years, was merged into the new National Social Inclusion Strategy[10] which integrates ideas aimed at reducing child poverty, Roma integration, and balancing regional disadvantages.

This change in addressing child poverty does not only mean that, in concordance with the growth strategy of the European Union, the latter document remains effective until 2020 (that is, for a maximum of 10 years). A certain shift of emphasis can also be detected in the targeting logic and means of intervention, such as decreasing the priority of maintaining the real terms of the financial support provided to families, awarding prevalence to the principle of *exclusively supporting the poor* instead the former principle of "expressed but not exclusive" support, as well as predominantly using a project-based intervention logic (see also Ferge 2014). The latter means that the strategy aims at creating solutions to specific problem areas by launching several short-term projects chiefly financed from EU structural funds.

The regional Program to Combat Child Poverty work in line with the Child Strategy to reduce inequality between territories. These projects are financed by the European Social Fund to increase the chances of deprived children in each of the regions. Within the framework of the program that ran from 2009 through 2015, a total of 23 of the most deprived sub-regions[11] were granted financial aid for the duration of 2–3-years, through three tenders, to enable them to elaborate and implement their own equal opportunities projects.

From a developmental point of view, the regions participating in the Programs to Combat Child Poverty have been and are facing very much the same problems: all have (child) poverty rates above the country average, a high unemployment rate, low incomes, and high indices of material deprivation. The education level of the adult population is lower than the country average, just like children's school performance. Most of the 23 sub-regions are located far from the capital, in the periphery of the country (see Appendix), where even the county centers are only accessible with difficulty from the settlements. Several regions are constituted by small villages of fewer than 500 inhabitants, with a settlement structure characterized by a lack of cities,[12] which makes access to educational, health-care and social services very uneven. In most cases, nursery, family day-care, secondary school, outpatient specialty care, and pharmacies can be found only in the settlements which function as sub-regional centers. There are far fewer professionals than needed: there is a shortage of special needs teachers, developmental teachers, speech therapists, child psychologists, physiotherapists; several localities lack pediatricians, and children's specialists are often unavailable even at the regional level. The best established networks are those of health visitors, family support services, and child welfare services; however, their activity is often limited to the provision of a minimum level of services due to the lack of capacity.

Due to the outward migration experienced in these regions in the last decades, many of the settlements have been ageing and depopulating. Some of the empty houses have been bought by poor, mostly Roma families who were attracted to these localities by low real estate prices. This population swap has led to a further decrease in real estate value, triggering a process of ghettoization, in many places by now irreversible. Social (and ethnic) segregation has been increasing not only in villages but also in the cities that function as regional centers. These typically peripheral neighborhoods have even worse access to quality human services. In these areas many families face multiple educational, social, housing and health problems, but the availability of precisely those services which would be extremely important to them is lacking.

To address these issues and insufficiencies, the Program to Combat Child Poverty has defined the objective of improving the availability of services for families with children to reduce overload and to enhance the performance of basic service providers, as well as to strengthen the cooperation between them. By specifically targeting the most deprived regions, this plan can contribute to the national Child Strategy primarily by decreasing

territorial inequality, by developing major social support systems (public education, health-care and social services) locally, and by improving inter-professional collaboration.

Tenders for the implementation of regional Program to Combat Child Poverty were designed as follows: initially, five, later another six, and finally fifteen more sub-regions[13] were invited to apply. As we have already mentioned in relation to the national strategies, the political environment of the program against child poverty had changed in the meantime, as is also reflected in the differences in the invitations to tender. In the first tender, the target group of the program included children and their families living in each region, with priority given to those with social disadvantages and the Roma. In the third call, the definition of the target group already specified disadvantages, including Roma ethnicity, that determined the direction of the eligible interventions. Compulsory activities were increasingly focused on the most deprived children, with the well-known over-representation of the Roma, and the call for tenders directly referred to the concept of ethnic (Roma) ghettos where program activities were compulsorily assigned. This means that, in spite of the program being originally defined as "color-blind," (free from any direct ethnic targeting), this principle eventually lost its validity.

