

## Limits of local self-government in the provision of “personal” social service in Slovakia



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### ABSTRACT

Social services provide a person with intervention and care from society. By activating a person through the use of social services, an individual reintegrates into social functioning, where he finds his natural place and thus, through his actions, the society keeps developing. Conceptually and competently, local self-government has suitable conditions for its citizens to provide social services that respond to their needs, as well as taking into account how the citizens' needs are concretized and what the demand for them is. Here, however, there is a need for research and analysis of demand, which the municipality should carry out in search of the types and forms of social services that it wants to effectively provide for the citizen. The aim of the article is to determine; what are the limits of municipal self-government in providing "personal social services" in Slovakia. The research was focused on identifying the most common problems and the demand for social services in relation to municipalities. In the 5 author's questionnaires, we focused on the hierarchy of the number of problems expressed, which most often led to the municipal self-government-the executive body of the municipality, the mayor. On the hierarchy of the most common problems, sets of questions and items were compiled for their solution by the municipal self-government. The results showed that mayors are limited by law in the provision of social services, but are not able to provide social services for the category of unemployed in terms of citizen activation.

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### 1. Introduction

Quality social services play a significant role in the quality of life of citizens. According to the principle of subsidiarity, local self-government is regarded as the crucial factor in the provision of social services. It is a system of providing for the needs of its inhabitants to enhance their development and the development of the community as well. Therefore, if we pay attention to the diversity of social services and the diversity of the needs of the population of particular local self-government, it is necessary to approach its analysis regarding individual human needs and the possibilities available to the local self-government. This mainly involves demographic factors and the needs of the population. The impact of social service on a person's life contributing to his activation


cannot be generalized because it is based on the individual's social life, dispositions, skills, and abilities. The basic unit of local self-government is the municipality, which is enshrined in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic and its definition is based on the concept of comprising persons with permanent residence in its territory. Its starting point from the point of view of law is the share of public power in the sense of granting municipalities the right to tackle certain matters in their own autonomous space, while from the point of view of the state there are means of control and oversight, which bring to the fore the preservation of constitutionality and legal regulation in decision-making matters. In addition, the local self-government is also responsible for managing its property and carrying out its financial affairs to meet the needs of the population living on its territory. This aspect corresponds to the principles of decentralization and subsidiarity, among other constitutional characteristics, which clearly define the meaning and purpose of local self-government (Jesenko and Gyuri, 2018).

The scientific approach to a theoretical definition of social work correlates with the principle of

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optimal social functioning of people. In the system of paradigms in social work, working with a person as a personality who has psychological equipment, with relationships to other people, with organizations, with relationships with the physical and social environment. Here we get to the resources, or rather to the fulfillment of needs, in the case of a problematic situation in which a citizen, a person finds himself. These can take the form of psychological support, information, retraining, material support, affordable housing, debt repayment assistance, etc. Therefore, we are talking about social care, social assistance, aimed at satisfying the individual to whom the local self-government is closest in meaning. However, the client does not have to be only the individual but also his family, group, and community. With the problem identified and defined, we again get to the environment where the client lives, namely, the municipality. Social work has specific elements, which are also included in the definitions in various forms, the scope of such activities is often dependent on political decisions, social services cannot be neglected, the scope and implementation of which are guaranteed and defined by law including local self-government.

In this sense, the principles of development of local self-government are set in a humanitarian context, the basis of which is to satisfy the needs and possibilities of cooperation of the citizen himself and to create such conditions that are in line with the perception of the citizen. The law also lists the obligations of the citizen, which correspond to certain participation of individuality in the development of local self-government. This means that the citizen is provided with conditions for incentives for the development of the community, but his cognition of needs depends on the level of his contribution and a motivational factor. On such a basis, we can conclude that a resident of a municipality who in some way participates in creating conditions that take into account their own needs and present their attitudes can become a recipient of social services under the Social Services Act, or the family as a group can become dependent at some point on social service (Lachytová, 2016).

It is possible to talk in general about the common good in meeting the needs, in which a person actively enters as an individual as well as a citizen. The provision of social services is a competence under the Act on Social Services of Municipalities and Other Territorial Self-Governments. They guarantee their security in terms of provision at a level that is given by quality standards. It is crucial for these entities to strike a balance between the different areas of legal competence. They are facing a challenging challenge in constantly monitoring the demand for social services in their administrative units, facing the issue of the possibility of meeting the needs of people in the field of social services, whether in the municipality, city, or region (Tóth, 2019).

