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Social Protection and Integration
Inclusion, Social Policy Aspects of Migration, Streamlining of Social Policies



Social Experimentation for Active Aging

Local Mapping/Base-line report

THE CZECH REPUBLIC:

Situation of Target Group and Activities in the Region of České Budějovice

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1. Introduction

This study is a base-line analysis of the situation of people aged 50 and over in the Czech Republic. The RILSA is taking part in the international project related to the topic of preparations for population aging, the purpose of which is to evaluate activities (the CZ selected project ALMP) leading potentially to integration of people aged 50 and over into the labour market. Such activities are considered significant in the context of improving situation of people from groups with specific problems in getting a job. Regarding people aged 50+, this problem is even more highlighted in the context of the expected significant aging of the population in numerous European countries in the following twenty years (in CZ extremely significantly). The said processes may be an important risk both at the macro-economic level (public finance instability, problems of social security systems), and at the individual level (necessity to leave the labour market prematurely, poverty in the old age). This is why we must look for such methods of assistance which will support participation of these people in the labour market.

Within the project “Social Experimentation for Active Aging“, in the Czech Republic we focus on the tool promoting self-employment of elderly people. In the European context, this activity is rather innovative in several aspects, since employment policy tools promoting self-employment are not frequently utilised and at first sight they seem to be of little convenience for the target group of people over the age of 50. In the Czech Republic, nevertheless, programmes focusing on enterprise promotion have been created in the long run, which gives us a good opportunity to acquire background knowledge and utilise implementing teams’ previous experience of these programmes. Project aims are primarily in acquiring knowledge on effects of the programme on the labour market integration and social improvement and in the development and dissemination of transferable methodology of social experimenting.

This base-line study focuses on acquisition of background knowledge about the situation in the monitored area and should serve as one of the groundwork document for implementing the respective project we are preparing. The purpose of the local base-line study is to get an overview of the current situation in the region of České Budějovice regarding the position of elderly people and their social integration into the labour market (particularly, through self-employment activities). Specifically, the study focuses on:



1. Identification of key areas and trends related to an active integration of elderly people (social problem identification level).
2. Identification of current activities/services provided in relation to the afore-mentioned social problem and to aims of the pilot action in the region of České Budějovice.
3. Determination of priorities and aspects of the current measures which are not sufficiently covered by the current forms of intervention and determination of confrontational tension between the currently performed measures and potential innovations which may lead to improvement of the current situation.

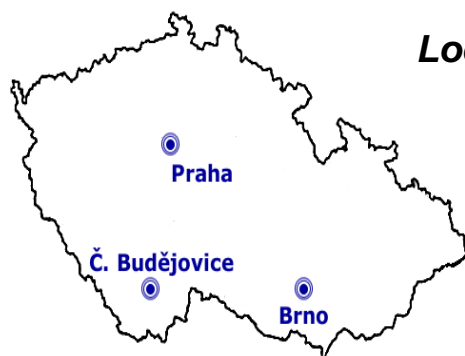
The structure of this base-line study corresponds roughly to the afore-mentioned aims. Our focus is always on both the local level and the national level. For one thing, the national level produces important socio-economic context of implemented measures, for another, it is a valuable source of information, since the measures (of the current policy) we monitor in this study are implemented in the nation-wide scale (though not entirely identically in all regions). In order to produce this study, we utilise a secondary analysis of available data, summaries of publications in particular (studies published in magazines and reports from surveys carried out in recent years, many of which were produced directly by the RILSA), in addition, we utilise aggregated data from national and local sources and cooperation with LARG members and other personnel of the Public Employment Services (PES).



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Locating city of České Budějovice

Administrative division of the České Budějovice region (source of the map: labour office 2010)





2. Situation on the labour market in the Czech Republic and in the region of České Budějovice (in relation to people aged 50+)

This section is focused on the contents analysis of the specific studies focusing on unemployment evaluation and other related aspects of the problem covering the target group of people aged 50 years and over – as for the utilised data, in this section we mostly include data provided by the labour office in České Budějovice and national statistics.

2.1. Czech Republic

Overall economic situation and unemployment

In the period from 2005 to the half-year of 2008 the Czech Republic was experiencing a significant economic decline, which has also been accompanied by a radical drop in unemployment since 2006. In the second half of 2008 the economic crisis started to show and the unemployment level restarted its marked increase (see Table 2.1).

Table no. 2.1 **Labour market in the Czech Republic 2000-2008**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
GDP (real interannual increase/decrease in %)	3.6	2.5	1.9	3.6	4.5	6.4	6.4	6.5	3.5	- 4.3
Unemployment rate December (%)	8.8	8.9	9.8	10.3	9.5	8.9	7.7	6.0	6.0	9.2
Average length of unemployment (days)	x	x	484	530	567	610	649	659	539	413
Average age of the unemployed – 4Q 2009	35.1	35.3	35.8	36.3	37.1	38.6	39.2	40.4	39.8	39.1
Proportion of the unemployed aged 50+ (%) – 4Q 2009	16.2	17.1	19.4	20.8	22.4	25.2	27.1	30.6	29.7	26.6
Proportion of people with primary education or incomplete primary education (%) – 4Q 2009	31.6	32.1	31.5	31.4	30.6	30.7	31.4	31.6	30.2	26.7
Long-term unemployment (>12m.) (%) – 4Q 2009	38.4	37.1	37.2	40.3	40.6	41.7	41.2	38.6	28.8	23
Long-term unemployment (>24m.) (%) – 4Q 2009	19.1	22.0	21.3	23.1	24.9	26.1	27.2	25.9	19.3	11.6

Source of the table: Hora et al. 2009, Sources of data: <http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/stat>, except for GDP: <http://www.czso.cz/>



Situation of citizens aged 50+ on the labour market

In the Czech Republic, the unemployment rate of elderly people (over 50 years old) is constantly lower than the unemployment rate of the other age groups, but in recent years the unemployment rate has been growing faster among these people than in the other age categories (Kotíková, Reml et al. 2007). Also, in recent years the average age of the unemployed has slightly increased and the proportion of people over the age of 50 among the unemployed stabilised at 30 percent (see Table 2.1). In the course of the economic crisis, however, elderly workers were the relatively less impacted category, since younger workers were dismissed more frequently (nevertheless, in absolute figures the increase of the elderly unemployed is significant). Simultaneously, it shows that all categories have not had identical chances for eliminating unemployment (see below).

2.2. The region of České Budějovice

Background information about the region

The pilot project promoting self-employment will be carried out across the entire area/region of České Budějovice. České Budějovice is a small region in the south of Bohemia, populated by about 186 thousand inhabitants. The regional centre is the city of České Budějovice, with the population of approx. 95 thousand people (see the map on the previous page). The region is characterised by a high population density, lower presence of industrial plants and extensive focus on services and tourism (from the long-term perspective, the positives of the region include geographical position near the borders with Germany and Austria). At the same time, this region has a significant (above-average in the context of CZ) representation of elderly inhabitants. In the future we can expect further aging of the population in the region. The character of the region can be described as rather rural, conservative, or traditional.

Labour market situation

In the long run, České Budějovice has been showing a low unemployment rate as distinct from the other CZ regions (3-4% of the unemployed versus 6-10% in the entire Czech Republic). Nevertheless, at the time of the crisis the region of České Budějovice was affected by growing unemployment and decreasing job opportunities. Although no mass dismissals occurred in the region, the monthly average number of the unemployed was growing significantly (from 3,488 people in 2008 to 5,495 people in 2009) (Labour Office 2010) and unemployment has grown to the maximum in last several years.



Labour market situation of citizens over the age of 50

At the end of the year 2009, the region of České Budějovice registered 1,580 job applicants over the age of 50 (by almost 50 percent more than previous year, which is, however, similar as in the other age groups). In 2008, the specific unemployment rate of the elderly people aged 50-54 (see Table 2.2) hovered around the average 4% (3% of men and 5.1% of women), however, in the age group of 55–59 years, it was 8% (5.6% of men and 13.5% of women) and in the age category over 60 years it was 4.1% (5.7% of men and 1.1% of women)¹. In 2009 unemployment grew significantly particularly in the endangered category of workers aged 55-59, where unemployment increased by 4.3 percent points (the specific unemployment rate among women in this age category amounted to no fewer than 18.1%).

Table 2.2: Specific unemployment levels by age and gender groups in 2008 and 2009

Age categories	Unemployment level (number of reg. applicants / ⁿ working population as at 03.03.2001)					
	As at 31.12. 2008			As at 31.12. 2009		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
20 - 24 years	5.0	5.2	5.1	7.5	9.1	8.2
25 - 29 years	3.1	3.8	3.4	5.4	7.1	6.2
30 - 34 years	3.0	6.1	4.4	5.4	9.1	7.1
35 - 39 years	2.2	5.0	3.6	4.7	7.7	6.2
40 - 44 years	2.4	4.1	3.2	4.3	5.6	4.9
45 - 49 years	2.0	3.0	2.5	3.6	4.7	4.1
50 - 54 years	3.0	5.1	4.0	5.4	6.4	5.9
55 - 59 years	5.6	13.5	8.0	9.8	18.1	12.3
60 years and over	5.7	1.1	4.1	7.5	0.9	5.3

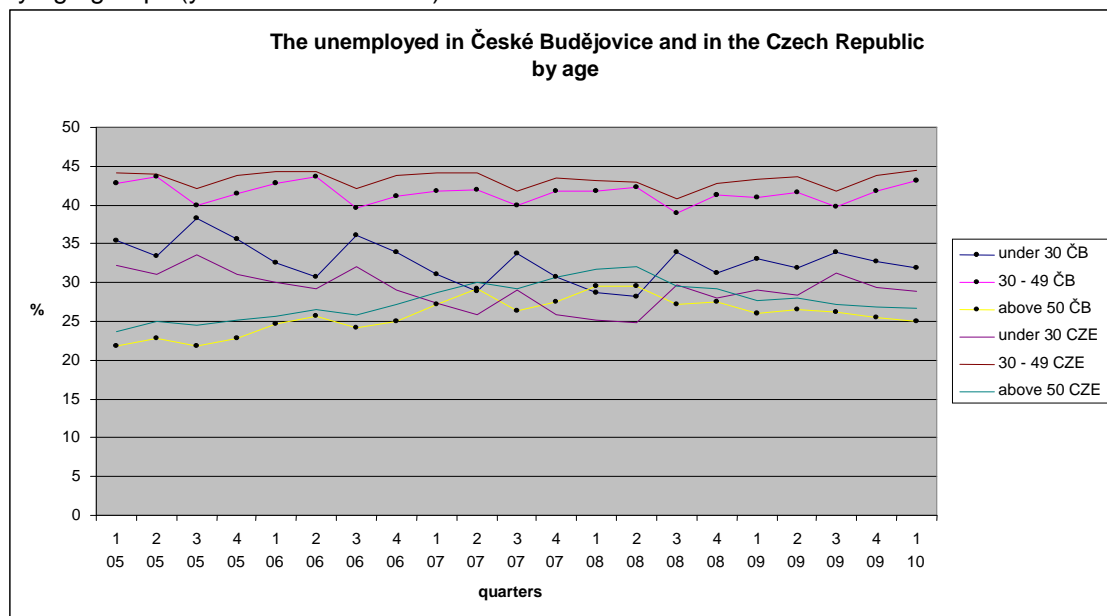
Source: Labour Office 2010, unemployment rates are related to the population in 2001 by the nation-wide population survey "SLDB".

