



PUBLIC POLICIES AND NGOs ACTIONS FOR ROMA INCLUSION

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Abstract: *The Roma communities in the European Union and in Romania are confronted with several important problems such as the lack of jobs, limited access to health care services, low education level, overcrowded houses, no property over the houses and land they use and, in general, a high level of passiveness regarding the problems confronting them and a very low level of civic involvement. In Romania, over 200 non-governmental organizations are presently undertaking both integrated actions, part of some national and international policies and programs, and singular actions with the purpose of responding to contextual needs of some Roma groups or communities. The main directions of activity of the non-governmental organizations involved in the promotion and supporting of Roma population's participation in economic activities are progressing in accordance with the speed and quality of the social economy principles' development and implementation. This article describes the legislation from Romania and from the European Union, that addresses the Roma. The article highlights the role and the actions of several important and active NGOs supporting Roma population in it's integration efforts, in order to intensify the participation of the vulnerable groups of population in economic activities in general, and in their communities in particular.*

Keywords: *Roma, NGO, legal framework, social inclusion*

I. Introduction

Although Roma exists in Europe for many decades, they still face many difficulties in integration, difficulties that have long been on the public agenda of many countries (Cace et. al., 2013). Although ethnic integration has become a legitimate objective of the state and is considered to be a public good, public opposition regarding the integration of Roma fell too little in intensity (Rughiniş, 2007) and there are few prospects for change in the near future. European Union Member States share a common responsibility to contribute to increasing social inclusion of Roma people and provide them equal opportunities for access to education, health and vocational training. In 2006, Ionescu and Cace (2006) estimated that the Roma represent up to 10 percent of the total resident population of Romania. There are a considerable number of organizations promoting social inclusion of the Roma in Romania, active in various fields.

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Compared to other EU countries, Romania hosts the largest number of Roma people. According to the Population and Housing Census in Romania, by the National Institute of Statistics, the Roma represent, in 2011, 3.3% of the total resident population, this percentage represents 621 600 inhabitants. Although statistics show that in Romania live less than 600,000 Roma people, experts in the field estimate that the number is estimated to reach 10% of the total resident population of Romania (Ionescu and Cace, 2006), while representatives of this minority in Romania mentions that live between 1.5 and 2.5 million Roma people.

Roma communities in Romania have problems such as lack of jobs, low education, limited access to health services, overcrowded houses, lack of ownership of houses and land they use and generally an increased level of passivity in the problems they face and at the same time, a very low level of civic involvement.

II. Specific problems of the analyzed vulnerable group

Roma is one of the largest ethnic minorities in the European Union. Estimates show that there are 10-12 million Roma living in different Member States, often in difficult living conditions (EC, 2011). Discrimination, poverty, social exclusion, lack of education, lack of access to basic healthcare, homelessness etc. are just some of the issues facing Roma people daily throughout the European Union (EC, 2005).

Although in the past decade there have been developed anti-discrimination policies and initiatives in terms of improving living conditions and social integration of the Roma, at the European level this minority is still the group most discriminated against compared to other minorities, and the more exposed to social exclusion. According to the EU study Minorities and Discrimination Survey 2009, on average 50% of Roma respondents were victims of discriminatory situations in the previous year, and 20% were victims of an attack racial (EU-MIDIS, 2009). In addition, Roma are also faced with social-economic exclusion: Roma are the largest, but at the same time, the poorest ethnic minority in Europe. High unemployment, low education and poor sanitary conditions are correlated with poverty and even severe poverty. Roma are victims of the vicious cycle of poverty: lack of jobs or low income prevents them from investing in their children's education, health or improving living conditions and the lack of these elements generates, in turn, poverty. A World Bank study shows that in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania and Serbia, chances of graduating secondary school education are four to six times lower for Roma than the majority population; high unemployment - only 50% of Roma have a job in Romania, this percentage is lower in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic; compared to the majority population, the proceeds are more limited - ranging from 39% in Romania to 69% in Bulgaria (De Laat and Bodewig, 2011).

