

# Evaluation of Efficiency of the Local Mechanisms of Social Inclusion of Roma



Government  
of the Republic  
of Serbia



SOCIAL INCLUSION  
— AND —  
POVERTY REDUCTION  
UNIT



**Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit,  
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Government  
for European Integration**

# Evaluation of Efficiency of the Local Mechanisms of Social Inclusion of Roma

---

Branka Anđelković  
Marko Obradović  
Jelena Radoman

CENTER Public Policy Research Centre  
January 2013

## Content:

### Contents

LIST OF ACRONYMS .....	4
Introduction / Objective of Survey .....	5
PART ONE .....	7
I. Overview – Social Inclusion of Roma in Serbia .....	7
PART TWO .....	10
II. ROMA COORDINATORS .....	10
III. HEALTH MEDIATORS .....	17
IV. NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE .....	22
V. TEACHING ASSISTANTS .....	26
VI. CENTRES FOR SOCIAL WELFARE .....	31
PART THREE – GENERAL FINDINGS AND SURVEYS .....	36
VII. Introduction .....	36
I. GENERAL FINDINGS .....	37
II. SUCCESS FACTORS .....	39
III. FAILURE FACTORS .....	44
IV. RECOMMENDATIONS .....	47

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

EAR – European Agency for Reconstruction

IPA – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

JMU– Joint mobile unit

LAP – Local action plan

MICS – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

MLESP – Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy

MOI – Ministry of Interior

NES – National Employment Service

NGO – non-governmental organisation

OSCE – Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

PDI – Pension and Disability Insurance

RSO – Republic Statistical Office

CSW – Centre for social welfare

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund

WB – World Bank

## Introduction / Objective of Survey

A significant number of Roma live in the Republic of Serbia. This population is faced with numerous socio-economic challenges because of which the Republic of Serbia adopted and is implementing the Strategy for Improvement of the Position of Roma.

In addition to the national policies, the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 and the EU Platform for Roma represent two relevant policy frameworks contributing to improvement of the situation of Roma in Europe, and consequently in Serbia too. The implementation of these should contribute considerably to fulfillment of the standards in the area of protection of human and minority rights.

Serbia is committed to fulfillment of the priorities set out in the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015. To that effect, it has established an adequate strategic and legal framework – the Strategy for Improvement of the Position of Roma. Also, Serbia adopted sectoral action plans and established the institutions mandated with advancement of the situation of Roma population. Numerous laws based on the Strategy were adopted: the Anti-Discrimination Law, the Law on National Councils of Ethnic Minorities, the Law on Social Housing, the Law on the Basics of Education with specific provisions related to inclusion and anti-discrimination, etc. Serbia ratified all the relevant international human rights conventions such as the Revised European Social Charter. However, enormous disparities remain between the indicators of poverty and social inclusion of Roma and those of the general population.

In March 2012, the Republic of Serbia was granted European Union candidate status. The issue of Roma inclusion will certainly become very relevant and significant in negotiations for the fullfledged membership, in the domain of human rights protection. In view of the above, a question is ever more frequently put about the real progress that Serbia made in the domain of social inclusion of Roma. On the one hand, there prevails an opinion that the majority of programmes implemented within the framework of the Decade of Roma Inclusion achieved modest results and that Roma in Serbia continue to live in poor conditions, in deprivation and discrimination. Others pertain that the problems of Roma have become more visible thanks to the Decade, and that the society started looking for solutions in response to numerous challenges they face. As practice shows, the majority of programmes such as those of the centres for social welfare (CSR) and the National Employment Service (NES), as well as the involvement of Roma coordinators (in municipalities in Serbia with Roma population) represent but a partial response to already deeply rooted socio-economic problems such as unemployment and/or poverty. On the other hand, some programmes were created and established in the sectors of health care and education and the activities they include have contributed to betterment of the social position of the Roma minority in Serbia as compared to the situation of seven years ago.