Below, we will evaluate the programs of two anonymous but real sub-regions: Sub-region "S" and Sub-region "E". From the regional programs described below, the project for Sub-region "S" was awarded in the first call in 2010, while that of Sub-region "E" in the third call in 2012. This enables us to take a closer look at the impact the two different approaches had on Roma integration. We will examine to what extent each program managed to reach children with multiple disadvantages, and particularly the Roma among them, and whether the children were involved in segregated or integrated ways.

5   Data source and methodology

The complex regional programs were accompanied by a mentorship program that provided professional-methodological support for the regional implementers. The authors of this study worked in these mentorship programs doing documentary and empirical research, and preparing situation analyses and evaluations with regard to the progress and success of the regional projects. Our study was based on the following information sources:

- Invitations for tenders as frameworks for the local Programs to Combat Child Poverty, declared objectives, and the set of applicable resources.
- Regional analyses made by the mentorship program and disseminated in the publication *Sub-regional Mirror (Kistérségi tükör)*, explicating the situation, needs and demands of local institutions. These documents formed compulsory parts of the regional tenders, and helped with project planning.

- At least one survey ("Needs assessment") was conducted in each region to assess the situation, needs and demands of families with children. The results were published in studies; here we only use the data needed for the description of the regions.
- Each local project was submitted to a mid-term and final evaluation ("evaluations") based on two main data sources: processed interviews with local stakeholders on the one hand, and information collected from beneficiaries of the services launched during the projects on the other. These evaluations were primarily intended to assist with project implementation in each region, occasionally relying on non-public information – therefore the evaluations themselves are not public either. However, an extensive summary of the evaluations in Hungarian (Husz 2016) as well as an excerpt about the experiences of the program in English are available to the public (Bauer *et al.* 2015).

For the purposes of this paper we used the above-described documents to gather information about the two selected regions and performed a secondary analysis of the evaluations.

6   Case studies

6.1   The program in Sub-region "S"

Sub-region "S" is typically composed of small villages: 20 of its 27 settlements have fewer than 500 inhabitants, and the centers are small towns with populations hardly exceeding 3000. The economy is predominantly based on forestry and agriculture, and additionally some smaller industrial plants and public institutions offer local employment options. In the past, a significant part of the population used to commute daily to the nearby mines and heavy industry plants, which however were closed one after the other upon the political transition of 1989. As evidence of this prolonged employment crisis, the census of 2011 – coinciding in time with the launch of the program – registered an employment rate of as little as 52% among people aged 18 to 59, which was significantly below the national average of 66% (KSH TEIR 2019). Low employment rates in the region led in turn to a significant rise in child poverty rates: 43% of the children living in this region had became poor due to low income, compared to the national average of 26% (MTA TK 2011 and 2013). Only 10 settlements had kindergartens, with two-thirds of children from disadvantaged families; the share of children with multiple disadvantages was 37%, even exceeding 50% in four settlements. Deprived children were represented in high proportion in the five primary schools of the region as well. Pupils of the regional schools regularly performed under the country average on national competency assessments, with absences above average, and schools awarding baccalaureates in lower numbers. According to the estimates of the *Sub-regional Mirror*, 40% of families with children were Roma.

As a first step of the program planning which started in 2009, team members of the mentorship program contacted the sub-regional association with the intention of introducing the Program to Combat Child Poverty. The tender size (600 million HUF, cca. two million EUR) was so significant that the region decided to apply. The former tried to involve as many participants as possible: management travelled among settlements in the first place, gathering ideas and suggestions from local mayors, public institutions, civil society organizations, and entrepreneurs. Only the Roma population was not involved. Members of the project team reported that they had encountered difficulty in the past trying to find common ground with the leaders of the local Roma minority self-governments.[14]

After the start of the mentorship program, the implementing team compiled a local periodical called the *Sub-regional Mirror* and published findings that helped to harmonize the demands of the settlements with real needs. The outlined program elements were later presented at community forums. The first sessions of this iterative consultation were not free from conflict. The reason was that financial demands far exceeded the available funds and, contrary to mayors' intentions, only a relatively small portion was available for spending on infrastructural development[15] (for example, on the renovation of buildings). At last, a compromise acceptable to all local governments was reached by introducing additional feasible program elements into as many settlements as possible.