According to the 2002¹ census, 41% of declared Roma were unskilled workers in agriculture, fishing and forestry and 31% fell into the category of skilled workers, foremen, technicians and associate professionals, compared to 25% and 7.8% for Romanian and Hungarians. Mariea Ionescu and Sorin Cace (2006) show the importance

¹ Available at <http://www.anr.gov.ro/html/Statistici.html> sau pe www.insse.ro.

of cultural values of the Roma people and family (family structure, social solidarity networks). They also highlight aspects of the Dependency Trap and accentuated the inequality between Roma women and men. The consequences of this situation is observed in all other spheres of life of Roma communities: from the most common type of occupations, to high unemployment or illiteracy (25.4% versus 1.4% minority Hungarians or 5.7 % minority of Ukrainians), health and housing. Also, the low levels of education of Roma compared to Romanian people or other national minorities is one of the main obstacles to be faced when trying to insert the Roma in the labor market, along with discrimination and segregation. Census data from 2002 shows that 34.3% of Roma have not completed any level of education, while 35.8% have completed primary education and 23.3% completed only secondary school.

The EU objectives, formulated in the EU Commission communication on the framework for national Roma integration policies, promote the need for an integrated approach to counter the problem of Roma exclusion. These objectives are grouped around four main areas of socio-economic inclusion. They are, above all, national policy areas: - education: increasing efforts to include all Roma children in the primary school system and to support them to complete the primary school cycle; - Employment: increasing efforts to destroy the gap between Roma and other citizens in terms of employment; - Health: increasing efforts to reduce disparities in health status between Roma and the general population; - Housing: intensifying efforts to destroy differences in access to housing and public utilities such as water and electricity.

Roma still suffer from discrimination that is felt in all the key areas mentioned above. Discrimination leads to poverty and fewer opportunities to find employment and become active participants in social actions. Poor achievement in education is an "open door" to find jobs unskilled and poorly paid, especially in informal sector employment, which causes more diverse issues: living conditions impoverished, lack of access to adequate health services, housing and other basic services. Sustainable solutions to social and economic problems of the Roma can be developed using a comprehensive approach, involving coordination of actions aimed at housing policies, education, healthcare and jobs.

Regarding the Roma access to the labor market, particular forms of discrimination they face in this area have been clearly coded in the metaphor of "glass box": "A glass box¹ excludes Roma from well payed jobs, denies Roma access to major segments of the labor market, blocks Roma from access to work better paid, isolates Roma at work and

¹ This metaphor initiated in a study of Roma exclusion from the job market, initiated by the European Center for Roma Rights in 2007 as a new term that paraphrases the "glass ceiling", a metaphor that suggests discrimination against women and ethnic minorities, particularly invisible factors that limit mobility to higher positions. "Glass ceiling" refers to all kinds of obstacles preventing women to progress to positions of officers or directors, while the "glass box" reflects discriminatory blocking Roma to employment "Roma specific", excluding them from entry into other sectors of employment (eg office work). Realities described and analyzed in the study were selected from the experience of Central and South Eastern Europe, but the practice of indirect discrimination that still suggests the metaphor can be found throughout Europe.

separates Roma in arrangements segregated activities that have to do only with Roma" ("the Glass Box: Exclusion of Roma from Employment ", European Centre for Roma Rights¹, 2007).

Because Roma are among the groups considered vulnerable in the labor market, the ANOFM has tried to reduce unemployment rates. Following activity reports of the ANOFM, we can observe a steady decrease in the number of Roma people included in professional programs organized by the ANOFM until 2010, followed by an increase in this number since 2011: 2,283 in 2006², 1,613 in 2007³, 1,109 in 2008⁴ and 755 in 2009⁵, 677 in 2010⁶, 898 in 2011⁷, 1,227 in 2012⁸ and 946 in 2013⁹.

In order to meet the needs of Roma, ANOFM started the Caravan for Roma employment. The program being implemented since 2005 by the ANOFM in collaboration with ANR and consisting of visits to Roma communities to inform them about their rights and obligations, and the services provided by the ANOFM to facilitate insertion in the labor market. 70 971 people attended to the Caravan for Roma employment activities in 2006¹⁰, the number of participants is steadily decreasing until 2009¹¹, when 19 412 people were registered. Unfortunately, the reports from the coming years no longer include such data.

A study by the Soros Foundation (2011), shows that 38% of employed Roma work as unskilled workers, 32% work as skilled employees, 9% are employed in agriculture and 13% traditional occupations.

