




**Measuring the impact of interventions in the area of social inclusion**

**The ex-post evaluation of the European Social Fund (2000-2006)**

**Janos Setenyi, Expanzio Consulting**  
**setenyi@expanzio.hu**

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**The Evaluation Task**

- **Ex-post evaluation of ESF 2000-2006 (obligatory task, DG Employment, European Parliament)**
- **The focus was impact and not management**
- **The TOR precisely defined evaluation areas and evaluation questions (EQ)**
- **The original goal was to provide an input to the *planification* of the forthcoming budgetary cycle**

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## Areas of Evaluation

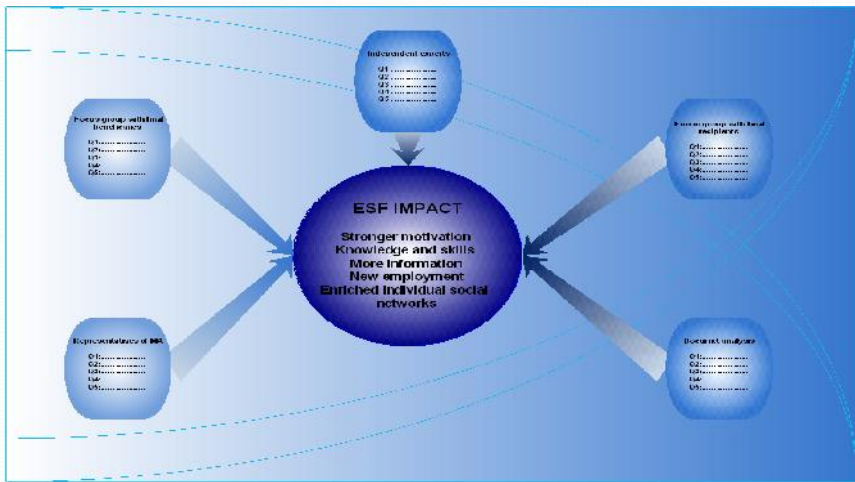
- I.a - Utilization of Resources
- I.b - Level of intervention
- II.- LLL, work force adaptability, information society
- III. - Labour market and impact on employment
- IV. - Social Inclusion
- V. Gender

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## Defining the impact (social inclusion)




**ESF IMPACT**

Stronger motivation  
Knowledge and skills  
More Information  
New employment  
Enriched individual social networks

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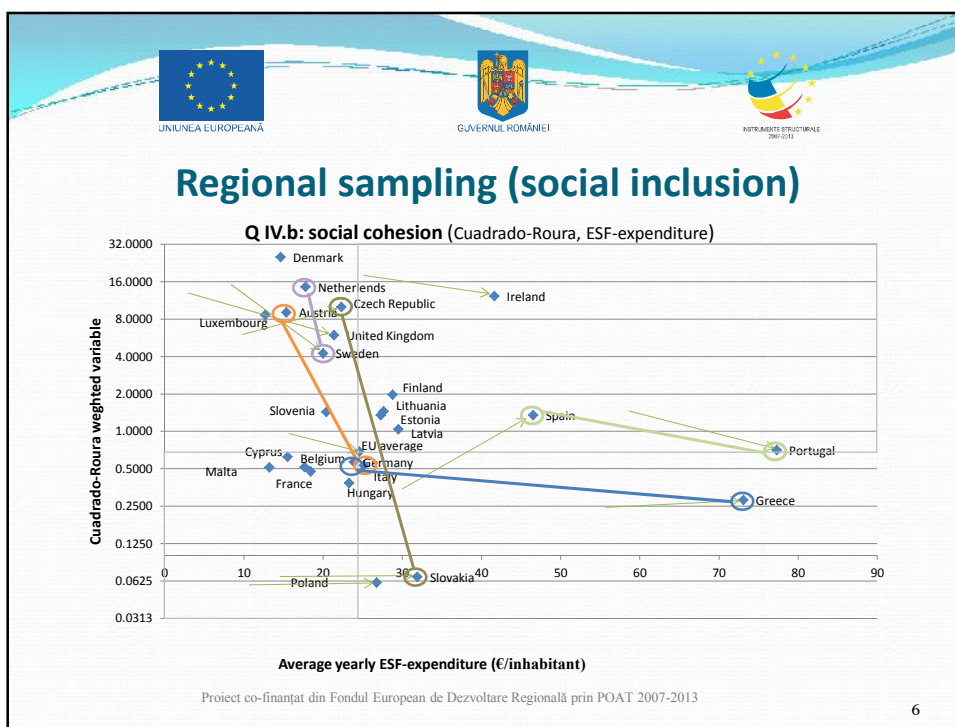