The project basically focused on compensating for the deficiencies of mainstream institutions; that is, offering services to children in need; services that either did not exist or had limited capacity in the region. To achieve this, project members hired a psychologist, a speech therapist, a health educator, and five developmental teachers[16] who taught in several schools, alternating on a daily basis. By bringing these services to schools, eventually all of them, professionals were able to take care of all the children in the region, including the most deprived Roma kids. Furthermore, each school hired a mentor teacher who was responsible for reducing the school drop-out rate of disadvantaged children. In addition to providing extra tuition and preparing 13–14-year-old children for secondary school, they undertook social work at school: maintaining close relationships with parents, trying to reduce the amount of absences, solving all sorts of other problems, and helping children progress in many other ways throughout their studies until the end of their secondary education. Moreover, three extra family assistants were hired by the project who, joining existing ones, contributed to the better care of disadvantaged families.

Capacity was lacking not only in terms of human resources but also in the limited recreational opportunities that children in this region could enjoy due to the lack of adequate financial resources. Therefore, the program also included the organization of extracurricular and summer activities that schools could not otherwise afford in order to help children often living in an under-stimulating environment to broaden their horizon.

This was particularly important for the most deprived children who, due to the limited financial resources of their families, often had not even crossed the borders of their villages. Activities included (free) extracurricular events such as workshops, skills-development activities,[17] sports events, as well as excursions, and summer camps. In the latter, special attention was paid to involving children from the worst backgrounds, while others living in better conditions were also invited.

Another element of the concept was improving the service quality of mainstream institutions. It appeared to be necessary to facilitate communication between families with children and local institutions, thereby helping to build partnerships. To achieve this, parents' clubs were created in kindergartens to develop parental competencies on the one hand, and to strengthen the relationship between families and kindergartens on the other. Occasionally, pediatricians and health visitors were also invited, which not only improved the accessibility of health care services but at these informal meetings brought parents and professionals closer to each other. Such events were very useful for Roma families who, usually having lower levels of trust in public institutions, considered professionals to be authorities rather than partners. Furthermore, several events took place to raise awareness of professionals in relation to the Roma, such as awareness-raising training for health visitors, and study journeys for teachers to schools which had succeeded in facilitating the integrated education of Roma pupils.

A new institution – namely, a community center[18] – was established only in one settlement: in the most disadvantaged village in the region, almost entirely populated by extremely poor Roma families. This center offered concentrated services for children: not only were learning support, community development activities and excursions organized, but internet use and comfort services (washing and bathing) were also provided. Partnering with the public institutions, the center offered adults a place and opportunity to contact family support services once a week on the spot.

As a whole, the program reached a significant proportion of children in the area by filling gaps in services one way or another. The territorial targeting approach proved to be correct: by implementing a large part of all activities in kindergartens and schools, it was easier to involve the child population of the sub-region. Not only were the most disadvantaged, including Roma families, reached, but children from most different backgrounds were actively involved in all activities. The program strengthened trust between families and local professionals, and thereby mutually sensitized them to understanding each other's points of view and facilitated integration. Moreover, since individual program elements were linked to mainstream institutions, the approach contributed to their development instead of creating parallel project institutions.