III. Public policies for Roma

1. EU legislation

The European Parliament resolution of 11 March 2009 on the social situation of the Roma and the improving of their access to the EU¹² labor market noted that improving inclusion of socioeconomic Roma minority in the enlarged Europe of 27 Member States has depended on policies that have produced limited results. The document outlines the actions that must be taken into account to speed up inclusion and to really

¹ European Roma Rights Center is one of the partner organizations in the "Roma Decade Initiative".

² ANOFM, Activity report for 2006.

³ ANOFM, Activity report for 2007.

⁴ ANOFM, Activity report for 2008.

⁵ ANOFM, Activity report for 2009.

⁶ ANOFM, Activity report for 2010.

⁷ ANOFM, Activity report for 2011.

⁸ ANOFM, Activity report for 2012.

⁹ ANOFM, Activity report for 2013.

¹⁰ ANOFM, Activity report for 2006.

¹¹ ANOFM, Activity report for 2009.

¹² Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2009-0117&language=EN>.

improve the situation of Roma. The recommendations offered in the document are closely linked to the ten common basic principles, as employment strategies and labor that have recently been proposed in the European strategy for growth in 2020 and addresses the problem of marginalized groups.

Parliament resolution calls on the target-policies which invite the stakeholders interested on the Roma community problems to participate as decision-makers, ie as equal partners in the development and implementation of inclusion policies. Regarding Roma women, the Parliament calls on the member states to improve access to vocational training, vocational training to adapt to the needs of local labor markets, thus providing Roma women sought employment skills. In connection with what was mentioned above, there is a need to discourage unskilled labor mobility, which would only increase discrimination against Roma women and limit their further progress in the labor market. All policies aimed at Roma women should lead to economic independence by promoting structures that can become freelancers and have access to microcredit. There should also be promoted measures to establish SMEs and social cooperatives. Supporting entrepreneurship can help Roma community to integrate their capabilities into the formal economy. Significant incentives could be offered to encourage them to enjoy their cultural skills (establishing cooperatives for producing, food, arts and crafts) and their language (becoming cultural mediators and interpreters).

In addition, the development of a community-based service that will extend the knowledge and skills of Roma women should be encouraged. All these initiatives are specific to addressing social economy. The real access to the formal labor market for Roma women (stimulating economic independence) is stipulated as a prerequisite for improving their social and family status. Suitable training programs and opportunities for specialization should prepare Roma women in terms of the necessary skills and confidence to compete equally with men for jobs, to combine family duties with their jobs and to improve their status in the family hierarchy. The multidimensional problems encountered by Roma women in their daily lives, their subordination in the structure of the patriarchal family (not to mention domestic violence, prostitution and human trafficking) could be overcome with the development initiatives of occupation labor, initiatives to boost self-assertion, thus reducing their risk of abuse. Moreover, fostering opportunities for specialization can help to break the "glass box" that limit their opportunities to evolve in and/or outside their own communities, having careers in which women belonging mass society have easy access. Parliament emphasizes the imperative need for the member states to initiate and invest in implementing these policies for disadvantaged groups (thus activating the social economy), which are directed towards intensifying auto aid more addictive than the benefits of social security.

Successive European Parliament resolutions have contributed significantly to attract attention primarily on individual and complex needs of the Roma community and, secondly, the need to develop an EU policy for the Roma community. On 05/04/2011, the European Commission said via press release "EU framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020", a comprehensive policy document that addresses the issue of social inclusion of marginalized Roma communities in Europe. The press release defines and coordinates responsibilities of the member states and the candidate

countries regarding Roma citizens, offering general guidelines for national social inclusion policies. Propose a "robust monitoring mechanism" to assess the progress of each individual inclusion policies of the member states. Both the positive and negative aspects of national strategy for Roma will be reported to the Commission, Council and Parliament and this will be a valuable opportunity to disseminate the rules of good Roma Inclusion, to learn from setbacks and critics and engage in sharing best practices among member states. According to EU policy for the Roma community, national Roma integration strategies should be developed a) in accordance with the common basic principles for Roma inclusion; b) in line with the broader European Strategy (economic development) 2020; c) in accordance with NRP¹s. EU Communication emphasizes the importance of funding allocation of national resources. It also notes that "... up from 26.5 billion euros of EU funding is currently programmed to support member states' efforts in social inclusion, including to support efforts to help the Roma."

Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) will work with member states in designing appropriate monitoring methods for creating comparative data. This institution has extensive experience working with a variety of interested organizations across the EU, with local authorities and mass organizations defending the rights of ethnic minorities, benefiting from a secure database and research experience on site. Identifies and promotes positive initiatives alike, contributing significantly to the dissemination of good practices in social inclusion in the EU. At the same time, stresses the importance of creating policies with and not only for Roma, enhancing their active involvement in raising barriers to their disadvantage and exclusion:

Decade of Roma Inclusion, initiated in 2003 by the World Bank and the Open Society Institute, was launched in Bucharest in 2005 as a strategic document for 2005-2015. By "Decade", signatory governments² have proposed to accelerate efforts to improve the situation of Roma, by involving them in decision making and evaluation in a quantifiable manner. The areas for action are: education, housing, employment and health.

The Decade of Roma Inclusion ("Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015", launched in 2005) is a positive reference example for enhanced cooperation between supranational institutions, government representatives and civil society at national Roma inclusion. The initiators of this great multilateral project were originally eight governments in Central and South-East that attracted support from the World Bank Institute for Open Society, Council of Europe Council Development Bank, European Development Programme of the United Nations, OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) and the European Commission. During the process, countries joined. Countries that currently support the project are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro,

¹ National Reform Program

² Founding Governments: Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Czech Republic, Romania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary. Any other government can join through the development and adoption of national action plans.

Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Spain. The Decade is the first multinational project in Europe that focuses on improving current socio-economic status of the Roma community. The Decade priority axis are focused on four areas of intervention: education, employment, health and housing. The fields are, of course, interrelated and policies with satisfactory results in one area will necessarily affect positively the others. Planning is headed by the Decade International Steering Committee (ISC), which is composed of representatives of the participating governments, international organizations and partner Roma organizations. Each year, one of the participating governments holding the Presidency of the Decade. In Romania, ANR (National Agency for Roma) is responsible for coordinating Romania's involvement in the project Decade of Roma Inclusion. During each Presidency, organized international workshops which provide an opportunity to present, discuss and disseminate best practices.

Europe 2020 Strategy for growth and employment (which replaces the Lisbon Agenda), came to light in March of 2010, defines five major goals and three approaches to "economic growth". Growth is defined as "intelligent, sustainable and inclusive". Two of the goals address the issue of socio-economic exclusion. One says raising the rate of employment for the population aged 20 to 64 years from 69% to 75%, while the other promises to reduce the number of Europeans living below the poverty line by 25%, raising over poverty 20 million of the 80 million people today. The European Commission has drawn up ten guidelines for the economic and employment.

In this context, it calls on the active inclusion, social policies as appropriate measures to increase the participation of vulnerable groups of population to the economy in general and to their community in particular. Active inclusion means helping people who cannot handle an ordinary job due to disability physical, mental or learning, to become active in other ways, such as community activities and voluntary, subsidized employment, community groups. The belief that supports this vision is the realization that each is endowed with skills and potential to contribute to society and the local community to which he belongs. Active and valuable contribution to the community should be seen as a job itself and not just a temporary path to employment on the labor market. "Inclusive economy" advocated by the EU 2020 strategy is based on measures of social activation dissemination and engagement by the whole society, to involve all groups at risk of poverty and exclusion (disadvantaged, disabled, suffering discrimination) labor market. To achieve this, the EU 2020 Strategy has set as one of its priority lines plan "inclusive growth". The plan for "inclusive growth" focuses on reducing the high rate of poverty in Europe and attracting labor market social groups with low employment rates of labor (women, nomads legal, youth and the elderly) and helping them to cope with and manage change by improving competence levels through vocational training and lifelong learning. Statistics indicate women, young and older workers as having a low employment rate (it is worth mentioning the employment rate for women: 63% of women compared with 76% of men aged between 20 and 64 years). In addition, 8% of people working do not earn enough to rise above the poverty line. The poverty rate was high even before the crisis (more than 80 million people at risk of poverty, including 19 million children), but with the economic crisis, the

situation has worsened (youth unemployment exceeds 21%)¹. Two major initiatives were launched to address all the issues mentioned above: a) Agenda for New Skills and Jobs and b) European platform against poverty and social exclusion.