¹ The situation of people over the age of 60 is specific, since in the Czech Republic the age prescribed by law as retirement age is lower for women (if they had children) than for men and many workers can utilise the institute of earlier retirement.



With regard to the other unemployed, the group of people aged 50+ makes up one fourth of the total number (Graph 2.2a), ranking among the less employable groups in the long run.

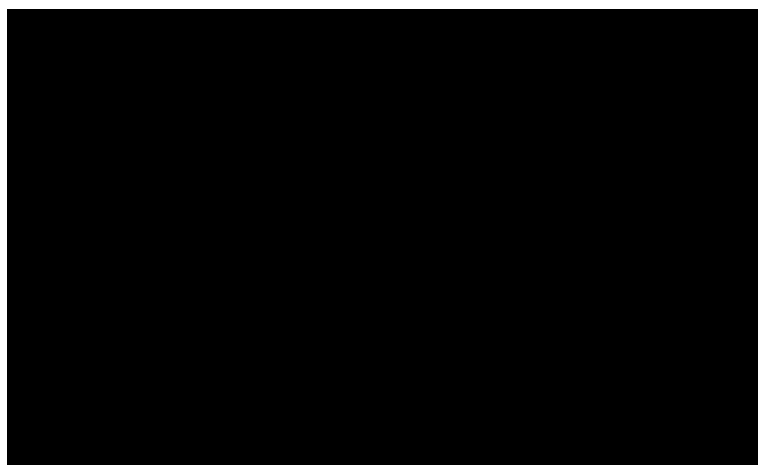
Graph 2.2a. Structure of the unemployed in the region of České Budějovice and in the Czech Republic by age groups (years of 2005 - 2010)



Source: based on MoLSA data available at <http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/stat>

Should we look closer at characteristics of the unemployed aged 50+ and compare them with the other age groups of the unemployed (database “OK Práce”), we find out that in recent five years (from 2005 to 2009) the proportion of men in the age group 50+ has been hovering above 50% similarly as in the group of less than 30 years of age, whereas the proportion of men in the age group of 30- 50 has not been less than 40% (Graph 2.2b).

Graph 2.2b. Proportion of men in various age groups of the unemployed

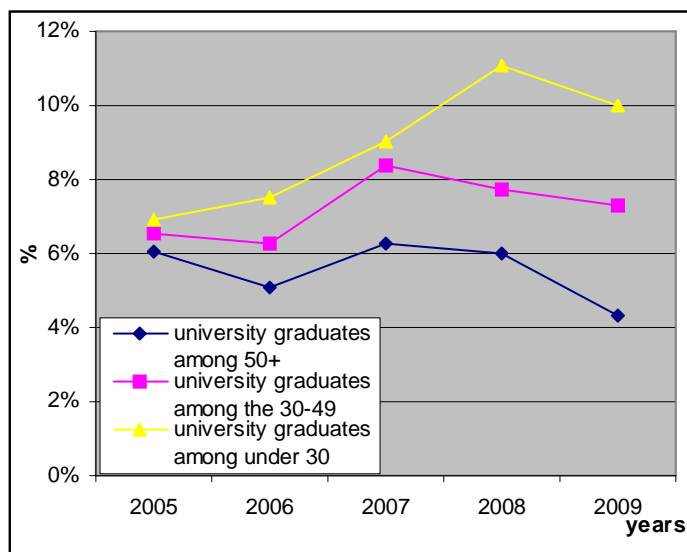


As far as education is concerned, it can be said that in comparison with the other age groups the unemployed over the age of 50 include less academically qualified people, with their



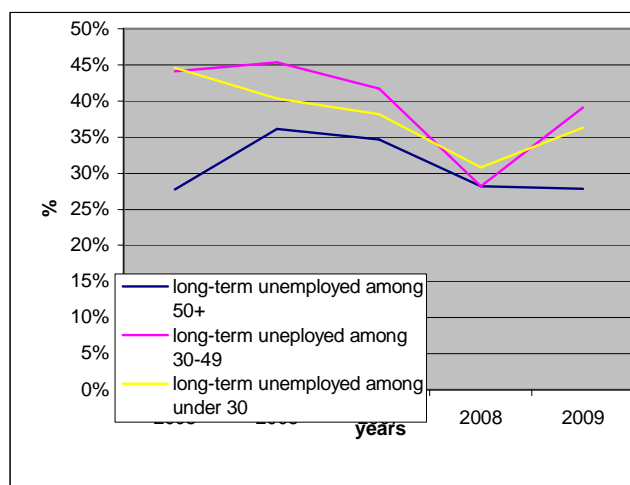
percentage hovering around 6% in the long run. Moving through the age categories downward, their proportion is growing by about 2% (Graph 2.2c). We would get a picture of the same meaning if we looked at the proportion of the unemployed with primary education. Among the unemployed aged 50+ their proportion is by about 10 percent point higher (30% versus 20% in the other age groups).

Graph 2.2c. Proportion of the academically qualified in various age groups of the unemployed



Nevertheless, the relatively low educational level of the unemployed aged 50+ does not make them a group endangered by unemployment in the long run, which can be illustrated by Graph 2.2d. Whereas the proportion of the long-term unemployed in the group of 50+ hovers around 30% in the long run, in the younger age categories it is by about 10% more.

Graph 2.2d. Proportion of the long-term unemployed in various age groups of the unemployed





2.3 Evaluation of aspects of life situation typical for elderly workers with regard to their employment

Elderly workers are globally viewed as a group which has significant problems in terms of employment (STEM 2006). Typical reasons for a reduced chance of the elderly job applicants are their worsened health condition (especially movement and sensory difficulties, occupational diseases), a lower level of education, in some cases higher wage demands (reservation wage) because of their advanced job experience and accustomation to a certain standard of living and strong bonds to the location of their dwelling, consequence of which is their low mobility/unwillingness to commute to work. From employers' perspective, an obstacle can consist in employers' anticipating low flexibility and adaptability of elderly workforce, lower work productivity (e.g. in manual professions), low unwillingness to make efforts for their own improvement and also a low return on investments in the human capital (see STEM 2006), which often result in practices at the verge of indirect (statistical) discrimination of elderly job applicants (e.g. on the grounds of estimating the job applicant's age from his/her physical appearance) (Hora 2008). In accordance with so called 'expectancy model', some applicants (particularly in the pre-retirement age) become sceptical due to repeated refusals by employers (negative experiences, psychological constraint, humiliation) (Hora 2008, Hora and Žižlavský 2009). Consequently, they can actually lose hope for employment and choose the strategy of surviving the remaining period until removal from the labour office register at old-age pension retirement.

On the contrary, elderly workers are highly valued by employers for their long-time work and life experience, their higher degree of responsibility and loyalty, also for their more judicious and well-balanced decision-making, systematic approach, reliability, lower fluctuation and higher time flexibility (Kotíková, Reml et al. 2007). Therefore, we see that for the same attribute a worker can both highly valued, and refused – e.g. rich work experience may lead to the elderly worker's higher quality of performance, and at the same time to his/her higher expectations in terms of wage. There is no univocal accord in the literature regarding high or low flexibility of elderly workers. It can be interpreted that although elderly workers have presumably better conditions in terms of time to be flexible (i.e. enough of free time), their "biological" dispositions are lower, showing in a lower ability and willingness of the organism to respond to external changes (i.e. location bond, fixed daily regime).



According to the available CZSO data, self-employed people aged 50+ make up a significant percentage of Czech entrepreneurs (more than 30 percent). Nevertheless, it is probable that these people started their businesses as the middle-aged twenty years ago, when after the change of the political regime new entrepreneurial opportunities opened in the then almost vacant sphere of commercial services. On the contrary, proportion of people starting business in the elderly age is low.

A bond extremely important for our project is between evaluation of the target group's situation and efficiency of measures taken (with regard to the need to support new, more efficient types of measures via social experiment). Prerequisites for implementing our local pilot action are as follows:

- Unemployment of elderly people in the region of České Budějovice increased most rapidly in comparison with the other age groups and concurrently we expect aging of the population (size of the social problem and need of intervention);
- The fact that success rate of the existing aid to the self-employed provided by LO in České Budějovice in cooperation with the South-Bohemian Chamber of Commerce is very high (see Section 4 below);
- We believe that aspects of the social experiment create room for an increase in unemployment of elderly workers by means of innovation of the existing aid scheme for the self-employed, particularly in encouraging elderly citizens to run business and in aligning the retraining programme to specific of this age group.



3. Outline of proposed local pilot action

Unemployed elderly people in the Czech Republic are a specific group of the unemployed because of prevalence of some specific characteristics. The problem is not their number but very limited routes back to the labour market. Most of the dismissed elderly workers choose a total withdrawal from the labour market to economic inactivity if they are eligible for pension benefits (early retirement, old age pension after reaching statutory retirement age, disability pension). If an elderly person becomes unemployed, it is usually for rather a long time and it is extremely difficult to bring him/her back. Reasons for it are barriers on the employers' side as well on the side of elderly workers.

Based on experience of employees of labour offices, most of the elderly unemployed people are lacking motivation in further education. Elderly people who lost their job often suffer from deteriorating psychological well-being in terms of decreasing self-confidence.

Active labour market programmes aimed at elderly unemployed people based on the preferential treatment of this group of the unemployed in different schemes are not effective enough. Reasons of their very low effectiveness are following:

- Active labour market programmes in the Czech Republic are financially and personally underdeveloped,
- These programmes are not targeted enough at unemployed elderly people,
- Elderly people without any paid employment are not interested in part-time employment. Working time or working organisation flexibility in case of elderly people is not supported substantially.