6.2   The program in Sub-region "E"

The structure of Sub-region "E" is likewise characterized by small villages: the majority of its 36 settlements have less than 500 inhabitants, only one of them being a city. Similarly to Sub-region "S," since long before the political transition this predominantly agricultural area had been unable to provide a fair standard of living for its population. Therefore, a significant part of the population was forced to commute on a daily basis to nearby industrial centers or mines. During the deep post-transition recession, not only did these workplaces drastically decrease in number, but so did local employment options, leading to the outward migration of younger and more skilled people. This region has never been able to emerge from this crisis of the labor market: according to the last census, only 45% of the population aged 18 to 59 were employed (KSH TEIR 2019). There were kindergartens in 17 settlements, and schools in 14 – though some schools provide education for the first four years only. Most of the settlements were ethnically segregated, which was also reflected in the social composition of the children attending the public education institutions: in ten schools, the proportion of children with multiple disadvantages was over 50%. Segregation could be detected within the city as well, both spatially (Roma neighborhoods) and on a school-by-school basis (*Sub-regional Mirror*).

As early as in the planning phase of the project, which started in 2011, the management tried to provide incentives for the local governments of all settlements with a significant child population to join the program. Due to the large number of settlements, the sub-region was divided into four territorial units, and the services were focused on the centers of these. Each intervention area was assigned a planning team that was responsible for contacting mayors and local institutions, surveying needs, gathering demands, and planning specific services as much as financial resources permitted. Members of the mentorship program played an active initiating role in the work of the teams as well as in negotiations with the local governments from the very beginning. It became clear very soon that although the sum of approximately 600 million HUF (cca. two million EUR) offered by the tender for a two-year term was fairly generous compared to the budgets of earlier human development interventions in the region, the settlements turned out to have even greater demands. As a result, planning was not free from conflict, just like in the other regions covered by the Program to Combat Child Poverty.

These conflicting interests were treated by the management in many different ways. First, managers could take advantage of professional relationships they had established in several settlements in the past. Second, while negotiating the distribution of services across settlements with mayors, they could often refer to the Sub-regional Mirror (Gyerekszegénység Elleni Programiroda 2009; Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálat 2012) as an objective, factual document, with conclusions usable as a basis for planning. Third, while assigning the available resources, project managers wanted to benefit as many settlements as possible, in the case of the poorest settlements establishing or upgrading a community center, creating a Sure Start children's house,[19] or some other community

space, and in the case of the less poor settlements establishing or upgrading at least one playground. However, since the sum available for the project was limited by the tender, some settlements that could not be benefited by such institutional development measures were compensated by receiving access to health screening tests and sporting events. Negotiations failed only in the case of a single settlement. The mayor of the central locality of the most disadvantaged sub-region left the program – which was already at the planning stage – because he considered the funding allocated to his area to be too little. Therefore, this territorial unit was awarded fewer services than the weight of problems would have justified.

For the smallest children and their parents, Sure Start houses were established in five locations. Settlements with a large number of needy Roma families were selected. One house was opened in the town center of the sub-regional centre, easily accessible to families with small children, another in the Roma neighborhood of the city, and an additional three in segregated or segregating settlements where the proportion of children with multiple disadvantages (mostly Roma) was high. That is, the houses were basically located close to the most deprived families. As a consequence, they ended up receiving Roma families only, even if originally intended by professionals to be mainstream institutions where children from diverse social backgrounds could be educated in an integrated environment. The location of the two in-town houses further strengthened segregation, which eventually also occurred even in the town-centre house. Although the overall social composition of families in the latter was rather heterogeneous, Roma and non-Roma parents refused to mingle with each other. In order to maintain the level of attendance, the manager of the house decided to create a split schedule to determine who and which session members could attend daily. However successful this method was in increasing attendance levels (an important factor in meeting the criteria for the indicators of the tender), the result was a special form of segregated environment.[20]

Besides Sure Start children's houses, the most resource-demanding and thus most highlighted elements of the program were the community centers and their activities. According to the invitation to tender, at least one community center with complex services was obligatory in all of the segregates or settlements undergoing a process of ghettoization (with a significant Roma population). In region "E" seven community centers were established: one in the already mentioned in-town Roma neighborhood near the Sure Start children's house, three in some ghetto villages in very bad conditions, and another three in other settlements with ethnic segregates.