The overall understanding of social services, which are based on services in the public interest, is linked to the principle of providing the citizen with local self-government and their focus on his needs. It is also important to implement them through activities and individual actions. However, it is not possible to define a uniform understanding on a European scale, given that in different European countries the names of social services differ based on their principles, implementation, providers, and systemic arrangements. Therefore, even regarding our research, it is necessary to clarify the individual understanding of social service, directly focused on the needs of individuality, i.e., the personal dimension. If we mean direct payments which generalize the client's problem as the lack of financial security, we cannot talk about social services because social service is to activate the client, not leave him to be a passive recipient.

Social services are understood in the intention of significant activities of several entities, including the state, self-government, and nongovernment organizations, whose goal is to solve social problems, support and develop individuality so that it is self-sufficient for social life in its natural environment, its maintenance, restoration and reduction of risks arising from social or health insufficiency. Social services are an integral part of the municipal policy with an emphasis on a broad context as well as part of the development of the municipality in the economic and social field. Services of general interest are defined in a narrow context with the provision of health care, social assistance, social services, humanitarian care, etc., where these services are not sufficiently covered by the state and therefore require the participation of non-profit organizations, i.e. the non-governmental sector which can implement these services in partnership with the municipality (Kaliňák et al., 2017).

The diversity of social services and their goals, which are aimed at meeting individual needs and are defined in the Social Services Act, give scope for the development of local self-government with the coordination of several entities because if we take into account the territory of individual municipalities, its population, and other areas self-government administers it is not possible to guarantee the provision of every single social service as its provider. Therefore, it is first of all necessary to create conditions within a specific municipality for mapping the needs of the population, their summarization, and analysis in the context of concretization and uniqueness of the municipality (Lachytová, 2018).

If we mean the individual nature of social services, we can speak of personal social services", and in the context of the European scale, it is clear what the principle of providing social services is (Brichtová and Repková, 2014). In the Slovak Republic, this concept is not enshrined in law, but the law defines, as mentioned above, the obligations of the service provider, but also the principles of

effectiveness and efficiency of social services per person.

We can talk about personal social service, which has undergone a certain development and which, according to historical research, at the end of the 19th century, was a matter mainly of philanthropic and self-help organizations. Perceiving the focus of the state in terms of the social-democratic social regime, social services were provided primarily by local authorities and employees. Examples are countries such as the United Kingdom, where local government authorities were the main providers, but also in Sweden, on the principle of the welfare state, the main providers of personal social services were local authorities. In the example of countries with a conservative welfare state regime, such as Germany or Italy, NGOs play an important role. Subsequently, in a way, according to the regime and orientation of individual countries, in terms of personal social services, they focused on the population as local authorities or in certain periods, but again according to individual countries and also third sector organizations, is non-governmental organizations. Neoliberalism has contributed to this, especially since the 1980s. During this period, Sweden was inclined to provide personal social services from the perspective of city units and society. In this sense, symbioses have already begun to emerge in the context of business orientation. During that period, Germany responded to the provision of personal social services through the prism of private providers. Central and Eastern Europe have undergone a process of decentralization, with increased responsibility for providing services at the local level. The states of this part of the European area were diverse and in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the provision of personal social services remained within the competence of the public space. The current period brings various and different trends, where the municipal sector comes to the fore again, is self-government, but also other forms of partnerships in the context of the non-governmental sector and other actors or providers (Wollmann, 2018).

Here we are talking about a social criterion, a certain characteristic that takes into account a part of the client's problem, such as a person with a disability or an unemployed person. It is necessary to set aside programs providing contributions and name it differently, not a social service, which through direct activity should activate the client to be able to function optimally. Personal social services include the following services: 1) long-term care, care for the elderly and care for the disabled, 2) social integration and reintegration services (with an emphasis on migrants), 3) labor market services targeted at disadvantaged groups, and persons with disabilities, 4) childcare (services provided to families before children start kindergarten and afternoon services for school-age children), 5) social housing (Brichtová and Repková, 2014).

We can comprehensively analyze the social service as a system of ensuring the needs of the

citizen, who, however, perceives his own needs individually and very subjectively. Therefore, the question arises as to how the executive body of the municipality, which "manages" the life of the municipality, can provide such a social service that the citizen is interested in. The mayor of the village directs his professional interests to the satisfaction of citizens. In terms of municipal self-government, we, therefore, design a social service provider.