PROPOSAL

LARG will be established in the region of České Budějovice. This region shows a relatively low unemployment rate (6.2% in March 2010). On the other hand, the turnover in employment is scant. That means if somebody lost his/her job, it's quite difficult to find a new one. From this point of view, self-employment could partially solve the problem.

But in case of the elderly unemployed doubts can exist in terms of using self-employment schemes. First, a statistic shows, that only 5% of the self-employed were 50-59 years old when they founded new business. The proportion of this age cohort is almost 20% in the



population. Second, programs that help the potential self-employed to found and run new business have been already available.

It means that self-employment schemes could be a potential solution for elderly workers, but this time there is only small interest in becoming the self-employed.

Some reasons why elderly people don't become a self-employer include e.g.

- The elderly unemployed don't know about the schemes;
- The elderly unemployed can't imagine what they should do as a self-employer;
- The elderly unemployed are searching for a more secure job; and
- The elderly unemployed are less flexible and are less motivated to learn new things.

The goal of our pilot action will not be only to experience a new intervention, but to find motivators and barriers why to become a self-employer.

Therefore, we plan these actions:

- **Small survey** within the target group with the purpose to find out how many of the unemployed are willing to become a self-employer, people in which profession or education level are more willing to become a self-employer and motivators and barriers.
- **Information and motivation phase** – we see this phase as very important. Therefore, in this phase which information and motivation methods are the most optimal will be tested. It will be done in consecutive but separate steps (each monitored and evaluated separately):
 - **Information on the bulletin board in the labour office** (this is a quite widespread way now)
 - The **advisor informs** about the possibility of participation in our pilot action
 - The **advisor motivates** the unemployed (**in a group**) to become a self-employer, which business each participant could realize (individually).
- **Psychological testing of competences** – one's own business requires special competencies. We will use psychometric tools to assess competencies of candidates.



- **Training of business knowledge** – participants will take part in an intensive training (about 160 hours). The topics will be: registration, marketing, trade, human resources, accounting, business plan, etc.
- **Individual and group consultancy regarding the business plan** – this consultancy will run simultaneously with the training.
- **Financial support** – we will try to negotiate the financial support for founding one's own business.
- **Group sessions** – 2 group sessions after founding one's own business. There are two purposes of sessions: 1) to discuss and consult together problems of running business, and 2) to evaluate the pilot action.

Timing:

Action	timing
Survey	Summer 2010
Information and motivation phase	September 2010
Psychological assessment	September 2010
Training of business knowledge	October – December 2010
Individual and group consultancy	October – December 2010
Financial support	January 2011 - ? (if any)
Group session 1	March 2011
Group session 2	June 2011

Proposed number of participants: 2 groups, 10 people in each



4. Current actions undertaken/services provided to meet the needs of elderly people in relation to (self-)employment

In this section we deal with programmes which are focused on integrating the target group of the elderly membership into the labour market (especially on the field of self-employment). While implementing measures/programmes of self-employment promotion, primarily important are the programmes implemented or assigned by regional and local labour offices (PES) within the national or European employment policy. In this respect, self-employment promotion is one from the broader range of tools in the active labour market policy. Another important body implementing measures of self-employment promotion is the Czech Chamber of Commerce and its regional offices which offer support primarily at the methodological level, via consulting and training, or other entities (educational or non-profit institutions). Nevertheless, the majority of programmes are implemented either by PES directly, or by PES cooperating with other entities.

4.1 Active labour market policy and evaluation at the national level

The active labour market policy started being implemented in the Czech Republic as early as several years after the change of the political regime in 1989. Measures of the active labour market policy have been implemented in accordance with the Employment Act (no. 1/1991), later pursuant to the Act no. 435/2004 currently in force, and recently a significant part of ALMP was implemented within programmes of the European Social Fund (ESF). The analysis of measures under the active labour market policy has also a relatively long tradition in the Czech Republic. The first evaluation study was carried out by RILSA's experts in 2001 (Sirovátka and Rákoczyová 2001). In the initial years studies were carried out on the local labour markets (unfortunately the region of České Budějovice was not among them), later studies covered the entire Czech Republic. Therefore, when presenting findings on programmes we must use the national context as a basis.

In this base-line study, apart from the general context of implementation of the active labour market policy in the Czech Republic we will specifically focus on two basic questions: a) how far measures of the active labour market policy are targeted at persons aged 50+ and b) how far, based on current experience and analyses, the tool of the active labour market policy focusing on promotion of starting self-employment by the unemployed.



In terms of the number of implemented measures and expended funds the Czech Republic, compared internationally, can be considered a country with a relatively low extent of implemented measures – the situation improved partially in recent years before the outset of the economic crisis thanks to the possibility to utilise funds from the European Social Fund (see Table 4.1). During the economic crisis (2008-2010) the extent of measures under the active labour market policy was rather limited again.

Table 4. **Extent of programmes under the active labour market policy in the Czech Republic**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of the unemployed at the year-end	510 416	448 545	354 878	352 250	539 136
Number of participants in the ALMP programmes					
Public-benefit work – national	16,846	18,011	12 374	7 708	4,834
Public-benefit work – ESF	–	–	–	8 538	14,960
Social-purpose jobs – national	25,129	25 417	16 706	9,987	6,859
Social-purpose jobs – ESF	–	–	–	2,769	13,349
Measures for graduates (school-leavers) to gather experience – national	28	2 [3]	–	–	–
Sheltered workshops and workplaces: establishment – national	1,592	1,606	1,284	974	1231
Sheltered workshops and workplaces: aid for operation – national	7,914	9,608	8,235	9,349	10,315
Aid for a new start (bridging contrib.) – national	1,051	1,234	898	691	n.d. [3]
Subsidy for commuting – national	3,609	2,085	1,350	999	n.d. [3]
Retraining – national and ESF[1]	41,318	53,504	57,031	40,220	39,831
Targeted programmes (pursuant to Article 120 ZoZ)	–	2 323	868	43	11
Targeted ESF programmes	–	–	–	–	193
ESF programmes (without detailed specification) [2]	–	27,227	37,655	16,584	10,596
Expenditures in thousand of CZK – national	4,027,853	4,023,011	3,572,804	3,453,489	2,216,909
Expenditures in thousand of CZK – ESF	–	1,277,664	2,100,517	2,678,240	2,736,558

Data sources: *portal.mpsv.cz*, *The 2007 Statistical Labour Market Year-Book in the Czech Republic (Statistická ročenka trhu práce v České republice 2007 (MoLSA 2008), 2008 (MoLSA 2009) and 2009 (MoLSA 2010), Analysis of employment and unemployment development in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 (MoLSA 2006-2010).*

Note: [1] As for retraining, statistics cannot differentiate whether the programme is national or from the ESF. [2] Prior to 2008, regarding schemes financed from the ESF no differentiation was made for different types of programmes, since 2008 differentiated in these programmes are SÚPM and VPP (separate lines in the table) – the remaining programmes are named ESF OP HRD, JPD 3, OP HRE (they are likely retraining and other schemes promoting employment). [3] These measures were cancelled in 2004 (graduates' experience gathering) and in 2008 (bridging contribution, contribution for commuting).

Tools traditionally used by the Czech government labour market policy for supporting people with problems relating to the long-term unemployment and employability were primarily retraining courses (programmes of recovery and enhancement of qualification) (abbreviated below as REK), social-purpose jobs (career preparation and subsidized jobs) (SÚPM), public-benefit work (work for the benefit of municipalities or communities) (VPP) and programmes of jobs for people with health disabilities (SCHDP). In the Czech Republic,



ALMP tools in their part aiming at public-purpose jobs include self-employment promotion which is the most important part for our base-line study. Roughly since 2006 a considerable amount of funds for implementing measures of the active policy was received from resources of the European Social Fund (ESF). Simultaneously, principles related to activation of the unemployed were enforced more noticeably in the public employment policy of the Czech Republic, particularly in the system of considerable restrictions on qualification for unemployment benefits and social benefits in the regime of material emergency, more frequent application of the sanction of excluding the job seeker from PES register and a flat introduction of some of the new consulting tools, especially the Individual Action Plan (IAP). In recent years particularly, the ALMP put more emphasis on job creation schemes rather than on measures focusing on recovery and development of the human capital. Whereas in traditional measures of the active labour market policy continuously performed analyses showed a certain effect (especially in programmes promoting employment in the private sector) on more frequent de-registration (from PES register) in the short-term and medium-term horizon (Hora et al. 2009), activation measures have not been evaluated comprehensively yet; however, it is obvious that they produce mixed results.

4.1.1 Focus of measures of the active labour market policy on people aged 50+

Generally it can be assumed that most programmes of the active labour market policy will be less focused on people aged 50+. This phenomenon can be explained by several different reasons: from the perspective of the programme implementing bodies, elderly workers need not always have necessary qualifications for a successful completion of the programme and a potential for subsequent employment on the labour market, there might be considerations on age-related decreasing benefit of investments in the human capital (to offer measures for elderly people will not pay off), but also a lack of interest by the unemployed themselves may play a role in this regard (low motivation, unwillingness to learn anything, waiting for retirement) (Sirovátka et al. 2004). Nevertheless, the overall result shows low participation of elderly workers in schemes of the active labour market policy as a factor contributing to the risk of social exclusion of these people (limited access to public aid more available for the other categories).

Some former studies focusing on evaluation of targeting of ALMP measures by age category (Sirovátka et al. 2002, Sirovátka et al. 2003a, Sirovátka et al. 2003b, Sirovátka et al. 2004, Sirovátka et al. 2006, Sirovátka and Kulhavý 2007, Hora et al. 2009) did prove that in the course of the whole respective period the group of workers aged 50+ was less represented in most of the monitored measures in comparison with the other age groups. It can be



explained by three potential factors: a) low perception of elderly workers as an endangered group, b) at the lower volume of implemented measures in total younger of the unemployed were preferred, c) (since the 1990s) a contrary effect is in the gradually growing proportion of the elderly workers among the unemployed (which meant, while preserving the proportionality of the targeting, a lower targeting on this age group). To illustrate the proportion of elderly workers in the ALMP in the Czech Republic, we may use detailed data from one the recent studies evaluating measures of the active labour market policy, which we together with our colleagues carried out on the 2007 data from the system OKpráce² (Hora et al. 2009).