Attendance rates, and thus the success of the centers depended not only on their physical characteristics (location and layout) but also on the professional and personal qualities of the team members, as well as on their visibility and acceptance. In most places, it was difficult to address people initially, especially when news of the comfort services[21] (bathing and washing facilities) that were provided got around. A feeling of shame kept even those who lacked piped water at home and who could have occasionally befitted

from these facilities away from the centers.[22] In general, stable groups of users were established when team members maintained good personal relationships with the families outside of the centers as well.

Well-functioning community centers offered a wide range of services: after-school workshops for children, excursions, internet access, nursery consultation, health-screening tests, a wide range of programs for every generation (for example, a cooking club, and a club for teens). In summary, most centers managed to reach quite a number of families, including the poorest ones in first place. However, their integrated operation could only be achieved in a few places: such attempts as a rule were rejected both by the local middle class and by the poor non-Roma.

To cope with insufficient personnel capacity, the program in Sub-region "E" hired several human service professionals (e.g. a speech therapist, psychologist and a developmental teacher). However, since there were not enough resources to allocate professionals to each and every school, professionals performed their activities in the community centers. In this way, their services were brought closer to most deprived families (at least in the settlements with a community center), although other families had no access to the former. The hiring activity of the project occasionally had consequences that opposed the original goals, since some of the staff of the project (e.g. those working in community centers) were attracted by the program away from the local family support services, worsening the shortage of professionals in basic services. These professionals continued to perform certain family support tasks (for example, helping locals handle official matters), but as employees of a community center they were no longer authorized to officially act as civil servants in necessary cases.

Similarly to as in Sub-region "S," the Sub-region "E" program also facilitated a wide range of educational activities in already existing institutions on behalf of children of preschool and school age. In all kindergartens in the region, activities were organized to strengthen parent-child relationships. In the schools, the deficiencies of students of vulnerable families were remedied by launching classes to promote financial competence and by organizing excursions, sports events, and camps. Furthermore, in the schools of the four most disadvantaged settlements, mostly populated by Roma, preventive classes were held to reduce early school leaving, deviant behavior, and early pregnancy. Taking place in institutions of public education, these events effectively reached children in need, regardless of their social background. The program made vigorous efforts to create access for the poorest families to the summer camps, but success was only partial. One of the difficulties was that not all parents allowed their children to go to the camps.[23] Another problem was that, as an incentive to learn, organizers sometimes required children to get good marks in school as a condition of participation. However, this requirement had an effect contrary to the objectives of the program because it reduced the access of those children to the camps who lived in extreme poverty and were unsuccessful in their

studies, in spite of the fact that it was exactly these students who were in greatest need of such programs.

In general terms, the program in Sub-region "E" can also be considered successful at reaching the most deprived, including the Roma population, thanks to accurate territorial targeting, and to the concentration of resources in the settlements where a lot of Roma families live in deep poverty. However, the program focused on providing special services to the Roma instead of strengthening and improving the quality of mainstream institutions, and this prevented the principle of integration from being properly realized. Although the program was not able to significantly improve the situation of people living in deep poverty, and did not solve the problem of the segregation of the Roma, it contributed to making life more comfortable for them. The program was not able to raise awareness of the necessity of social and ethnic integration; among other goals the program was also not able to improve communication between parents and professionals. The program improved the quality and widened the portfolio of social and educational services in the sub-region, with special respect to summer camps, to consultations with psychologists at the community center, and to the activities of children with the developmental teacher. However, the program in many cases failed to attract many of the vulnerable families for whom these activities were implemented in the first place. This failure also frustrated the professionals who were involved.