"The active participation of Roma in shaping Roma policies and their implementation should have been included as the fifth goal of integration framework" (EU framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020). Roma policies can not be extended to remote communities that are targeted to benefit from them. Significant participation of Roma professionals in formulating and implementing policies for Roma is crucial to their success, to encourage a sense of ownership and responsibility... inclusion is not possible without participation." (Open Society Institute - Brussels, the paper "Policies EU Roma Inclusion", policy Review, July 2011). Launched by the Open Society Foundation, these initiatives are operational programs devoted to promoting equality and integration of marginalized Roma communities, with particular emphasis on women and children rights. They offer general institutional development grants for Roma non-governmental organizations and grants for specific projects that facilitate dialogue and exchange of best practices.

2. National legislation

Public policies in Romania are in line with social policies promoted at the European Union level. The Romanian Government has recognized the scale of the Roma issue and acknowledged the need for consistent policies to mitigate it, which materialized in the Strategy for Improving the Roma. This strategy was developed by the Romanian Government, in collaboration with representatives of the Roma population, with international institutions, particularly the European Union. The strategy was based on seven principles: the consensus principle, the principle of social utility, the principle of sectorial distribution, decentralized execution principle, the principle of legal compatibility, identity differentiation principle and the principle of equality. The aim of this strategy was to significantly improve the situation of Roma in Romania, by promoting social inclusion measures. The strategy's objectives were: (1) institutionalizing political objectives assumed by the government in empowering the Roma issue and the central and local authorities in implementing concrete measures to improve the situation of Romanian citizens of Roma origin; (2) support training and promote intellectual and economic elite of Roma, to act as a facilitator of social integration policies and modernization; (3) eliminate stereotypes, prejudices and practices of certain officials of central and local public institutions that encourage discrimination against Romanian citizens of Roma origin compared with other citizens; (4) producing a positive change in public opinion about the Roma ethnics, based

¹ According to the EU poverty map (EU - Statistics on income and living conditions), 114 million people in Europe were at risk of poverty or exclusion in 2009 (80 million at risk of poverty, while 40 million went through the experience of severe material deprivation). The social groups that face the highest risk of poverty and / or social exclusion are: children, the elderly, single parents, single women, people with no qualifications, unemployed and inactive persons of working age, including all those with disabilities, people living in rural and nomads. Ethnic minorities, including Roma, can not be identified through official EU statistics but some national sources indicate that they face an increased risk of exclusion.

on principles of tolerance and social solidarity; (5) fostering Roma participation in the economic, social, educational, cultural and political development of society through involvement in sectorial assistance and community development; (6) prevent institutional and social discrimination of Roma citizens in their access to services offered by the company; (7) the arrangements for ensuring equal opportunities for Roma in order to achieve a decent standard of living.

The purpose of the Government Strategy for inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to Roma minority for the period 2012-2020 is to ensure socio-economic inclusion of Romanian citizens of Roma minority by implementing integrated policies in education, employment, health, housing, culture and social infrastructure. At the same time, the Government Strategy aims at empowering the central and local Roma minority and civil society to increase the socio-economic inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority.

Government Strategy objectives are: - ensuring equal access and free access of Romanian citizens belonging to Roma minority to quality education at all levels in the public education system to support economic growth and society development based on knowledge; - promote inclusive education within the education system, the prevention and elimination of segregation and the fight against discrimination based on ethnicity, social status, disability or other criteria that affect children and young people from disadvantaged groups, including Roma; - stimulating the increase of employment of persons belonging to Roma and increasing the attractiveness for investment; - stimulating health promotion measures to help increase the access of citizens belonging to the Roma minority to public health services and increasing life expectancy; - provision by central institutions, local and social partners, of decent living conditions in economically and socially disadvantaged communities, and access to public services and little infrastructure; - the preservation, development and cultural identity (language, customs, heritage) of the Roma minority; - development by institutions of measures that meet the social needs of disadvantaged groups, including members of the Roma minority in the fields of community development, child protection, justice and public order.