In the two following tables borrowed from the afore-mentioned analysis we present the extent of public measures of the active labour market policy in the Czech Republic in 2007. For explanation of abbreviations representing types of the ALMP programmes refer kindly to the beginning of this chapter. The first table (4.2) shows the structure of ALMP participants launched in 2007 by representative features, the second table (4.3) shows a focus of each type of the programme on certain categories of the unemployed. We present here the volume of the unemployed in the given category that take part in specific types of programmes. Both tables imply that in 2007 the category of people aged 50+ was relatively 'disadvantaged in the access to the programme' as distinct from the other age categories. Comparing different age groups, higher, or at least similar proportion of programme participants can be found in programmes of public-benefit work, sheltered workshops and workplaces for people with health disabilities and social-purpose jobs. Among other things, it indirectly indicates that these elderly workers can be perceived as less convenient for some types of programmes (e.g. retraining). Participation in the aforementioned programmes where their representation is proportionally comparable with the other age groups may rather indicate 'a solution of the last pre-retirement post'. The unemployed whose employability on the open labour market seems to be unrealistic are placed in some of the programmes of sheltered job in the private, public or social-business sectors. Self-employment promotion programmes are targeted on this category of the unemployed only rarely. Just 10% of participants of these programmes are more than 50 years old and the programmes are

² Data of the OKpráce system contain information from the administrative database of separate labour offices. The data on individual unemployed people present in the labour office register are therefore selected and anonymized, including relatively detailed data on attendance of active labour market policy programmes.



joined by mere 0.1% of the unemployed aged 50+ (in contrast to 0.4% in age categories 25-34 and 35-49 years).

In terms of gross effects of ALMP on the unemployed (de-registration, or no return to the register), some of the surveys bring findings that although the elderly unemployed are placed in the programmes in a lesser degree, benefit from their participation in terms of their employment on the labour market can be relatively significant (Sirovátka et al. 2006). This finding has been also confirmed by the study by Hora et al. (2009), where participation in the register was monitored with regard to a group of programme participants and a group of non-participants (quasi-control group). Table no. 4.4. specifies percentages of both groups that stayed in the register after 30, 60, 90 or more days (after completing the programme by the monitored group, or from the first day in the register in the monitored year for the quasi-control group). Whereas in the group of programme participants aged 50+ about half of the unemployed stayed in the register after 30 days, in the group of the unemployed non-participants it was more than 80 percent. At the end of the monitored period about one quarter of the participants stayed in the register and about one half of the unemployed. The ALMP programmes for this group seem to be useful also for the reason that it is a group whose chances to leave the register without attending the programme are very low compared to the other groups.

Table no. 4.2: Structure of new participants of implemented programmes in 2007 and the structure of the unemployed in total (last column)

GENDER (in %)	R	VPP	SUPM	CHRD	SVČ	IAP	ESF	Ú. APZ	UNEMPL.
Women	62.6	38.7	57.5	62.1	49.9	54.4	65.8	58.5	51.4
Men	37.4	61.3	42.5	37.9	50.1	45.6	34.2	41.5	48.6
Total N (= 100%)	39130	7154	11188	581	1831	7459	28210	74701	635831
EDUCATION (in %)	R	VPP	SUPM	CHRD	SVČ	IAP	ESF	Ú. APZ	UNEMPL.
Primary	15.1	41.8	13.2	28.9	5.4	21.8	19.6	19.8	24.6
Apprenticeship	40.2	47.8	42.6	52.5	43.7	40.3	38.7	41.6	43.2
Secondary (school-leaving exam)	39.3	9.6	39.2	17.6	42.4	34.0	36.5	34	26.3
University	5.4	0.8	5	1	8.4	3.9	5.2	4.6	5.8
Total N (= 100%)	39130	7154	11188	581	1831	7459	28210	74701	635224
AGE CAT. (in %)	R	VPP	SUPM	CHRD	SVČ	IAP	ESF	Ú. APZ	UNEMPL.
Under the age of 18	1.0	0.5	1.4	0	0.5	4.6	1.1	1.4	2.4
19-24 years	15.0	7.2	33.3	2.4	19.0	41.6	13.5	18.9	18.7
25-34 years	27.6	17.6	20.3	16.5	34.5	20.1	26.2	24.7	25.6
35-49 years	36.4	34.6	21.2	37.9	36.0	20.5	36.9	32.7	27.9
Over 50 years	20	40.1	23.9	43.2	9.9	13.3	22.3	22.3	25.5
Total N (= 100 %)	39,113	7,151	11,176	581	1,831	7,458	28,201	74,662	635,465
HEALTH COND.(in %)	R	VPP	SUPM	CHRD	SVČ	IAP	ESF	Ú. APZ	UNEMPL.
Good	76.0	70.1	78.1	3.1	87.4	82.0	70.6	74.6	75.2



Health restriction	12.5	12.0	8.3	2.2	7.6	10.3	14.5	12.1	11.2
ZPS	2.7	2.9	3.0	23.7	1.6	1.8	3.3	2.9	1.8
CID plus ID	8.8	15.0	10.6	70.9	3.4	5.8	11.5	10.4	11.7
Total N (= 100 %)	38,729	7,129	11,023	578	1,808	7,413	27,960	73,987	626,390
PREVIOUS REGISTRAT. (in %)	R	VPP	SUPM	CHRD	SVČ	IAP	ESF	Ú. APZ	UNEMPL.
0-180 days	22.9	7.2	28.8	15.2	23.8	40.5	19.2	22.6	n.d.
181-360 days	14.9	8.4	15.6	11.4	18.8	14.3	12.8	13.7	n.d.
361-720 days	20.0	17.2	20.1	19.2	23.2	16.7	18.2	19	n.d.
721+ days	42.2	67.2	35.5	54.2	34.2	28.5	49.7	44.8	n.d.
Total N (= 100 %)	39128	7139	11105	572	1831	7459	28175	74537	n.d.
REPEAT. UNEMPLOYED (in %)	R	VPP	SUPM	CHRD	SVČ	IAP	ESF	Ú. APZ	UNEMPL.
Monitored register only	27.9	8.3	37.5	20	31.9	36.2	26.1	27.6	35.2
1 previous registration	23.5	12.8	23.5	24.3	25.4	22.0	23.3	22.1	22.0
2 previous registrations	17.3	14.7	14.8	18.9	16.5	15.7	17.4	16.6	15.0
3 previous registrations	11.3	14.2	9.5	13.4	10.2	9.8	12.1	11.3	9.8
4 previous registrations	7.4	11.6	5.7	6.9	6.9	6.1	7.6	7.5	6.4
5+ previous reg.	12.7	38.4	9.0	16.5	9.1	10.2	13.6	14.8	11.6
Total N (= 100 %)	39,113	7,151	11,176	581	1,831	7,458	28,201	74,662	635,465

Source: 2007 data of the database "OK práce".

Note: Abbreviations explained in the text of Section 4.1. Discrepancies in the number of programme participants are caused by missing data (e.g. on health status), when cases with missing data were not included in the analysis).

Table no. 4.3: Representation of groups of new participants in programmes in 2007

GENDER (in %)	R	VPP	SUPM	CHRD	SVČ	IAP	ESF	Ú. APZ
Women	7.5	0.8	2.0	0.1	0.3	1.2	5.7	13.4
Men	4.7	1.4	1.5	0.1	0.3	1.1	3.1	10.0
Total %	6.2	1.1	1.8	0.1	0.3	1.2	4.4	11.7
EDUCATION (in %)	R	VPP	SUPM	CHRD	SVČ	IAP	ESF	Ú. APZ
Primary	3.8	1.9	0.9	0.1	0.1	1.0	3.5	9.4
Apprenticeship	5.7	1.2	1.7	0.1	0.3	1.1	4.0	11.3
Secondary (school-leaving exam)	9.2	0.4	2.6	0.1	0.5	1.5	6.2	15.2
University	5.7	0.1	1.5	0	0.4	0.8	4.0	9.3
Total %	6.2	1.1	1.8	0.1	0.3	1.2	4.4	11.8
AGE CAT. (in %)	R	VPP	SUPM	CHRD	SVČ	IAP	ESF	Ú. APZ
Under the age of 18	2.6	0.2	1.0	0	0.1	2.3	2.1	6.9
19-24 years	4.9	0.4	3.1	0	0.3	2.6	3.2	11.9
25-34 years	6.6	0.8	1.4	0.1	0.4	0.9	4.5	11.4
35-49 years	8.0	1.4	1.3	0.1	0.4	0.9	5.9	13.8
Over 50 years	4.8	1.8	1.6	0.2	0.1	0.6	3.9	10.3
Total %	6.2	1.1	1.8	0.1	0.3	1.2	4.4	11.7
HEALTH COND.(in %)	R	VPP	SUPM	CHRD	SVČ	IAP	ESF	Ú. APZ
Good	6.2	1.1	1.8	0	0.3	1.3	4.2	11.7
Health restriction	6.9	1.2	1.3	0	0.2	1.1	5.8	12.7
ZPS	9.0	1.8	2.8	1.2	0.3	1.2	8.1	18.7
CID plus ID	4.7	1.5	1.6	0.6	0.1	0.6	4.4	10.5
Total %	6.2	1.1	1.8	0.1	0.3	1.2	4.5	11.8
REPEAT. UNEMPLOYED (in %)	R	VPP	SUPM	CHRD	SVČ	IAP	ESF	Ú. APZ
Monitored register only	4.9	0.3	1.9	0.1	0.3	1.2	3.3	9.2
1 previous registration	6.6	0.7	1.9	0.1	0.3	1.2	4.7	11.8



2 previous registrations	7.1	1.1	1.7	0.1	0.3	1.2	5.2	13.0
3 previous registrations	7.1	1.6	1.7	0.1	0.3	1.2	5.4	13.5
4 previous registrations	7.1	2.0	1.6	0.1	0.3	1.1	5.3	13.8
5+ previous reg.	6.7	3.7	1.4	0.1	0.2	1.0	5.2	15.0
Total %	6.2	1.1	1.8	0.1	0.3	1.2	4.4	11.7

Source: 2007 data of the "OK práce" database.

Note: Abbreviations explained in the text of Section 4.1.