6.3   Comparison

Case selection is essential in comparative research. To ensure comparability, we picked two sub-regions which are similar in certain regards. As both sub-regions are parts of the Program to Combat Child Poverty, they are underdeveloped. Both of them faced and still face similar economic and social problems, are located in a peripheral area of Hungary, and have a similar settlement structure. At the same time, our two selected sub-regions show several differences in terms of their geographic position (see Appendix), program planning, implementation period, and accomplishments. The similarities and differences are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of Programs to Combat Child Poverty of two sub-regions

	Sub-region "S"	Sub-region "E"
Basic characteristics of the sub-region	Small rural villages, mainly < 500 inhabitants, high unemployment, high rate of multiply deprived children, socially and ethnically segregated villages, lack of quality services.	
Planning of the local Program to Combat Child Poverty	Evidence-based; community planning, involving mayors, public institutions, NGOs, entrepreneurs, inhabitants; involvement of Roma representatives lacking.	Evidence-based; partly community planning, involving mayors, public institutions; involvement of Roma representatives lacking.
Implementation of the program		
Main focus and instruments	Mainly: improving existing local institutions: supplementing lacking human resources, expanding on their activities; quality improvements. Furthermore: establishing a new local institution (a community house) in a segregated village.	Mainly: establishing new local institutions for the poorest (7 community houses, 5 Sure Start houses/services). Partly: improving existing local institutions: supplementing lacking human resources, expanding their activities.
Involvement of settlements	Every settlement of the sub-region involved, through existing (mainstream) institutions, especially schools and kindergartens.	Most settlements of the sub-region involved, with special focus on segregated villages. Involvement mainly through the new institutions.
Involvement of the main target group: disadvantaged and/or Roma children	Good level of involvement, predominantly in schools and preschools.	Partial level of involvement in certain schools and preschools and in the close vicinity of Sure Start and community houses.
Main areas of development	Human and cultural capital (skills development, extracurricular activities, programs in school holidays). Social capital and social integration (improving relationships between poor families and institutions).	Human and cultural capital (skills development, extracurricular activities, programs in school holidays).

Features of integration/inclusion	Good level of integration. Children with different socioeconomic status and ethnicity treated and involved together.	Partial level of integration in some services. Segregated participation in Sure Start houses and partly in complex community houses.
Main strengths and weaknesses	Strengths: Effective cooperation with mainstream institutions, filling some gaps, quality improvements; access to all children in every preschool and school; integrated and inclusive implementation. Weakness: remaining differences among settlements in terms of availability of services.	Strengths: Establishment of several new institutions with a variety of previously missing services. Reducing differences among settlements in terms of the availability of services. Some improvement of mainstream institutions. Weakness: duplicated services, role conflicts; lack of integration goals; efficiency problems with some services.

Source: Author's compilation.

As a result of the delivery of different services, both local projects were successful because disadvantaged children – among whom the Roma are over-represented – were effectively involved in the program. Thus, the local programs efficiently reached the main target group of the program and made crucial investments into the human and cultural capital of children. These investments concerned biological, cognitive, emotional, recreational and social needs and deficiencies, as well as bettering the life chances of children.

Through employing speech therapists, physiotherapists and psychologists, significant investment into the human capital of children was made, with special respect to their physical, mental and cognitive health (Schultz 1961; Becker 1964). By providing mentoring and developmental services in schools and preschools and organizing extracurricular activities within and beyond these institutions, the program invested not only in human capital, but also in the cultural capital of kids. Through the complex services of Sure Start and community houses, the program aimed to develop parenting, family management, lobbying and other parental skills which may improve indirectly children's implicit cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) as well. Similarly, the delivery of recreational services or innovative program elements for children may result in the same development. Meanwhile, some aforementioned program elements fostered networking activities and provided possible channels to create, maintain or strengthen social capital (Bourdieu 1986; Coleman 1988).

The essential difference between the projects' implementation lies in the integration and inclusion of the excluded (Sen 2000). Whilst in Sub-region "S" integrative and inclusive

participation was realized through the involvement of all pupils who attend school and preschool, this was not the case in Sub-region "E". Paradoxically, as an unintended negative externality of the interventions Sure Start houses and some community houses of Sub-region "E" even deepened the segregation existing between the local Roma and non-Roma families and their children. In contrast, in Sub-region "S" the project managed to inclusively implement the Program to Combat Child Poverty through the equal involvement of children by sensitizing and awareness training, and by strengthening communication between different social groups and professionals. Its accomplishments are basically in line with the principles of the *Europe 2020 inclusive growth* strategy, as well as the *explicit but not exclusive targeting* and *aiming for the mainstream* principles which are two cornerstones of the *Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion*.