Since the adoption of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in 2005, the Government of the Republic of Serbia began paying more attention to social inclusion of Roma, in an attempt to respond to the challenges of deep poverty and exclusion of this category of population in Serbia. The present study represents an analysis of the programmes, the so called "mechanisms for social inclusion of Roma" in Serbia, in the municipalities where all of them exist. The mentioned activities are those undertaken by the National Employment Service, centres for social welfare, Roma coordinators in

local governments, health mediators commissioned by the Ministry of Health and teaching assistants by the Ministry of Science, Education and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia. In accordance with that, the authors of the report have tried to answer the following questions:

- Which programmes and incentives for social inclusion of Roma have been stipulated by the strategic documents of the Republic of Serbia?
- What is the objective of each of the observed mechanisms or institutions with respect to social inclusion of Roma?
- How were the programmes of health mediators, teaching assistants, Roma coordinators, National Employment Service and the centres for social welfare implemented?
- How do these mechanisms and institutions function and coordinate their work?
- Which are the factors of success and factors of failure with respect to these mechanisms?

This report has three parts. The first part represents an overview of the strategic documents on social inclusion of Roma. The second part presents individual findings and recommendations of authors for each individual mechanism on the basis of field research. A total of 65 interviews were conducted with the representatives of the National Employment Service, social welfare centres, teaching assistants, health mediators, Roma coordinators, representatives of local governments and relevant ministries and other Government bodies. The interviews were conducted in October 2012 in Pančevo, Novi Sad, Sombor, Zrenjanin, Barajevo, Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Jagodina, Vranje, Surdulica, Bujanovac and Belgrade. The municipalities were selected on the basis of income (below or above the average income in Serbia); territorial distribution (Vojvodina, Central Serbia, South Serbia) and the share of Roma and the majority population in the total number of inhabitants in a municipality. The beneficiaries of the services of these mechanisms were interviewed in two focus groups organised in Vranje and Kraljevo and in meetings held in Roma settlements in Bujanovac and Barajevo. In the third part of the report, the authors present general findings, the success and failure factors and propose recommendations for all the mechanisms with the aim of their contributing to a more efficient social inclusion of Roma in Serbia.

The Analysis of Efficiency of Social Inclusion of Roma was supported by the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration, as part of the preparations for implementation of the project focused on support to the Strategy for Improvement of the Position of Roma, funded by EU IPA 2012.

# PART ONE

## I. Overview – Social Inclusion of Roma in Serbia

### Statistics – Roma in Serbia

According to the 2011 Census of Population, 147,604 Roma live in Serbia. However, the previous unofficial estimates implied their number may be up to 250,000. According to the 2011 Census, the greatest number of Roma live in southern and eastern Serbia (57,239 or 38.7% of the total Roma population) and Vojvodina (42,391 Roma or 34.8% of the total Roma population). So, Roma make up for more than 10% of the total population in the north and south of the country: in Bač, Novi Bečej, Nova Crnja, Beočin, Koceljevo, Pećinci, Bojnik, Surdulica, Bujanovac, Bela Palanka. Roma also live in cities and towns such as Belgrade (27,325), Niš (6,996), Leskovac (7,700).<sup>1</sup>

Roma in Serbia face numerous problems. Although the share of able bodied Roma in the country is on the rise, only 29% of them take part in the local labour market. Discrimination and lack of education are among the key reasons for this: 19% of Roma are illiterate (of which 2/3 are women), and a mere 12% have lower secondary school education. Low level of education prevents their stronger participation on the labour market. Even when employed, on the average Roma earn 48% of the average pay in Serbia (WB, 2010). More than 60% of Roma is without any income, Roma women being in a majority (RSO, 2010).

The participation on the labour market and the low level of education are not the only problems besieging this population. According to UNICEF data, 60% of Roma live below the poverty line<sup>2</sup>. Health of Roma is often at risk because a considerable number of them live in informal settlements where the health conditions are very bad and the most frequent problems are lack of potable water and sewage.