Table no. 4.4: ALL PROGRAMMES – Presence in the register after X days

AGE CAT. (in %)		30	60	90	120	150	180	210	240	270	300	330	360
under 18 years	ALMP particip.	50.9	45.5	41.1	38.1	35.1	32.3	34.7	35.3	34.0	29.9	30.9	31.2
	control	48.6	46.0	43.9	41.0	37.4	34.9	34.5	33.7	31.3	31.5	33.2	34.1
19-24 years	ALMP particip.	26.9	21.8	18.0	15.5	13.6	12.2	10.6	9.5	9.0	8.6	8.8	8.3
	control	42.3	33.9	30.2	26.0	22.2	19.0	17.8	16.7	15.3	14.7	14.3	14.6
25-34 years	ALMP particip.	44.2	38.1	33.2	29.6	26.1	23.8	21.1	19.4	18.0	17.0	16.7	16.0
	control	56.4	46.5	41.9	37.0	33.4	30.0	28.0	26.7	25.2	24.8	24.9	25.9
35-49 years	ALMP particip.	51.3	46.1	41.5	37.2	33.4	30.4	28.1	26.6	25.1	24.4	23.8	22.6
	control	67.7	58.4	53.9	49.1	45.9	42.6	40.6	39.4	37.9	37.7	38.2	40.1
50 years+	ALMP particip.	50.6	47.4	43.7	39.4	34.7	31.4	29.2	28.9	27.5	26.3	24.9	23.6
	control	78.4	71.2	67.1	62.7	59.4	56.2	53.9	52.3	50.2	48.8	47.9	47.9

4.1.2 Findings on self-employment promotion as a tool of active labour market policy at the national level

In the latter part of this section we will focus on summarizing findings of studies aiming at evaluation of benefits of the schemes promoting self-employment (enterprise). With regard to this topic, the first findings were brought already by one of pilot studies in 2003 (Sirovátka et al. 2003b). Authors of the study carried out on the local labour market stated that enterprise promotion programmes produced relatively high effects on employment of the long-term unemployed (1-2 years in the unemployment register), people aged 50+ and people with health disabilities). In the follow-up study (Sirovátka et al. 2004), the category of self-employment promotion was unfortunately included in a wider category of job creation (the reason probably was that these programmes are of relatively small extent). Nevertheless, the overall results of this category allow an estimate that the supported rather rarely returned back to the register after a short period of time, which was also confirmed by studies in the following years.

Self-employment promotion was a separate subject of the study by Sirovátka et al. 2006. Authors state that in 2003 less than one percent of the total number of applicants was supported this way. According to the authors, programmes were targeted also at elderly



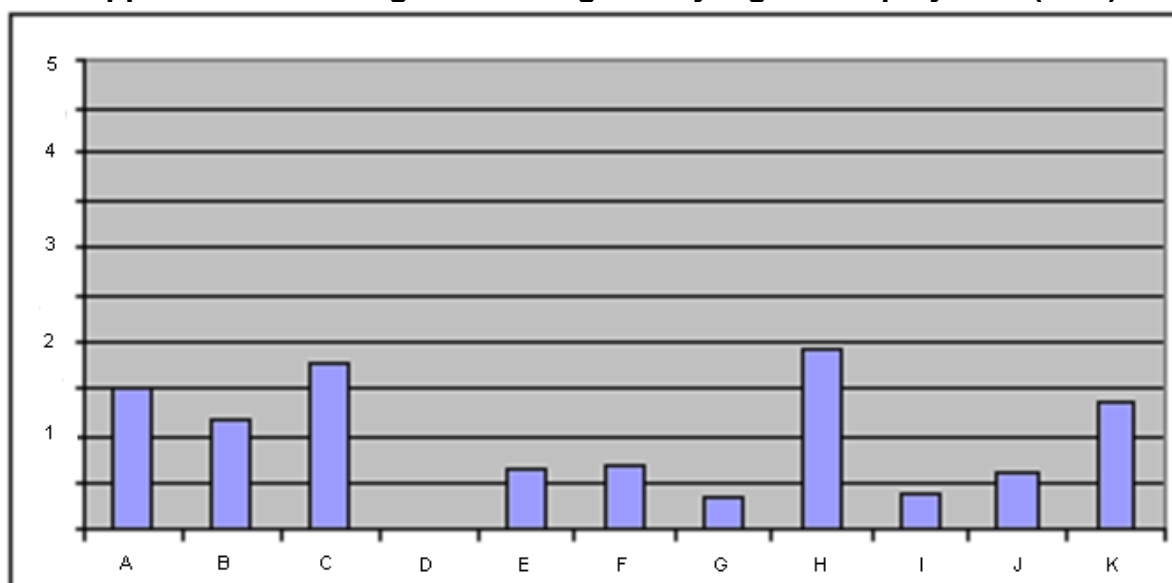
applicants, when a significant number of them were applicants with health disabilities. In terms of the programme duration, the programmes were the longest within the implementation of the national employment policy. Authors state that only a small percentage of participants in the self-employment promotion schemes returned back to the register, most markedly this difference was obvious in comparison with the unemployed with similar characteristics who, however, did not take part in a self-employment promotion programme. In general, the study has shown that in terms of the low return rate to the register this measure is relatively efficient and rather focused on elderly workers³, nevertheless, due to its small scope it is considerably selective.

The follow-up study by Sirovátka and Kulhavý (2007) proved that self-employment promotion programmes are mostly focused on people in the age category of 25-34 years, on people unemployed in the short term/first-registered, on academically qualified people (programmes of self-employment promotion made up 10% of programmes implemented with academically qualified people) and on people who had rather high income in previous time. On the contrary, these programmes were markedly less targeted on the long-term unemployed and candidates with primary education (see Graph 4.1). Also, self-employment promotion usually followed some preparatory programme (e.g. retraining). According to the authors, a typical feature of self-employment promotion, distinct from other programmes, was a long duration of the programme (in 97 percent of the cases it lasted longer than 1 year).

³ Later studies did not confirm a focus of self-employment promotion on elderly workers (see below). According to the so-far unpublished data from the database OKpráce in 2007, there were 14.3% of the self-employment promotion beneficiaries at the age of 19-24 years, 36% beneficiaries were 25-34 years old, 37% were at the age of 35-49 years and 12.7% were at the age 50+.



Graph 4.1 Proportion of participants of the self-employment promotion programme among the unemployed, endangered categories of job applicants and in regions endangered by high unemployment (in %)



Source: Kulhavý and Sirovátka (2007): (a) Total, (b) Ústí nad Labem region, (c) Moravian-Silesian region, (d) the young unemployed, (e) the elderly unemployed, (f) people with health disabilities, (g) primary education only, (h) taking care of a child under the age of 15, (i) the unemployed requiring special assistance, (j) the long-term unemployed, (k) the repeatedly unemployed.

In the analysis by Sirovátka and Kulhavý (2007), the self-employment promotion programme in terms of returning back to the register after completion of the programme was successful as distinct from most of the other programmes. The proportion of participants who after completing the programme returned back to the register amounted to about 8-10%, the programme was highly efficient also for the repeatedly unemployed, a lower decrease was evident among the long-term unemployed and among people with primary education (where this programme was less efficient than other types of programmes), by contrast, academically qualified participants benefited from the programme. In the study by Hora et al. (2009) the PES register was re-entered by no more than 1-2% of participants of the self-employment promotion programme.

Therefore, results of the ALMP tool are extremely good. On one side, we can assume that excellent effects of the self-employment promotion programme can be caused by a long time of promotion (while analyses focus rather on short- to mid-term effects), lower targeting of the programme (the most people aged 30-40, high proportion of the academically qualified) and the related higher human or financial capital of participants. On the other hand, however, these participants may despite their relatively good baseline conditions be coping with specific disadvantages (health handicap or difficult applicability of the field of attained

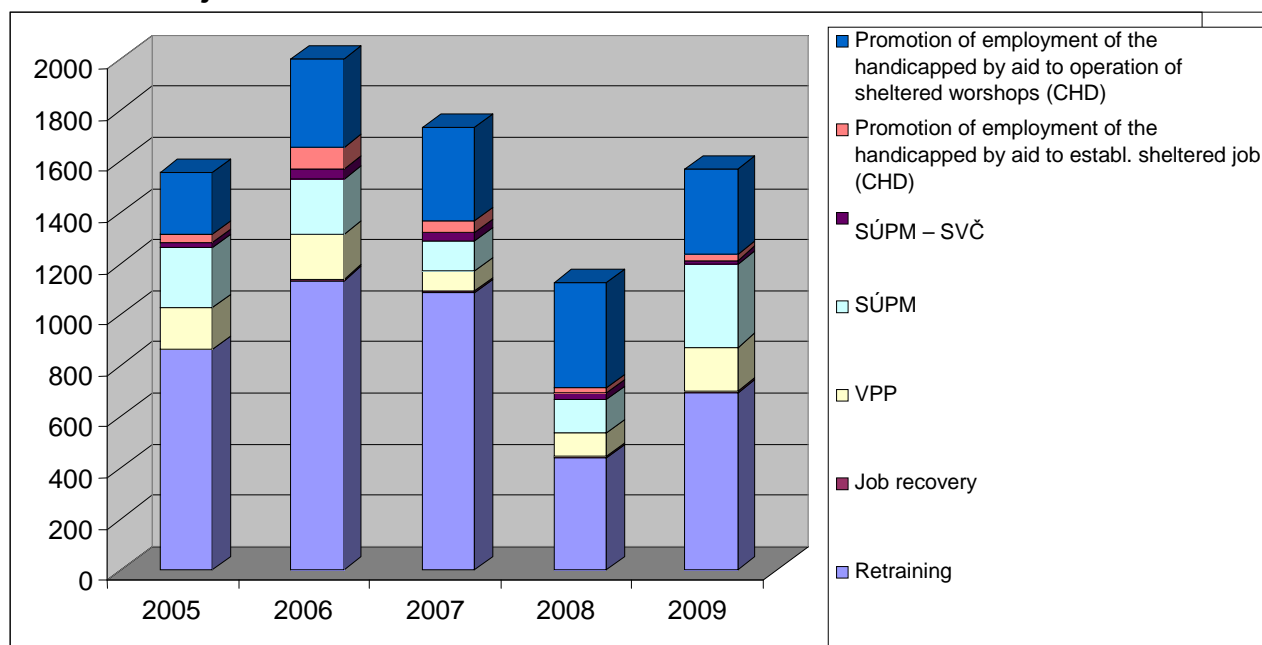


qualification). At the evaluation, it seems, therefore, to be better to monitor cases in detail and assess them separately.

4.2 Active labour market policy at the local level in the region of České Budějovice

In this section we deal with implementation of activities leading to employment of elderly people in the region of České Budějovice. The overall composition of ALMP (e.g. when comparing contents of individual programmes) in the region of České Budějovice does not differ much from the situation at the national level. In the past five years the most frequently used ALMP tool was retraining, contributions for operation of sheltered workplaces and social-purpose jobs (see Chart 4.2). Similarly as in the other regions, the self-employment promotion programme is of a small size. In the past time, the extent of programmes was highly influenced by use of funds from the European Social Fund⁴. The graph shows that in 2008 the ALMP volume entered a significant slump (it was caused by administrative problems in implementing public tender procedures), in 2009 the extent of programmes hovered around approximately the same level as in 2005.