When presenting the law on social services, attention is paid to the obligations of the provider of social services. In this context, we also perceive the municipality or its entities that actually provide social services. The provider is obliged-a) to take into account the individual needs of the recipient of social services - in this context, if the social service is provided by the municipality or its entities, it also calls for mapping the needs of residents living in the municipality and the cooperation of residents. Furthermore, the obligation-b) to activate the recipient of social services according to his abilities and possibilities-as for the population, the municipality tries to socially rehabilitate the dependent so that it can actively take part in the development of the community, nevertheless, it needs to be stressed that in social service facilities not only the inhabitants of the municipality according to the local jurisdiction are primarily included. If we perceive the provision of social services in the sense of local self-government, then it is primarily the needs of its inhabitants. According to the law, the provider is obliged c) to provide social services at a professional level, d) to cooperate with the family, municipality, and community in creating conditions for the return of the recipient of social services provided in a year-round facility to the natural family environment and preferential provision of social services in the field, on an outpatient basis, a weekly residency form with the consent of the recipient of the social service and while respecting his personal goals, needs, abilities and health status (Oláh and Roháč, 2020; Tkáčová, 2015).

The requirements for quality social services were also modified in the system of law. The criteria for the various social services are defined as follows: a) should promote the independence and autonomy of users (not by providing the services increase their dependence), b) should promote inclusion and integration (not by providing the service strengthen the exclusion of the user from the community and deepen social isolation), c) they should be based on respect for the individual needs of the beneficiaries (in the sense of the rule that "one size does not fit all"), d) they should be based on the partnership between different actors (as social services represent a multidisciplinary and multisectoral agenda), e) their quality should be guaranteed (as a way to effectively protect vulnerable people), f) they should be based on equality without discrimination (no one can be excluded from the benefit of social services) (Brichtová and Repková, 2014).

In the conditions of the Slovak Republic, we are talking about social services in accordance with applicable legislation. Social services are broken down by type. However, it is important to perceive them in the context of individual character, where a certain conflict may arise, in providing social services at a flat rate, as determined by law, or to look for ways to define the main problem or an unfavorable social situation within the territorial unit, namely mayors and respond to needs current and specific.

Through instruments, self-governments can focus on the provision, maintenance, and expansion of social services for their citizens, even at the systemic level. Legislative instruments, i.e., generally binding regulations, are general regulations that bind the citizen to implement them, however, they have to be in accordance with higher regulations. An important factor in the provision of social services is also the administrative tools through which the municipality provides and directs economic activities and the use of local resources. Economic instruments respond to the finances and assets of the municipality. Information and communication tools take an important role in terms of monitoring the effectiveness of the use of other tools. These include information centers, counseling centers, municipal marketing, building information systems, public relations, and e-government. We consider these tools to be a broad-spectrum system in all areas of self-government development, but their use aims to achieve the set goals and improve the quality of life of the population to which social services respond similarly with their impact on quality of life (Horanská, 2018).

According to Act *Zbierka zákonov (2008)*; on social services, the so-called partnership can also be a provider of social services, in which it is a grouping of persons created for the purpose of implementing projects and programs that mitigate the adverse impact on citizens. The partnership can be formed mainly by the municipality, Self-Governing Region, the Labor Office of Social Affairs and the Family, representatives of the community (in our case municipalities), and other persons. On this basis, municipalities can conclude various groups, while meeting the needs of citizens in terms of social services. Primarily in such a direction, if the municipality is not able to provide and provide personal social service.

## 2. Methodology and results

In connection with the above theoretical starting points, we focused our research on local self-government as a provider of social services. Our aim was to determine whether the municipality provides a particular type of social service based on the identification of the needs of its citizens or whether it provides a standard service knowing the system of service provision based on knowledge of the majority of the country's population resulting in the offer of the service or services.

The primary goal of the study was to focus on the citizen's main "problems" that led to the need. The goal was to follow the findings as a municipality if the mayor solves the problem and the needs of the citizen regarding personal social service.

We compiled questionnaires in five so-called modifications. It was primarily a question of what problems citizens present to their mayors, executive bodies of municipal self-government, and what personal social services, in which the problem, subsequently the municipality solves the needs of the citizen. That is, what social services does it provide and where is for which the problem and needs of the citizen to the municipality have limits and barriers.

