

Intended and Unintended Outcomes of Partnerships at the Local Level in Slovakia

Authors : Daniel Klimovský

Abstract : Slovakia belongs to the most fragmented countries if one looks at its local government structure. The Slovak central governments implemented both broad devolution and fiscal decentralization some decades ago. However, neither territorial consolidation nor size categorization of local competences and powers has been implemented yet. Taking this fact into account, it is clear that the local governments are challenged not only by their citizens as customers but also by effectiveness as well as efficiency of delivered services. The paper is focused on behavior of the local governments in Slovakia and their approaches towards other local partners, including other local governments. Analysis of set of interviews shows that inter-municipal cooperation is the most common local partnership in Slovakia, but due to diversity of the local governments, this kind of cooperation leads to both intended and unintended outcomes. While in many cases the local governments are more efficient as well as effective in delivery of local services thanks to inter-municipal cooperation, there are many cases where inter-municipal cooperation fails, and it brings rather questionable or even negative outcomes.

Keywords : local governments, local partnerships, inter-municipal cooperation, delivery of local services

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