Graph 4.2 Range of measures of active labour market policy in the region of České Budějovice



Source: LO 2006-2010. Note. The graph does not include some specific programmes which were not

⁴ For illustration, e.g. in 2009 within ALMP 13.8 million CZK were utilised from the national resources and 30 million were drawn from the ESF funds. Additional funds (not included here) from the ESF were then drawn for “regional” projects. It is thus obvious that ESF funds play a vital role in the implementation of ALMP.



implemented throughout the entire monitored period and the purpose of which is not the integration into the labour market (e.g. programmes focusing on unemployment prevention through employee training: “Extend your knowledge! “ (Vzdělávejte se!).

According to the 2008 Annual Report, the Labour Office strived to promote as much as possible employment of this problematic category [people aged 50+] on the labour market. Job applicants aged 50+ fall clearly in the category whose percentage in the composition of all the unemployed remains high. Also long-term unemployment is primarily a problem of elderly people“ (Labour office, 2009). Information published in annual reports of the Labour Office in České Budějovice imply, that targeting ALMP on applicants aged 50+ is relatively high in the region of České Budějovice in comparison with national data. In 2008 the implemented ALMP included 27.2% of participants aged 50+, in 2009 it was 29.1%. This proportion roughly corresponds to the proportion of people aged 50+ in the group of the unemployed (see data published in section 2).

An interesting category of measures is particularly specific national and regional projects, which can implement PES in regions in connection with actual needs of certain specific groups such as school-leavers/graduates, parents of small children or elderly workers. In the period 2005-2009 several ALMP programmes were implemented, which were focusing directly on elderly workers or which covered elderly workers as one of the key target groups for intervention. Programmes “Return“ and “Step out of the register“ focused on promotion of creating subsidized jobs for the category of the unemployed aged 50+. The structure of the programme “Return“ was multi-levelled – a larger number of the unemployed completed the retraining part of the programme, some of them were then placed to a subsidized job (in 2009 the programme Return supported 38 jobs). The second group of projects are currently implemented projects of a large scale (Journey to work, Good work) focusing on adaptation of workers to changing conditions in the form of educational seminars specialising in soft skills, possibilities to acquire professional skills in the field of assumed employment and also subsidies for jobs. The programmes are thus primarily for employment enhancement and job creation. In this regard it is important to mention potential links between the self-employment promotion and other types of programmes. Programmes reinforcing applicants’ skills are both an alternative and a part of or complement to programmes intended for self-employment promotion (see below), programmes for subsidized job creation can be regarded as an alternative to the self-employment promotion (in the national labour market policy the self-employment promotion is also understood as a creation of social-purpose jobs). In the following section we will focus on introducing the existing form of the self-employment promotion programme.



4.2.1 Implementation of the existing interventions leading to self-employment of job candidates in the region of České Budějovice

This part of the study is based on public as well as internal documents provided by the Labour Office in České Budějovice (especially on annual reports of the labour office práce) and on interviews with the labour office staff, particularly with the director of the labour office Mr. Loukota, who is a LARG member.

Participation in the programme is conditioned by three key aspects – a method of providing the information, on the possibility to take part in the project, conditions for joining the programme and candidates' interest in this form of support. Each candidate who enters the register is usually informed within 3 weeks about an opportunity to get a contribution for launching a business, via a leaflet where a date of an informational group meeting is specified. After attending the informational meeting, candidates whose interest continues may contact a business consultant who will provide them with detailed information and recommend further steps. A precondition for joining the programme of self-employment promotion is a registration with the labour office connected with unsuccessful job search/intermediation in the duration of six months. Clients' joining is primarily influenced by their own choice, or motivation to set up a business, which stems from candidates' personal interest. According to the LO director's words, interest in participation in the programme is, because of its particularity, relatively high (see also below). However, interest is not in such an extent to exceed the capacity of the office for granting this contribution. The contribution can be acquired by job candidates whose business plan is not only of prime-quality from the economic point of view, showing signs of feasibility, time-unlimited employment on the labour market, but it also meets requirements prescribed by the labour office. Provided some candidates are refused, it is usually because their business plan is unrealistic or problematic from the moral or legal point of view (e.g. opening a gambling club).



Table 4.5: Primary Indicators of the Self-Employment Promotion Programme in the Labour Office in České Budějovice in 2005-2009

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Newly supported jobs in total	19	38	30	24	17
Of which women	15	18	16	15	7
Of which aged 50+	2	5	5	3	2
Of which with health disability	4	2	7	n.d.	n.d.
Of which with unfinished secondary education	9	21	15	10	5
Maximum amount of aid per beneficiary	CZK 40,000	CZK 40,000	CZK 40,000	CZK 50,000	CZK 50,000
Total volume of aid	CZK 628,250	CZK 1,410,000	CZK 883,000	CZK 1,065,000	CZK 796,000
Bridging contribution	CZK 122,550	CZK 245,310	CZK 0	CZK 0	CZK 0
Completed in total	35	31	23	37	29
Two-year period end	26	26	20	31	27
Termination of business before expiry of the two-year term	9	5	3	6	2

Source: LO 2006-2010

The preparation itself for setting up a business is usually running at two mutually overlapping levels, theoretical-educational and practical, when participants may utilise absorbed information immediately in practise for implementing their own business plan. As a rule, theoretical preparation includes a course for setting-up entrepreneurs and, if needed, retraining for a field in which the participant is interested to carry on business. Courses for setting up a business are organized in cooperation with educational institutions, e.g. with the South-Bohemian Chamber of Commerce based in České Budějovice. They cover fields such as economics, law and marketing of the labour market (how to obtain a trade licence, market research)⁵. Retraining for carrying on business is usually provided as part of the regular offer of the labour office (these programmes are largely implemented in the form of a public tender of providers). If it concerns a specific type of business, which is commonly not provided by the labour office, such training can be arranged for a specific candidate based on a special

⁵ viz. <http://www.jhk.cz/sluzby-jhk/poradenstv-a-vzdlvn/112-vzdlvac-kurzy.html>



contract. Attendance of courses is not a pre-condition for granting a financial aid, though most of the beneficiaries take part in the course, mostly in their own interest.

The analysis of the internal database of the retraining course “Business Basics” of the South-Bohemian Chamber of Commerce shows that of the total 217 trainees since 2002 only 9% were 50 years old or over this age at the time of commencement of the course. This fact can be caused by a low interest or awareness of elderly people, or by a method of selecting trainees by the provider. Simultaneously, however, success rate of the course, measured as a ratio of people who after attending the course started a business and the total number of trainees is almost identical in the category 50+ as among young trainees, namely, 79% of participants aged 50+ started a business, versus 81% of participants in the younger category. This fact may indicate promising outlook for self-employment promotion in the elderly unemployed as well as a potential need to address and motivate them more thoroughly.

Each participant of the programme draws up a business plan and submits it together with the grant application and compulsory supplements to the labour office. Applications are discussed by a commission set up for this purpose within the labour office. Apart from evaluation of the candidate’s own project, the commission also takes into consideration other aspects such as candidate’s state of health (a medical certificate that the candidate may carry on business in the given field), obtaining a trade licence or whether the candidate has appropriate premises for the given business, etc.

Business candidates who succeed in justifying the project (business plan) are provided with a one-time contribution (i.e. funds bound for a purchase of specific items such as furniture or a computer). In the Czech Republic, the amount of this contribution may be up to CZK 100,000, in České Budějovice the contribution is granted up to CZK 50,000 (the actual amount granted often hovers around the upper limit). Provision of the contribution is, among other things, conditioned by applicant’s obligation to carry on business for at least 24 months since its launch. Adherence to these conditions is (can be) checked by the grant provider, the interim control is carried out by labour office employees (i.e. whether business has been launched in the business premises, whether the entrepreneur has receipts for the purchase of items), the “ex-post” control is carried out after two years when the monitoring period ends for the beneficiary with a focus on checking fulfilment of all the terms and conditions specified in the agreement. The purpose of the control is primarily to find out whether the beneficiary carries on business and whether items for which the contribution was granted were in his/her



possession during the entire effect of the agreement. In the event that the entrepreneur was not carrying on business for the whole period of two years, the contribution, or its aliquot part must be paid back to the labour office (e.g. if the business was carried on for one year only, half of the funds provided must be returned back). After the provision of the contribution, participants are no more provided with individual assistance (accompaniment) in the form of consulting. In the past, however, a project, financially supported from the ESF, was implemented in the labour office in cooperation with the association Cepac Olomouc, which included also a pre-paid consulting for the initial period of setting up a business.

The enterprise itself is commenced by starting a business activity (therefore, it is not necessary to launch it immediately after obtaining a trade licence). About half of the participants of the preparatory stage decide after its completion to commence enterprise and apply for assistance in the form of contribution for a job creation to carry out self-employed activity. In this manner, business activities in the following fields were promoted in 2005-2009:

- a) Trading, intermediation and real-estate business;
- b) Catering and tourism;
- c) Rendering personal services such as hairdresser, cosmetics, massages, cleaning services;
- d) Specialised services of technical nature (graphic and drawing work, technical consultancy in building industry, energy auditor);
- e) Work in horticulture, agriculture, forestry and breeding;
- f) Enterprise in the building industry, craft industry (cabinet-making, heating engineering), repair and service activity; and
- g) Educational and development activities.

The most participants in the enterprise promotion programme rank among the age category of 30 to 40 years and more women than men are among them (although generally in the Czech Republic more men carry on business than women). Each year the programme is joined by 60-100 people interested in enterprise and those who already run their business and are in the two-year term. For illustration, annually the labour office register is gone through by about 10-12 thousand applicants, less than one percent of them are promoted to start self-employment. This is proved by previous findings about this programme being of a rather smaller scale.

When evaluating success of the programme we can undoubtedly apply more criteria (see also discussions below), the primary criterion which is also used by labour offices is stability of the established business in the two-year horizon. From this point of view, this programme is highly successful, which has also been proven by data provided by the labour office and



presented above in Table 4.5, where it is obvious that percentage of the programme participants who reach the two-year term is significantly higher than percentage of those who fail. A premature completion of the programme after the subsidy provision does not always mean failure in enterprise (other reasons for terminating business can for example be a worsened state of entrepreneur's health, entering a parental leave or suspension of business activities or transfer of business activities to a collateral gainful activity associated with a decision to find employment) (Labour Office 2010).