7   Concluding remarks

Concerning development for the poor, there are two main lessons to be learned from the above-described case studies. First, new services may become segregated if they operate in parallel with preexisting mainstream services and institutions. This might be particularly the case with services provided to an excluded minority; namely, the Roma. Even if the new services are of a higher standard, they will not necessarily solve the problem of segregation, and instead may contribute to its maintenance. Consequently, programs aimed at the integration of the segregated should focus on strengthening and supporting mainstream institutions. The introduction of new services is justified only if basic services are not available. Second, well-planned, targeted and implemented social and educational services inevitably raise mutual awareness and improve communication between professionals and families at risk of poverty. Mutual awareness is a precondition of integrated development, while without good communication between professionals and families at risk of poverty, even segregated services function less effectively.

Notes:
[1] Foucault in his economic sociology clearly distinguished between labor power (i.e. the capacity to work) and the capacity to generate income; to receive a wage through the help of one's work, also called capital-ability. The idea is that the basic element to be explained by economic analyses is not so much the individual, or processes and mechanisms, but enterprises (Gary Becker (2014) An appreciation by Michel Foucault, available at: https://kieranhealy.org/blog/archives/2014/05/04/gary-becker-an-appreciation-by-michel-foucault/ (15 March, 2019)).
[2] Prior to this period, human capital, educational investment and its productivity were analyzed by illustrious economists such as Adam Smith (1723–1790) ([1776] 1977), Thomas Robert Malthus

(1766–1834), Georg Friedrich List (1789–1846), Alfred Marshall (1842–1924) ([1873] 1995), Arthur Cecil Pigou (1877–1959) (1928), Arthur W. Lewis (1915–1991), Milton Friedman (1912–2006) and Jacob Mincer (1922–2006) (1958). The term "human capital" was probably first introduced by William Petty (1623–1687) in the seventeenth century (1662). See also Caldari (2010), and Krasniqi and Topxhiu (2016). Alfred Marshall suggestively sums up the core idea of human capital theory thus: *"… the best investment of the present capital of the country is to educate the next generation and make them all gentlemen"* (Marshall [1873] 1995, 106).

[3] In this context, "field" is interpreted as the person's social position within a given social space. A field is constituted by the conflicts of social groups in defining what cultural capital is, which type of cultural capital is legitimate, and which type is illegitimate. For more details, see: King (2005, 215–232).

[4] In this context, the "habitus" of a person is interpreted as embodied intellectual disposition and tendencies (See King 2005).

[5] Here we omit a presentation of the contribution of several theorists to the evolution of the concept. For a detailed history of social capital, see e.g. Woolcock (1998) or Farr (2004).

[6] This includes the right (a) to an adequate standard of living, healthcare, education, recreation, (b) to protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, (c) to participate in communities and to have programs and services for themselves.

[7] Some examples of European Union frameworks and policies for Roma inclusion: The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015, the Integrated Platform for Roma Inclusion, and the Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process.

[8] These two principles are implemented most efficiently if inclusion attempts start in early childhood. For more details, see the Roma Early Childhood Inclusion Overview Report. For truly effective Roma integration, the report envisages local community- and family-based programming in the European Union Member States (Bennett 2012). The same programming method is applied to the Hungarian Program to Combat Child Poverty presented in the chapter below.

[9] According to Hungarian legislation, disadvantaged children are those living in families that, in addition to having a low income, are affected by at least one of the following criteria: parents are minimally educated, or in a precarious employment situation, or the family has poor housing conditions. The status of multiple disadvantages applies when at least two of the three listed criteria are met.