From the above aim, we set research questions:

1. What is the most common problem of the inhabitants of the municipality regarding the provision of social services?
2. What need arises from the problem of the citizen to the most widespread?
3. What personal social services does the mayor solve the problem of the citizen with?

We found out what type of social services is provided in Slovakia by the local self-government within the Košice region. There are 440 municipalities within the Košice self-governing region, 17 of which have town status. Due to the most densely populated areas, the research sample consisted of municipalities near the regional town of Košice (EURES, 2020).

For a better orientation, we offer a legal provision of social services available to the municipal self-government in which it provides, due to the problem of the citizen, which ultimately implies the need for social services, which should be individual, in terms of personal social services.

The Act on Social Services (§ 12) divides social services according to type as follows: 1. social services of crisis intervention which are: a) field social service of crisis intervention, b) provision of social services in facilities such as -low-threshold day center, -integration center, -community center, -dormitory, -shelter, -halfway home, -emergency housing facility, -low-threshold social service for children and family, 2. Social services to support the family with children: a) assistance in personal child care and support for the reconciliation of family and working life, b) provision of social services in temporary childcare facilities, c) early intervention service, 3. Social services to deal with an unfavorable social situation due to a severe disability, an unfavorable state of health, or the attainment of retirement age: a) the provision of social services in facilities for natural persons who depend on the assistance of another natural person and for natural persons who have reached retirement age, b) home care service (hereinafter referred to as care service), c) transport service, d) guide service and reading service, e) interpreting service, f) mediation of interpreting service, g) mediation of personal



assistance, h) device lending, 4. Social services using telecommunications technologies: a) monitoring and signaling needs for assistance, b) crisis assistance provided through telecommunications technology 5. Support services: a) relief services, b) assistance in securing custody rights and obligations, c) providing social services in the day center, d) support for independent living, e) provision of social services f) provision of social services in the laundry, g) provision of social services in the personal hygiene center.

These types of social services may be provided in the outpatient field or residential form or in another form (e.g., by telephone or using telecommunication technologies) according to the unfavorable social situation and the environment in which the natural person resides. In total, there are 283 social service providers in the register of social service providers kept at the Office of the Košice Self-Governing Region. In 2014, this office issued 718 decisions on reliance on social services and placed 90% of citizens applying for social services (where dependence on social services is assessed) in facilities providing social services, which represents 621 citizens. Based on the concluded agreement on the provision of financial contributions with 71 providers of social services (non-public and other public) in 2014, the Office of the Košice Self-Governing Region provided a financial contribution for a total of 1,358 places, namely: 522 places in the social services home, 164 places in specialized facilities, 108 places in a supported housing facility, 61 places in a rehabilitation center, 38 places in a halfway house, 270 places in a shelter and 130 places in an emergency housing facility. It also funded 3,000 hours of interpreting service, 943 hours of social rehabilitation, and a grant for 23.5 specialized counselors (Vucke, 2016). All these facilities are in the competence of the Košice self-governing region, which globally covers the register and financing of social services for the benefit of the citizen.

In the research, we monitored the provision of social services by type and by the form of provision. Based on these findings, we summarized the provision of social services by municipalities, while copying the needs of citizens in a particular municipality to a sufficient extent. Distribution and counseling for a citizen in an unfavorable social situation were provided directly by the municipal self-government, or the municipality was responsible for providing the type of social service in its territory as well.

We addressed the individual municipalities with the questionnaire method. We sent the questionnaires online, directly to the municipality's email. Each questionnaire contained 35-37. Together, we distributed 5 questionnaires, which included questions and items designed regarding the problems most often interpreted by citizens when visiting the municipal office. They express the need.

This means that the first item in each questionnaire was based on a hierarchical arrangement of the most common problems of citizens. Mayors as recipients had to hierarchically organize and name the situation as the overall name of the client group, which is most often shown, while the subsequent questions in the first modification led to the first most common problem of citizens, where we formulated items for citizens' needs and solutions. The last group of questions mapped the limits and barriers in solving the problems in social services. The second modification of the questionnaire was aimed at identifying the second most common problem of the citizen, the third modification mapped the third most common problem, the fourth modification followed the respondents mentioned the fourth most common problem of the citizen and the fifth modification. In the hierarchy, where mayors determined the order of the most frequent problems of citizens that citizens need to solve with social services, it turned out that the analysis resulted in 6 groups dependent on social services, which the mayors mentioned.