5. Discussion of “strengths” and “limitations” of current actions/policy

In this section we will focus on discussion of benefits and limitations of the current action. Since it is impossible to discuss the entire range of active labour market policy measures in detail within this base-line study, in the following part we will focus primarily on evaluating the strengths of the current form of the programme implementation in terms of its potential for our social experiment. To emphasize this application aim is highly important, because it is an analysis of the programme carried out ex post and according to criteria which were not known to the implementing entities of the original programme. Therefore, it is not an evaluation as such, but rather a discussion on the potential of the programme. We thus include two separate levels: a) what strengths and weaknesses the current programme has in terms of needs to implement this social experiment successfully; b) what threats and opportunities we may expect at the implementation of our social experiment. In the following text we distinguish three stages: 1) preparatory stage (including selection of participants), 2) implementation stage and 3) the stage of evaluation of programme effects.

Part 1: Preparatory stage

In terms of targeting the measure on the target group the problematic aspect is particularly low integration of people aged 50+ to the programmes of active labour market policy. The whole ALMP at the national level is relatively less targeted on the most difficult cases (we mean especially applicants from “endangered” groups) and when targeted on elderly workers, then rather in the form of job creation (here, however, benefits and effects are not evaluated at all, e.g. regarding job quality of jobs created this way). From the relatively disadvantaged position on the Czech labour market of people aged 50+ (see Chapter 1 and Chapter 4) it can be deduced that risks of some in the professional literature commonly discussed indirect negative effects, such as the dead weight effect or the “creaming” effect (Sirovátka 1995), are relatively less significant in this group. In the region of České Budějovice ALMP measures are more targeted on people aged 50+ versus the situation at the national level, this finding, however, is not true for the self-employment promotion programme.

In terms of expected participation aspects of the elderly unemployed primarily important is their motivation to join the programme. Elderly workers may have low self-confidence and limited knowledge about business topics, they may be afraid of complexity of the problem, etc. According to words of a PES employee, a frequent reason for considering setting up a business is candidates’ escape from the situation frustrative for them when they cannot find



traditional employment in the long run. Participation in the programme may improve their situation but also worsen it in the event they decide to set up a business without a proper considering it, by force of circumstances (e.g. necessity to return the subsidy). At the implementation of programmes for elderly workers we can encounter some other specific risks. Primarily, it is a threat of deepening resignation to employment among elderly workers who completed the ALMP programme successfully but despite that they fail to find employment (Sirovátka et al. 2006). In addition, there may be a danger that the elderly unemployed will see the participation in the active labour market policy programme as an opportunity to bridge the period before their regular or earlier retirement or as a means for reducing uncertainty (Sirovátka et al. 2004, Hora 2008). A certain advantage of the self-employment promotion in contrast to some other types of programmes, such as public-benefit work and social-purpose jobs is primarily in placing the candidate in the open labour market and a lower risk of the so-called carousel effect (when applicants are repeatedly placed in subsidized programmes – on this see Sirovátka and Kulhavý 2007).

In terms of the scope of the programme, however, it is also obvious that the self-employment promotion programme is one of the smaller programmes within the Czech ALMP, only a few thousand participants from all over the Czech Republic each year. According to words of Mrs Šťastná, who is responsible for the implementation of self-employment promotion in PES:

“The number of job applicants in the register of labour offices, who are qualified for carrying on self-employment activity is incomparably higher than the number of those who actually set up their own business. A great deal of responsibility for finding a suitable job for the unemployed lies on the specialised staff in labour offices, who can motivate the unemployed greatly and help them finding a job via self-employment. For that it is necessary to strengthen self-confidence, courage and motivation of the unemployed but also to provide them with sufficient information and knowledge about business, potentially to provide financial assistance for their self-employed activity.”



Preparatory stage	
Major strength of the current programme:	
Availability from the candidate's point of view	The project is relatively open (accessible) to all groups of applicants (including elderly workers) provided they meet basic requirements.
Availability in terms of activities carried on	The project is relatively open (accessible) to all types of business activities.
Consultancy by a specialised advisor	At the initial stage of the programme consulting activities are carried on, helping the unemployed to get familiar with the potential of self-employment.
Major weaknesses of the current programme:	
Limits of participation in the programme	The project is intended for candidates with at least six month registration in the labour office. Advantage of this process is that the unemployed may use this period of time for preparations for self-employment. Disadvantage is that candidates for self-employment may stay in the register until the term expires after which they are allowed to join the programme (negative effect of the "lock-in")
Respondents' own choice	Candidates are usually selected to the project by their own choice. Consequently the question is whether the scope of the project can be extended in the future (we do not know candidates' actual interest).
Targeting at other age groups	The project is usually not implemented for the target group aged 50+, but for candidates in the age of 30-40 years (though there are such cases also nowadays)
Targeting at the unemployed with a higher human and social capital	The project is usually implemented for a group of candidates with a higher level of education
Low activity of intermediaries	Personal advisors for intermediation are not involved in the project implementation.
Unknown efficiency of the method of candidates' addressing	The existing programme uses a combined method of providing information about the programme (publishing information on the bulletin board and verbal informing by a job intermediary), the efficiency of which (number of people interested in the programme/ total number of applicants) is not evaluated probably because of easy filling of the programme capacity.
Low capacity of the programme (financial aspect)	The existing programme has a limited financial budget. Provided the number of programme participants increases, financial subsidy per client would decrease proportionally.
Threats in terms of the future programme implementation	
Fears and low motivation to participate	Elderly candidates can be afraid of setting up a business (frequent fears, according to the LO director, concern e.g. administrative complexity of self-employment)
Health risks	Worsened state of health may restrain the candidate in the programme participation or may lead to his/her earlier completion (at present, prior to the provision of the aid candidates need a medical certificate on their state of health which does not prevent them from starting a business activity).
Some candidates not addressed	The missing evaluation of efficiency of addressing candidates does not allow identification of the programme's demand and may thus result in not addressing a certain part of the target group.
Negative effect of "lock-in"	The fact that the current programme is offered only after six months in the LO register



	may lead to candidates' unnecessary remaining unemployed.
Unknown possibility to "extend" the programme For various types of candidates because of the method of candidates' selection)	The programme's sole targeting at selected candidates with certain characteristics (e.g. university education) does not allow assessment of potential efficiency of the programme in case of its extension to participants varying in type (e.g. in case of its application on a "massive" scale).
Demand partially not met due to the restrained financial capacity	In case of an increase in demand, the restrained financial budget of the programme may lead either to a reduction of subsidy per client, or to neglect of a part of the target group.
Opportunities in terms of the future programme implementation	
Potential of the programme for social integration	The programme is focused on positive aspects of the life situation of elderly workers which can be potentially useful (particularly use of experience and positive aspects of motivation) in the interaction with the "time-tested" ALMP tool.

Stage 2: Implementation stage

Based on experience of the PES staff the implementation of this programme is not accompanied with significant problems. The programme is relatively financially and administratively undemanding. To compare it with the other types of support in the form of SÚPM: employers are usually provided with a subsidy in the amount of 6 wages at maintaining the job for two years (that is a subsidy of a similar or higher amount). The project is implemented in accordance with needs of the local region (e.g. topical situation on the labour market). At the educational stage of the programme (preparation for enterprise and retraining for the field of business activities) cooperation with educational entities proved useful. The programme has been operative for several years, which enables implementing teams to identify weaknesses of the programme and carry out innovations).

The educational stage of the programme is relatively short and similarly as in the other short-term retraining programmes doubts may therefore arise concerning adequacy of information provided in a short period of time for professional career⁶. The above-mentioned may indicate a risk of insufficient competencies of the programme participants. Also, in the implementation of the programme until now feedback from programme participants has not been gathered nor their knowledge after completion of the course anyhow tested. Some of the above-mentioned risks should be overcome via implementing the social experiment by more LARG members, including a former programme participant who brings along practical experience.

⁶ Some graduates' studies carried out by students of The Masaryk University focused on evaluation of retraining programmes by trainees (via interviews). These studies imply that many participants of programmes assessed absorbed knowledge to be too basic, confronting them with employers' higher demands.



Generally, a potentially weaker aspect of the programme is the individual assistance in some stages of the programme implementation. Primarily it concerns non-existence of a systematic assistance in the form of consulting after the subsidy provision (we do not know to what extent it can be provided e.g. by lecturers of the retraining programme). A certain weakness of the programme may also be the amount of the financial aid (approx. CZK 50,000), which is insufficient to cover some activities (which may be necessary to set up a business). However, to define an adequate amount of aid can be debateable in many ways⁷. It is also necessary to stress that the overall capacity of (potentially) provided subsidies correspond to the current extent of the programme and does not allow any further extension (the same also applies to the new programme in the form of social experiment).

The most significant threat regarding implementation of the new programme is its implementation for another target group than in the past. In particular, it is not obvious what kinds of modification are needed for the programme in order to be well implemented for the group of people aged 50+. There is a danger that the programme will not work in some aspects (e.g. elderly people will need more assistance than the programme offers or will need to be supported in other types of activities).

Implementation stage	
Major strength of the current programme:	
Administrative costs	The project is not more administratively demanding than the other programmes of active labour market policy
Financial demands	The project is not more financially demanding than the other types of assistance.
Particularity of the programme	The project is not implemented identically in all Labour offices (in all regions) – particular labour offices may differ significantly (it holds true that we are dealing with the situation in České Budějovice).
Previous experience with the programme implementation	The programme has been implemented for several years already and has a clear structure, including methodology of its implementation
High percentage of programme participants will start carrying on business	According to the data by the South-Bohemian Chamber of Commerce, about 80% of participants of the course start their business. The situation is almost identical across all the age groups.
Major weaknesses of the current programme:	
Promotion in the process of business launching	The programme usually does not include any form of personal consulting assistance at the time of setting up a business (after the grant provision)

⁷ Primarily, an analysis of adequacy of the financial aid, currently under preparation, is needed (are there cases when a low amount of subsidy made the business plan implementation impossible?). The question also is whether a higher subsidy is needed and whether a higher subsidy could not be a danger in terms of misuse of the subsidy or necessity to pay the provided funds back in case of the business failure.