## Methodological problems

- **Impact on what level? (EU, Member State, region, localities)**
- **Scope? There is no way to provide statistically convincing samples for counterfactual evaluation**
- **Theory-based impact evaluation (both qualitative and quantitative) was proposed**
- **The data base (especially financial data) was extremely limited and unstructured**

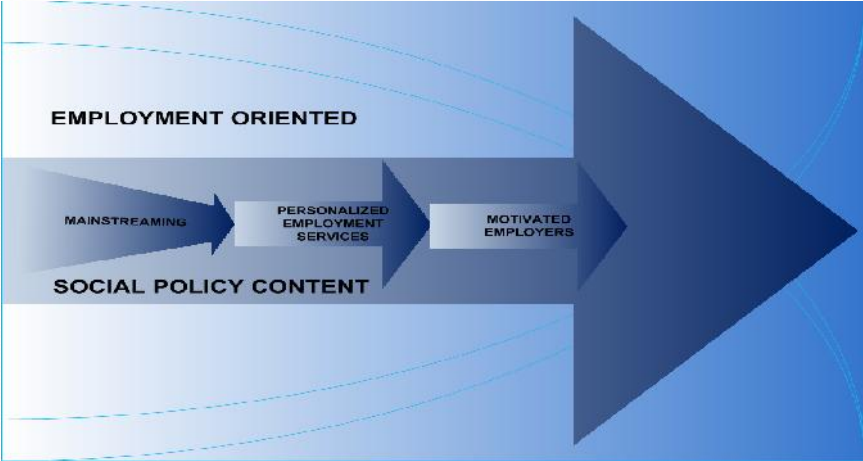
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### Findings I. An impact-focused regional model (Flevoland)



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### Findings II. An impact-focused MS model (Slovenia)

- National strategy on the use of the Structural Funds in 2000
- Ministry of Labour coordinates
- Creative approaches: *“Contrary to the mainstream ESF approach real social groups and persons in need are difficult to describe with the mainstream categories. For instance ESF has many programmes for young people but the real crisis group is the 20-35 age old, reasonably educated, derailed and somewhat segregated young people”*(Former director of Managing Authority, Slovenia)
- Conscious localization
- The Management Authority as a learning organization
- Embedded media, strong public control low level of corruption

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## General conclusions

- There is no detectable and positive macro-level impact of ESF. In many cases there is a negative correlation between the ongoing social trends and the amount of invested resources.
- Meso-level is the most optimal level of ESF interventions. There is measurable and positive impact of the initiated innovation and public policies (modernization of public employment service, educational reform etc.).
- The micro-level impact of ESF seems to be positive although the depth and the efficiency of changes are hard to estimate.
- ESF itself is rather a product of historical evolution than a mission oriented organization.
- There is a chain of interpretation between planning and implementation; the idea of linear implementation is an illusion.
- Impact is mostly defined by the quality of social/economic/cultural environment.

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## Some recommendations to increase impact

- **Is ESF a strategic instrument of European policy-making or rather a tool of North-South wealth redistribution and solidarity?**
- Segments of population and actors should become the main programming units to which certain amount of funds, specific outreach strategies and certain targets should be attached.
- Interventions should be focused to the most adaptive level of investment (meso level) instead of helping individuals
- Integration between ESF and other structural funds as well as other national policies should be improved, although, at the same time, the role of ESF also needs to be better specified, and the capability of programs to respond to discontinuities should be increased.
- Indicators, monitoring, controlling, evaluation circuits must become more relevant and flexible.
- Rewards should be made more effective and promoted at all levels.
- Transfer of knowledge and systems of knowledge management should become one of the most distinctive, adding value feature of the ESF and one of the main role of the European Commission.

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