We used the Chi-square test at the significance level  $p=0.05$  to analyze the data obtained from the research. We selected the answers where we noticed the most significant difference in the answers.

We addressed 94 municipalities, whose location is strategically close to the second-largest city in Slovakia-the city of Košice, which belongs to the Košice self-governing region, within the district of Košice-surroundings.

District Košice-Okolie has 114 municipalities, while 111 municipalities have a website, but 3 municipalities do not have a website (Sodbtn, 2021).

Relevant sets of questionnaires were returned from the addressed municipalities in number, regarding municipal self-government 78 (82.97%).

Fig. 1 shows the number of dependents in percentage when the respondents, the mayors of municipalities commented on the typology of dependents coming with their requirements or needs regarding personal social services to municipalities. Of the total number of clients who in a certain period of time, in our case 6 months, came with applications for local self-government, according to the statements and analysis of the results of the questionnaire in percentage terms depended-in terms of health in 15% %, dependency due to disability in 13%, dependency due to age-seniors in 22%, dependency-as large families in 8% and dependency-from an economic point of view in 15%. This means that these aspects correspond to the main problem which significantly limits the optimal social functioning of the individual.

As mentioned, we mapped the solution to the problems of the given groups from the point of view of municipal self-government. Under the statutory provision, the recipients expressed themselves in accordance with the applicable legislation, i.e., in terms of the form of social service provision.

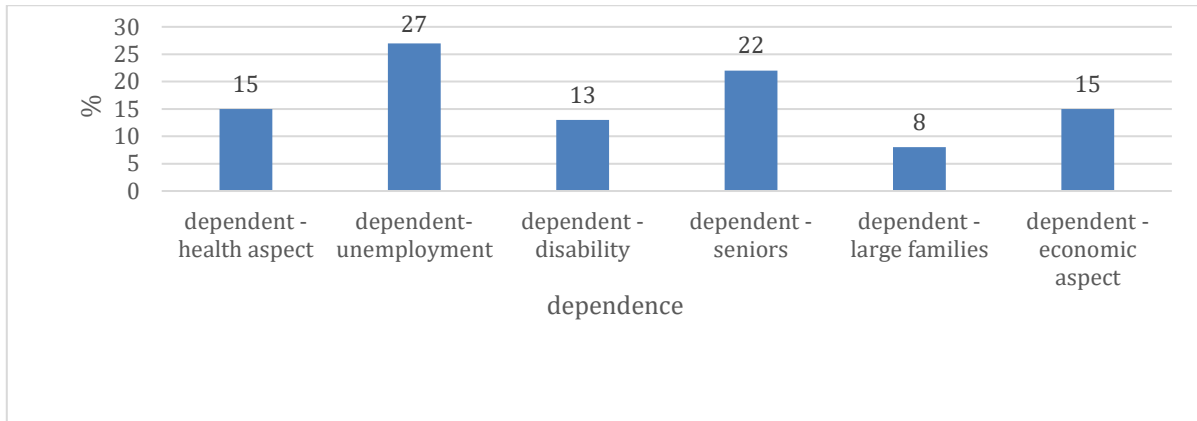


Fig. 1: The number of dependents

Fig. 2 shows the percentage of the most requested form of social service which proved to be outpatient in 58% as a service, in 26% clients requested a

residential form of service, and in 16% it was fieldwork of social service.