Insufficient financial assistance	To carry on business project participants would often need more funds than the labour office may provide them in the form of a subsidy. This implies that the programme need not be convenient for certain types of business (e.g. restaurants) or business in a rather large extent. Nevertheless, assistance can be provided in the form of information supplied/ training.
“Short” duration of the educational stage	The educational stage lasts three weeks up to one month
Missing feedback of the programme participants	Feedback from programme participants is not gathered.
Threats in terms of the future programme implementation	
Inadequacy of the programme in terms of needs of elderly workers	The programme has not been tested for elderly workers who may have specific needs which are not taken into account within the programme.
Insufficient competence of programme participants	The mere three-week educational programme may not develop participants’ competencies sufficiently, which may consequently result in a reduced efficiency of the programme.
Opportunities in terms of the future programme implementation	
Financial provision	Also thanks to cooperation of numerous entities at the project implementation, enough funds are available for the implementation in compliance with the agreed model.
Personnel secured via cooperation	Cooperation of LARG members (from various spheres and fields of activity) and broader social networks allows implementing the project in a participative manner.

Stage 3: Outcomes of the programme

Strengths of the current programme clearly include the existing outcomes of the programme with regard to the return of participants to the register. Participants of the first stage of the programme who in the end do not choose self-employment assert themselves more frequently on the labour market in another way than non-participants of the programme. Nevertheless, outcomes of the programme have not been evaluated from the perspective of net effects yet. Key elements of the programme which lead to its success are not known and there is a danger that outcomes of the current programme are burdened with a high percentage of the “dead weight”.

Undertaking itself can be attended by some conditions which are not directly governable by teams implementing the programme. The present time in the Czech Republic is characterised by a long-lasting economic recession which may also have an impact on the initial time of undertaking. As it has been mentioned above, a failure in undertaking may worsen the elderly person’s situation. Labour market experts in the Czech Republic (e.g. Kotýnková 2008) also point to the phenomenon “employment of entrepreneurs” or in slang called “Svarc system“. It is a situation when a person asks for trade licence without intent to



undertake. In reality, s/he works for one employer who pays her/him as a tradesman, evading thus mandatory payments of social and health insurance. From the perspective of the state, it is probably a problem of circumvention of the law and tax evasion. Another danger consists in misuse of the subsidy – some labour offices encountered cases when programme participants submitted fake invoices on purchase of goods for reimbursement.

In terms of the programme evaluation, a controversial issue still lies in low experience in evaluation via social experiment. In evaluation up to now, quantitative aspect has been markedly preferred. These analyses have brought interesting and substantial findings, however, they are significantly limited by a) not entirely excellent quality of available data, b) limitations of applied quantitative methods (e.g. information is missing on work quality in the new job) and c) missing evaluation via qualitative methods. The third item in particular is one of the drawbacks which we wish to rectify partially in our project.

An important opportunity of the new project is the implementation via social experiment, when it is possible to adjust particular parameters of the project in accordance with needs and conditions of the target group. One of the key elements is then a larger participation of the programme attendees. Nevertheless, the implementation via social experiment of a small scale represents a significant risk in terms of the programme transferability to other implementation contexts. Although it is possible to transfer single experience of programme participants, we cannot envisage what outcomes would result from the programme under other programme or contextual conditions. This remark is particularly important at extending the programme for large target groups, when another (lower probably) targeting of the programme can be expected.



Outcomes of the programme	
Major strength of the current programme:	
Effects on employment by self-employment	The programme brings excellent outcomes in terms of employment. A significant part (70-90 percent by estimate) of beneficiaries really undertake for the entire period of two years after the subsidy provision. (Unfortunately in the consecutive of time participants were never monitored).
Effects on employment by other means	A positive side effect of the programme is that some candidates who complete the programme, though do not start their business, they succeed in finding a job on the labour market, as employees, in a short time after. Although in this case it may be dubious whether it occurs thanks to the participation in the programme, it can be regarded as undoubtedly positive.
Major weaknesses of the current programme:	
Missing evaluation of net effects	Net effects are not measured (it is not clear what is the reason of success of the existing programme participants – whether the programme, or something else)
Threats in terms of the future programme implementation	
Economic conditions	At the time of recession to set up a business can be difficult (economic crisis)
Business bankruptcy / misuse of the subsidy	There exists a danger of misusing the subsidy (the entrepreneur suspends undertaking and cannot be found – to get the subsidy back). In the LO director's words, these cases are very rare.
Dummy enterprise	Undertaking itself can become a method of being employed by a single employer (so-called employment of entrepreneurs).
A lack of experience with a qualitative method of evaluation	The existing methods of evaluation of ALMP programmes, including self-employment promotion.
Evaluation cannot be done in a large scale	The programme via social experiment cannot prove effects of the programme in a large scale.
“Non-transferability” of programme outcomes due to the small number of clients	Because of the small number of clients and qualitative method of research the outcomes of the programme can be highly valid (trustworthy), however, little generalizable (transferable).
Impossibility to enhance programme efficiency due to the absence of participants' feedback	Lacking feedback from programme participants does not reveal potential weaknesses to the authors of the programme, consequently reducing possibilities to enhance programme efficiency.
Opportunities in terms of the future programme implementation	
Opportunity to modify the programme based on needs of social experiment	The project is not implemented in all labour offices (in all regions) identically – labour offices may differ significantly (it holds true that we are dealing with the situation in České Budějovice) – this allows social experimenting.



5.1 Participants' involvement

Under the existing programme stakeholders (PES and programme implementing bodies – educational entities and participants) cooperate in a high degree. Programme participants are directly involved in the programme and their impact in some aspects is significant (this is evident, for example, at developing a business plan). Elderly workers appear to have similar conditions in the programme as the other participants, but their percentage is relatively low (reasons of their low participation, however, cannot be clearly identified). Participation seems to be lower in areas such as cooperation and support of the unemployed after the subsidy provision. Despite, in this context the aspect of participation in the programme can be regarded as relatively developed.

The planned implementation and evaluation of the programme will be done via social experiment in the context of efforts to improve the current state of implementing social policy. It is based on the principle that implemented policies should involve a wide range of relevant stakeholders, including service users and worked on the principle of cooperation, partnerships and empowerment of individual stakeholders. The objective for the programme application is thus:

- 1) Stimulate social activity (e.g. via connecting people to social networks of stakeholders and by their mutual cooperation);
- 2) Mutually discuss and develop new or modified approaches towards solution of social problems;
- 3) Mutually propose and discuss new evaluation processes and use them for evaluation of developed policies (it is assumed that such measures are entirely new or significantly modified) and also evaluate adequacy of these evaluation processes;
- 4) Inform general public about outcomes of the programme, including key stakeholders at the regional, national and international level.

At the level of implementation, the pilot project of social experiment may follow up the existing ALMP programme and experience gathered during the implementation of the ESF project, carried out in cooperation with CEPAC. The aim of the implemented project is not, however, to create a new, greenfield programme, but:



- 1) To use measures currently implemented: to utilise existing experience in the implementation of measures and participants' personal experience; the advantage is that the programme can be implemented under partially identical conditions as the original measures;
- 2) To modify measures in a certain way (based on mutual discussion within LARG) by new elements which may be both a response to identified problems of the existing measures and an attempt to introduce innovative features;
- 3) To utilise a chance to evaluate the project more also on the basis of qualitative data (interviews with participants), which as an approach has not been usually utilised in the Czech Republic until now.

The second level of evaluation is to assess significance of social experimenting for individual participants of the project. The programme evaluations should also include:

- 1) Assessment of impact on programme participants:
- 2) Assessment of impact on LARG (lessons learned and policy changed)
- 3) Assessment of impact on broader context of institutions (stakeholders) including program national dissemination

Conclusion

The purpose of this base-line study was to get an overview of the current situation in the region of České Budějovice in terms of position of elderly people and their social integration to the labour market (primarily via self-employment). The study shows that elderly people are usually not the group ALMP focuses on in the Czech Republic (the situation in the respective region is slightly different). In spite of that some surveys proved that ALMP programmes can be useful for workers aged 50+.

For social experiment within the active aging project a region was selected where the problem of unemployment rate is currently rather minor (it can be convenient if we want to carry out the experiment in "standard" conditions), but where a danger of unemployment of elderly workers will grow in the future. Social experiment should work on the previous successful implementation of the business support and bring knowledge about potential for supporting elderly workers in this way. Utilisation of the existing programme seems to be a significant strength of the social experiment, since thanks to previous experience of the implementing entities risks of creating a greenfield programme can be thus partially eliminated. Another strong aspect of the programme via social experiment is a participative form of the programme which facilitates a continuous discussion of methods and outcomes of the implementation. A basis for discussion of developing a social experiment is also this



base-line study, primarily suggestions specified in sections 4.2.1 and 5. (these findings are presented in a summarized form in the table below). The most significant factors affecting the programme implementation seem to be: Limits of the existing participation of people aged 50+ in the programme, low experience in the programme implementation for this target group and a need to introduce new evaluation methods for the programme which will enable to uncover the “black box“ of the implementation process of ALMP programmes more than in the past.

	<i>Programme stage</i>		
	<i>1 - preparation</i>	<i>2 - implementation</i>	<i>3 – outcomes / effects</i>
Strengths	Availability from the candidate's point of view	Administrative costs	Effects on employment by self employment
	Availability in terms of activities carried on	Financial demands	Effects on employment by other means
	Consultancy by a specialised advisor	Particularity of the programme	
		Previous experience with the programme implementation	
Weaknesses	Limits of participation in the programme	Promotion in the process of business launching	Missing evaluation of net effects
	Respondents' own choice	Insufficient financial assistance	Missing feedback from the programme participants
	Targeting at other age groups	Missing feedback of the programme participants	
	Targeting at the unemployed with a higher human and social capital	Short duration of the educational stage	
	Low activity of intermediaries		
	Unknown efficiency of the method of candidates' addressing		
	Low capacity of the programme (financial aspect)		
Opportunities	Potential of the programme for social integration	Financial provision	Possibility to modify the programme based on needs of social experiment
		Personnel secured via cooperation	
Threats	Fears and low motivation to participate	Inadequacy of the programme in terms of needs of elderly workers	Economic conditions
	Health risks	Insufficient competence of programme participants	Business bankruptcy /subsidy misuse



	Some candidates not addressed		Dummy business
	Negative effect of "lock-in"		Missing experience in a qualitative method of evaluation
	Unknown possibility to "extend" the programme for various types of candidates because of the method of candidates' selection)		"Non-transferability" of outcomes of the programme due to a small number of clients
			Evaluation cannot be performed in a large scale
	Demand partially not met due to the restrained financial capacity		Impossibility to improve efficiency of the programme due to a lack of feedback from participants

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