The expected results of the implementation of the Government Strategy for inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to Roma minority for the period 2012-2020 are: - the number of initial and ongoing training programs of teachers in inclusive education increased by 30%; - the number of children belonging to the Roma minority who participate in preschool programs and support for leaving compulsory education increased by 30 percentage points; - 30% increase in the number of places for Roma granted admission to school/university; - the systematic monitoring and reduction of cases of school segregation; - an increase by 60,000 of the number of employed persons belonging to the Roma minority; - an increase with 25,000 in the number of employed Roma minority women; - setting up a unit within the Ministry of Health, called the Technical Assistance Unit for Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation of health mediators; - increasing the number of health mediators by 25% compared to 450 in 2011; - 5,000 homes built for beneficiaries belonging to the Roma minority; - 5,000 rehabilitated housing for Roma; - Establishment of the "Museum of Roma Culture and Civilization"; - Establishment of the "Roma State Theatre".

The Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development establishes the structural intervention in human resources through the European Social Fund. The overall objective of the programme is the development of human capital and increasing competitiveness, by linking education and lifelong labor market and ensuring increased opportunities for participating in a modern labor market, flexible and inclusive labor market for 1,650,000 people. The programme is structured on the following priorities: education and training in support of growth and development of knowledge based society; lifelong connection to the labor market; increasing adaptability of workers and enterprises; modernize public employment service; promoting active employment measures; promoting social inclusion and technical assistance.

These strategies represent the views of both the government and the institutions with attribution in the socio-economic integration of Roma and the non-governmental organizations aimed at supporting the social integration of Roma. The latter have a very important role in reducing social exclusion of the Roma, are actively involved in the implementation of strategies and, at the same time, developing parallel programs that respond to other needs of the Roma population in Romania.

IV. National Intervention models

1. "Împreună" Foundation

"Împreună" Foundation was founded in 1998 with the mission to improve the lives of community members in need, at risk of marginalization and social exclusion. The main activity of the organization is the provision of social services for vulnerable groups, granted at the "Împreună" day center, which includes: day center for children in need, counseling and support for parents, seniors club, the office of information and counseling for disadvantaged people, intergenerational computer club workshop, lucrative and income generating activities.

Services for vulnerable groups by the organization, especially for women and Roma groups

1. "Împreună" Day Center for children in need

Services:

- education (school homework, educational activities, computer club);
- serving lunch;
- developing social skills and independent living;
- information and social counseling;
- psychological assessment and counseling;
- socializing and leisure.

2. Seniors Club

Services:

- information and social counseling;
- psychological assessment and counseling;
- socializing and leisure;
- occupational therapy - handicraft workshop.

2. Community Development Agency Buzău “Association”

The mission of the organization is to contribute to the comprehensive and sustainable development of disadvantaged local communities by ensuring full access of their citizens to political, economic, social and cultural rights through efficient and multidisciplinary human resources and economic conditions.

Programs / projects / actions developed by the organization:

1. April 8 - International Roma Day; The Association supported the organization and holding of cultural and artistic activities, with culture theme, history and traditions of Roma, work in schools with Roma students.
2. May 9 - Europe Day; intercultural contest show, in partnership with schools in the county.
3. Since inception, the association ensures permanent access for citizens from Roma communities to civil rights through by offering support for legality obtaining identity documents and marital status, as well as property deeds to homes owned, the costs being borne by the association.
4. Campaigns to prevent and combat all forms of discrimination; actions carried out in 15 schools in Buzau and Ramnicu Sarat, but also in rural areas. These activities were conducted within the project "Say No to Discrimination", in partnership with the County Police Inspectorate and the CNCND Territorial Office of Buzau.

3. Community Cultural Center "Anton Pann" Association

Community Cultural Center "Anton Pann" Association aims to unite in its ranks most intellectuals, young Roma and non-Roma and with them establish and highlight priorities regarding measures necessary to promote socio-economic and cultural development of the Roma ethnic group, and legal ways and means of achieving them, to improve the situation of Roma in local communities.

Community Cultural Center "Anton Pann" Association is campaigning for expression, preservation and development of Roma through cultural and artistic activities, by means of mass communication (press, TV, radio), by facilitating the use of Romani in private, collective and public by organizing lectures, demonstrations and grant award for promoting multiculturalism, integration of Roma culture in general circulation exchanges in Romania and worldwide.