[10] For the strategy in English, see http://romagov.kormany.hu/download/5/58/20000/Strategy%20-%20HU%20-%20EN.PDF (19 February, 2019).

[11] In 2007, 175 sub-regions were established in Hungary for the purpose of settlement development. Based on their infrastructural levels and the population's social and economic metrics, 47 of the sub-regions were defined as extremely deprived. In these sub-regions, complex cohesion programs were launched, one of which was the Program to Combat Child Poverty described in the study, and which operates in 23 sub-regions. From 2017 the program has been running in somewhat refurbished form and has been extended to eight new regions.

[12] The sub-regions participating in the program included 532 settlements, of which only 35 were cities, while 346 localities had fewer than 1000 inhabitants.

[13] In the third stage, three tenders were not awarded due to a lack of resources.

[14] Based on experience, involving the Roma population in the planning process proved to be troublesome in other regions as well. This was due to the general lack of Roma civil society organizations, and of Roma middle class as potential leaders, while the leaders of minority self-governments did not always turn out to be creditable representatives of the local Roma population.

[15] It was a general experience in the Program to Combat Child Poverty that mayors chiefly envisaged construction projects, thinking that new or renovated houses would remain assets of the

settlement even after the end of the program. However, they did not see the point in developing "human assets".

[16] A relatively high number of special needs teachers was necessary because, especially in certain segregates, many disabled children were eligible to attend.

[17] One innovative element was encouraging and supporting student enterprises in every school. Children were asked to create a product or service and then to sell it by finding the right market and sales channels. These enterprises, mostly successful, enabled students to obtain plenty of useful economic knowledge and skills that improved their future chances on the labor market.

[18] An obligatory element of the tender was the establishment of community centers with complex services, specifically in segregated settlements or neighborhoods, to mitigate the shortage of such services in these places which typically lacked them. Apart from the community houses with complex services for addressing all ages, additional community spaces included the Sure Start children's houses, after-school support programs, youth houses and IT points. However, unlike community service centers, these initiatives limited their activities to specific subject areas or age groups, and were not obligatorily restricted to segregates.

[19] The children's houses, inspired by the Sure Start program in the UK, constitute in Hungary a new kind of institution for supporting early childhood development. Besides promoting infants' early development and skill acquisition, they strengthen parental competencies by engaging parents and providing them with knowledge and experience.

[20] As also reported by the evaluation studies about the Sure Start children's houses, the general experience is that the social composition of the visitors of these houses sooner or later became homogenized, and either middle-class or poor families predominantly visited them. Both socially and ethnically speaking, there were only few houses with an integrated environment (Szomor and László 2014).

[21] Comfort services received a very mixed reception among the population of all regions. As one of the sub-regional evaluations reported, *"Initially ... there was strong opposition: partly because the non-Roma thought something [had been] done again 'only for the Roma,' and didn't understand 'why is it again the Roma who receive anything at all?' On the other hand, the Roma did not receive the bathing and washing facilities with enthusiasm, saying that they were clean, and could wash at home".* The feeling of shame was probably fed by the painful memory of forced bathing in the communist era, a means used by the leadership of the time to "elevate" the Roma who at that time were looked upon as a public order and health risk (Bernáth and Polyák 2001).

[22] In the most disadvantaged settlements, only 15-20% of homes had a piped water supply (*Sub-regional Mirror*).

[23] Camps and excursions were organized in a number of regions covered by the Program to Combat Child Poverty. Generally, involving the poorest families required extra effort. One of the reasons for this was – as already mentioned – that parents were reluctant to allow their children to go to places they were not familiar with. This issue was successfully overcome when trusting personal relationships already existed between organizers and parents. Another inhibiting factor was that some parents felt shame about not being able to provide proper clothing, equipment and bathing amenities for their children. Recognizing this, camps were often organized so that participants had all these amenities at their disposal.

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Appendix

Area of implementation of Program to Combat Child Poverty and proportion of disadvantaged pupils in elementary schools in Hungary, 2013/2014, sub-region level (%)