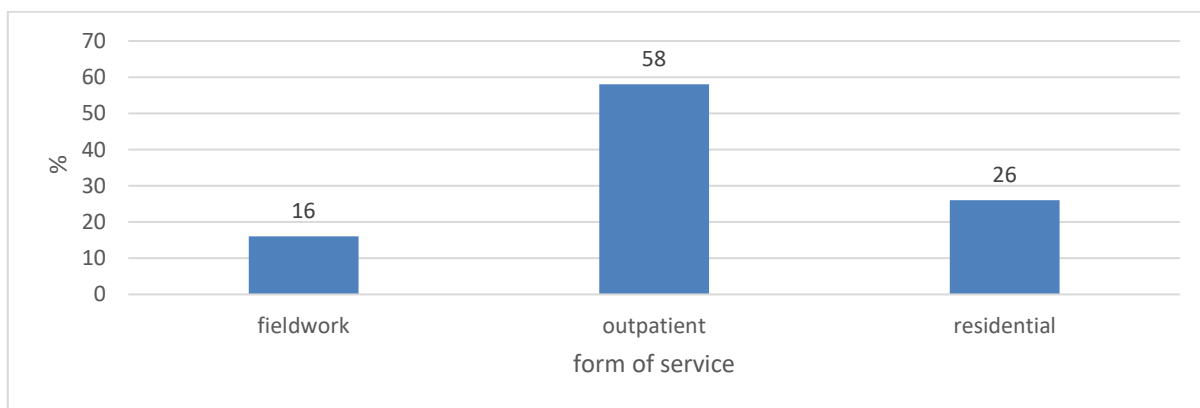


Fig. 2: Form of social service

Recipients stated that due to social situations and the primary social problems of dependence they can currently and effectively address:

1. Dependency-disability
2. Dependency-seniors
3. Dependency-health aspects (unfavorable health conditions)
4. Dependency-large families
5. Dependency-unemployment
6. Dependence-economic aspect-in general

However, what raised the question and the subsequent investigation was the absence of social services for unemployed citizens. It is clear that such a specific social service is not defined as a type, but within professional activities, there are such professional activities that view the citizen in terms of "personal" social services. There is strong social control in local self-government. The target groups who come and ask the municipality for help, guidance, or a definitive solution to their situation perceive the relationship between the representatives of the municipality and the citizens as confidential and human. The municipality is therefore interested in solving not only one direct problem of the citizen but his entire situation so that he can participate in the development of the municipality.

It was in our interest to interpret the problem of unemployment in the locality more closely because the mayors were inclined to the attitude that the situation is a problem for the citizen, and this is where they see the limits of municipal self-government because legislatively a social service it is not enshrined in legislation and therefore not provided by the municipal self-government.

The issue of unemployment for individual territorial self-governing regions is also mapped in the following Table 1. The Košice region, which we mapped in our research, is remarkable due to its close settlement by municipalities. In summary, as of 28 February 2021, there was an increase in the number of unemployed people in the Košice region, namely, 383, which represents 10.97% unemployment, while it is the second region in the Slovak Republic with the highest number of unemployed. It is necessary to draw attention to the fact that the city of Košice is the second-largest city in Slovakia, so a smaller percentage could be expected, given the area, population, and job opportunities.

Older data showed that employment in this region copies demographic factors and locality as such. Workers commute to work from municipalities, mostly to cities. However, in the given region, 15% are short-term employees working abroad, mainly in Austria and the Czech Republic.

**Table 1:** Unemployment in the Košice Region as of 28.02.2021 by region ([Dlznik.zoznam, 2020](#))

Region	Number	Increase/Decrease	Unemployment rate
Bratislava Region	18296	+170	4,91%
Trnava Region	16452	-23	5,36%
Trenčín Region	17904	-90	5,55%
Nitra Region	21810	+216	5,88%
Žilina Region	25255	+135	6,77%
Banská Bystrica Region	37325	+270	10,22%
Prešov Region	51643	+388	12,00%
Košice Region	<b>45603</b>	<b>+383</b>	<b>10,97%</b>
Slovak republic	234288	+1449	7,09%

The latest indicators show that at the end of March 2020, the registered unemployment rate in the Košice Region was 7.68%, which represents 29,393 available job seekers, which is the second-highest unemployment rate in Slovakia. At the end of March 2020, the highest unemployment rate in the region was in the district of Rožňava (12.14%), the lowest in the district of Košice III (3.01%). The majority of the unemployed are people with secondary vocational education or only with completed basic education who are taken on mainly on an occasional auxiliary or seasonal basis ([EURES, 2020](#)).

From this point of view, we can argue that the subsequent poverty and no activation of the citizen, only the passive receipt of temporary financial assistance, significantly affects the increase of socio-pathological phenomena. The Košice Region is one of the regions in Slovakia with a persistently high unemployment rate.

For example, there is a direct link between poverty and unemployment, and a 2006 US study found that to protect the poor who are homeless, a safety net needs to be provided before poverty occurs (directly linked to unemployment, as a person without a job does not have an adequate income) the phenomenon of homelessness becomes. The social safety net is intended to provide programs and policies aimed at tackling the phenomenon as an individual problem ([Bild et al., 2008](#)).