In order to meet the objectives laid down by the statute, the Association developed the following activities, among others:

1. Legal advice and guidance of Romanian citizens of Roma origin in the compilation of identity and property documents.

2. Information in schools, colleges and other institutions to monitor cases of discrimination and segregation.
3. Meetings with high school students and eighth graders to guide them to schools and universities to continue their studies.
4. Information, guidance and counseling for graduates graduates (classes VIII and XII) in further learning.
5. Support activities undertaken within the project "Together on the Labour Market", implemented by the National Agency for Roma, financed by the European Social Fund. Under this project we have identified 104 people who have completed training.

4. Roma Party "Pro-Europa", Tulcea Branch

The purpose and objectives of the association Roma Party "Pro-Europe" is the preservation, expression and development of the Roma minority, particularly language education, culture of the Roma minority, the means of mass communication in the mother tongue, as well as the beliefs of Romanian citizens of Roma minority, in accordance with the principles of equality and non-discrimination in relation to other citizens enshrined in the Constitution.

Programs / projects / actions developed by the organization:

1. "Participation of vulnerable groups in the social economy" co-financed by the European Social Fund, which aimed to increase, in local communities (including Roma people) across the country, the ability to achieve sustainable and inclusive local development.
2. "Together for a better society", financed by the European Social Fund, the objective was general improvement in the labor market participation of vulnerable groups and promoting social inclusion through the development of social economy activities and structures. In this project, we organized 13 training courses for different occupations.
3. "School - a chance for everyone", financed by the European Social Fund, had the overall objective of raising the level of education of Roma children in rural and urban areas and developing human capital to include their future on a modern labor market and flexible ensuring access to education and reducing early school leaving phenomenon.
4. "Social inclusion of Roma women", financed by the European Social Fund implemented in partnership with Roma Women Association of Romania, Institute for Research on National Minorities and the European Centre for Roma Rights, under which aims to promote social inclusion Roma women and improve their situation by developing structures and mechanisms to promote equal opportunities.

5. "Rom for Rom" Association

Association "Rom Rom" is a nonprofit organization active mainly in the educational and social fields. The main purpose of its activities is to support the promotion and development of Roma in all possible dimensions and develop the idea of volunteering as an expression of social solidarity, to support youth in general.

Programs / projects / actions developed by the organization:

1. Education Day Center "Pinocchio" aims to provide all children a pleasant learning and playing space, trying to improve school attendance and provide those who do not attend school the opportunity to learn.
2. School mediation: we conducted meetings with teachers of children enrolled in the center, in order to reduce the average dropout and improve the level of children education, especially those with a higher risk. Meetings with parents and families to share their progress and activities of children enrolled at the center.

6. Alliance for Roma Unity, Braila Branch (AURr)

The organization's mission is to contribute to improving the existing gaps between Roma and the majority, and to achieve full equality with other populations of Roma living on Romanian territory.

It campaigns for Roma to enjoy all their rights as citizens, without any discrimination against other ethnic groups or minorities within the territory of the Romanian state, to respect and promote multiculturalism, integration of Roma culture in circuit values in Romania and worldwide.

Programs / projects / actions developed by the organization:

- "A step forward" - financed by PHARE funds amounting to 20,000 euros, aimed at increasing access of Roma children in secondary education. The applicant for this project was AURr Braila, in partnership with the Local Council of Braila.
- "Together" - documentary film, which was achieved through a project funded by the US Embassy, worth \$ 10,000. The project aimed at increasing tolerance among children by knowing the customs and traditions of minorities. The film was distributed in schools as teaching material.
- "Reports of equality" - developed by the Prefecture of Braila in partnership with AURR Braila was financed by PHARE. The project was 45,000 euros. The main objective of the project was the training of 30 community workers and engaging them in local municipalities. Many of these workers were employed in the Community and partner municipalities are what experts now call for Roma.
- "The wheel"- the project was financed by PHARE and had a value of 47,000 euros. The project aimed at increasing access of Roma people in the labor market. The project has qualified 42 Roma as masons, painters, confectioner and social mediator.

Services for vulnerable groups by the organization, especially for women and Roma groups: From 2001 to the present, the organization has helped the Roma community members with various services, depending on the existing issues in the community at that time.

Even at the beginning of - 2001 - a big problem was the lack of local people to be the interface between public authorities and the community, to identify the problems Roma people are facing and make it known to the authorities. To meet this need, the organization, together with the Prefect Institution of Braila, developed and implemented

the first project in which they were qualified in the occupation of Community worker a total of 30 Roma persons, of whom 25 people in the county Braila and five people in the counties of the South East.