Further, research has shown that the unemployment rate is related to income, where the unemployed may experience, due to low income, lower demands on social services, while the municipality may have lower costs for providing one whose social services, but staying with social services is more pronounced, but higher unemployment rates also include higher expenditures if the number of recipients of social services increases ([Tran et al., 2018](#)).

The questionnaire questions showed that the mayors perceive the main problem of unemployment among the unemployed, so the respondents stated that the biggest problem is that the residents have no jobs, so they have no way to ensure income and active activity. Given that the questionnaires showed that the main need was not to present work as employment and services that would provide them with access to work employment, in a way, it was an accompaniment and guidance in finding a suitable job. Subsequently, it turned out that the mayor could not provide such

personal services. Systematically, such clients depend on state aid or state benefits, without applying the principle of subsidiarity. We found out what is the rate of clients who address municipalities in solving the problem of unemployment. There was a significant difference in responses.

As many as 98% of the respondents responded to the high level of demand from the citizens, where the main problem was unemployment. There was a significant difference in the item of a possible solution of the client situation by the municipality, up to 95% of the respondents could not imagine any help other than from the state or Social Insurance Company or benefits in material need and immediately directed the client to the relevant institutions. There was also a significant difference in the issue of using the possibility of activating such a client through a social enterprise. This form of assistance and activation of the client was demonstrated in only 3.84% of the addressed municipalities. In the case of the analysis of associated problems resulting from unemployment, the recipients expressed in up to 68% that they would be able to recommend or specify a different type of social service.

Based on the above, it is clear that unemployment does not exist as a separate and only problem of the client, but the client often considers it a primary barrier to social functioning. With its activation and proper guidance, the problem could be eliminated and the level of unsolvable problems, such as health disorders and other problems, corresponding to the overall exclusion of the individual, would not rise.

### 3. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can state that there is a direct connection between the provisions of social services by the municipality, with the delineation of its competencies, but also the analysis of social services in terms of providing needs to the citizen whose activation helps the development of the municipality. Municipalities as such have a wide range of social services, but their focus is not "personal" on the client, but more or less copy the system settings. However, current legislation allows municipalities to respond to the needs of citizens in the type and form of social services provided.

The research indicated the enthusiasm of municipalities in providing social services to citizens but also identified the limits in perceiving the needs of their inhabitants. The results also show that an

important problem that a person cannot manage independently is his applicability in society in terms of employment in the context of perceiving the benefits of his personality.

The results of the research showed that the municipality has the greatest limits in providing personal social services for a citizen whose main problem is unemployment. We analyzed the provision of social services in 78 municipalities. The mayor expressed the hierarchical arrangement of the most common problems that citizens come to the municipal office, demanding the provision of social services. In the analysis, we conceived the results of 5 modifications of the questionnaires, but in the results, the mayors, as a recipient, created 6 groups of dependent citizens, according to the interpretation of the problem, respectively the state. In the presented group, the mayors did not state the limits and barriers in the provision of social services but expressed the attitude that they do not have the competence or legislative framework to address the unemployed with social services. Only 3.84% of respondents admitted a certain "form" of social service to a social enterprise, but up to 68% would be able to help an unemployed citizen with social services if this situation were not their main problem.

The results of the research identified the limits and barriers in the provision of social services by the municipality. It is oriented in the sense of valid legislation and does not have the space to perceive the individual needs of the citizen, which results from his problems.

The municipality cannot provide social services to citizens where the primary problem lies in exclusion from the work process, neither in terms of social counseling nor in terms of social rehabilitation nor in terms of creating an environment in which such a clientele would be employed.

At present, great emphasis is placed on municipalities regarding the solution of the unemployment situation of citizens who, due to unfavorable health status, age, or low qualifications, have a problem finding employment. Here we also have space for social entrepreneurship or similar entities which in the non-profit sector can on the one hand meet the needs of others and on the other hand create specific jobs in the villages for citizens who lack activation through work.

However, the situation is now particularly critical with not only these groups but also many citizens losing their incomes due to the loss of employment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which often leads to social mobility within the stratification of social groups. It remains appropriate to appeal to public administration intervention mechanisms that will help overcome the crisis situation associated with the problem of unemployment. This article is a partial output of the project VEGA 1/0595/21–Public administration interventions at the time of COVID-19 and their impact on the quality of life of citizens of selected communities.

## Compliance with ethical standards

## Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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