V. International models of intervention

1. ESPACE 16, Strasbourg

In June 2011, the city of Strasbourg decided to build a temporary living space for 20 Roma families from Romania, to help them to integrate in this city. This project, managed by the government of the city, assist these families through both the institutions and their staff and by involving NGOs. ESPACE 16 is located in the city center near the train station and the stations means of transport. This space consists of 26 caravans and buildings, which provides, in addition to living quarters, toilets, showers, washing machines and a meeting room. At the time of the move in ESPACE 16 families have signed a contract which established integration objectives and operating rules of this space. At the end of 2013, 22 families lived this space. Since March 2013 all over 16 years old were registered to attend French language courses during which they are made aware of them and various information about life in France. Over 50% of the inhabitants of this area understand the importance of these courses and consistently participates.

2. Alliance for inclusion of roma in education, Macedonia

The objectives of this program include improving academic performance, the rate of enrollment and stay in school, and increase the number of Roma students who complete courses at secondary and tertiary level enroll in education. The project aims to increase motivation among Roma children and improving self-esteem. In the first year of implementation of this project, 657 Roma students benefited from it, while they are at different levels of education. In the 2007-2008 school year, the program was implemented in 25 cities and 57 secondary schools, with about 64 mentors.

The results were not long in coming, so that in 2005-2006 the rate of enrollment of Roma students in secondary education grew by 22.9%. In 2006-2007 the rate of students graduating classes without leave or repeat them grew by 3.6%. 98.5% of students enrolled in the program have completed secondary education in 2007.

3. The increase in social and cultural capital in areas with a Roma population, Slovenia

This project, carried out nationally, was composed both of research and analysis of the situation of Roma in Slovenia, evaluation of projects undertaken and their results in terms of growth rate of inclusion of Roma, but also intervention activities as well as educational assistance, training of teachers, social workers and other experts in working with children of Roma, development of Roma children dedicated extra-curricular activities, etc. The project had significant results in the form of national and comparative analyzes on the inclusion of Roma people and the preservation of their culture. The project also aimed to highlight both good practices and bad examples because they are not replicated in other areas.

4. Local and Regional Roma Minority Councils, Croatia

Through this project, there were created local and regional councils composed of representatives of the Roma minority councils through which this minority to participate both in the government locally and regionally, and in making decisions, especially those concerning directly or indirectly members of the minority. These councils can propose new regulations or notify local, regional or even national interests of errors to be directed to breach of the constitution or laws. It also is the responsibility of the councils and the implementation of measures relating directly or indirectly Roma minority.

VI. Conclusions

Improving living conditions and quality of life of Roma is a priority for public authorities from Romania and other EU countries, and for many organizations who have made a point to support Roma to attain a decent living as close to the majority population of the EU Member States. This goal, however, is impossible if access to education, employment, social services, etc. is not provided. Among the causes and conditions that lead to poor integration of the Roma population there are close links, sustained efforts are needed to bridge the gap between the Roma population and the majority populations. The projects presented here and more others, are important steps made in this common endeavor that needs to become increasingly more consistent, organizations must work constantly supported by governments and public authorities.

In order to build effective policies, it is particularly important that they be based on the needs felt in communities, needs to be addressed in special projects undertaken by NGOs. Through practices adopted by civil society in its efforts for the social integration of the Roma, considerable attention should be given to activities that promote their culture and traditions. Through such an approach integration through diversity can be promoted, a type of effort you can have more success than to force Roma to adopt the culture of the majority population. By the interest shown by the active organizations in the social integration of Roma, understanding the importance of this integration is demonstrated through diversity. It is also important to involve in these efforts the people in the communities where the projects are implemented not only as beneficiaries but also as facilitators, as members of project teams, and possibly as models for others. The Romanian NGOs for Roma inclusion are supporting and completing the efforts invested by the public authorities in solving the different problems faced by the Roma population. The activities of these NGOs are addressing a wide area of issues, with the programs being implemented at local, regional or even national levels, according to the bottom-up principles of community development, and not necessarily following the central policies directed by the EU or the government (Cace et. al., 2012).

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