More than 40% of settlements in which Roma live are considered urgent accommodation (RSO, 2010). Thus, one of the burning problems faced by Roma are poor housing conditions. The process of legalisation of illegally built housing began in 2003. The Action Plan for Roma Housing (2005) established the direction and defined the key activities towards resolving the housing problems of Roma in the Republic of Serbia. Nevertheless, legalisation is slow, and the number of legalised

---

<sup>1</sup> 2011. Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in The Republic of Serbia, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade, 2012

<sup>2</sup> 2010. MICS – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

houses negligible relative to the dimensions of the phenomena. Since 2003, 360,000 requests for legalisation have been submitted, including the requests from Roma settlements.

The reasons for slow progress in this area differ, but the majority of municipalities lack funds for legalisation and urbanisation of settlements which entails installation of water supply, sewage, power. Therefore, the emphasis remains on the distribution of building materials, partial construction of infrastructure in Roma settlements and assistance to families whose houses had been ruined during natural disasters.

The difficult living conditions result in high child mortality rates. For instance, the infant mortality rate in Roma settlements is estimated at 14 promille, while the probability of them dying before the age of 5 is around 15 at 1000 live births – almost twice the national average (MICS, UNICEF, 2010). Domestic violence is a wide spread problem, but is largely unrecognised and barely on the “radar” of local police and courts so far.

The number of internally displaced Roma from Kosovo and Metohija is high; many of them do not have personal documentation. According to the 2011 Census, there are 147,604 Roma in Serbia including the internally displaced persons. At the same time, the electronic database of the Ministry of Health currently registers 129,367 Roma, or 8,178 Roma without personal documents; the health mediators having obtained documents for 3,295 Roma.

The issue of documentation (ID, health booklet, etc.) is not a phenomenon limited to the displaced Roma only. Many Roma born in Serbia and living in informal settlements also lack documentation, which results in poor access to health and social protection, education and judiciary.

In cooperation with the non-governmental organisations, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Serbia implements the programmes of free legal assistance to the undocumented Roma. However, exercise of the right to documentation remains a challenge. The issue of health booklets was being successfully resolved until suspension of the procedure of issuance of health booklets for persons without birth certificates. The statements of two witnesses on Roma ethnicity no longer suffice and the registration of the person at the address of a social welfare centre is required (made possible as of 8 December 2012 – when the Rulebook on the Form of Registration of Habitual Residence at the address of an institution i.e. centre for social welfare).

Identity cards still remain elusive for many Roma because they do not have registered habitual/temporary residence at the legally existing address. In December 2012, the initiative of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy (MLESP) was adopted to the effect that Roma may register at the addresses of social welfare centres in their cities by enactment of a joint Rulebook of MOI and MLESP<sup>2</sup> allowing for this possibility.

## **Strategic and legal framework**

The Republic of Serbia has been adopting strategies, laws and by-laws stipulating solutions to the problems of the Roma population since 2002. The key sectoral documents are Action

---

<sup>2</sup> As by-law of the Law on Habitual and Temporary Residence of Citizens

Plan/employment Roma (2004), Strategy for Improvement of Education of Roma (2005), Guidelines for Legalisation of Roma Settlements (2007) and the Plan of Protection of Health of Roma (2006).

The members of the National Council of the Roma Ethnic Minority were appointed in May 2003. Two years later, Serbia signed the Declaration of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015, and chaired the Decade in the period July 2008 - June 2009. The Council for Improvement of the Position of Roma was established in 2008, and the Strategy for Improvement on the Position of Roma in Serbia was developed in 2009. This completed the process of setting up the strategic framework for Roma inclusion in Serbia. The Strategy focuses on education, housing, health and employment and the priorities identified are combatting discrimination, poverty reduction and closing the gender gap between Roma men and women.

The Strategy represented the basis for numerous laws: the Anti-Discrimination Law, the Law on Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of Ethnic Minorities, the Law on Social Housing and the Law on the Basics of Education with specific provisions on inclusion and anti-discrimination.

The Autonomous Province of Vojvodina established an Office for Roma Inclusion; the City of Belgrade founded the Council for Roma Inclusion in December 2010.

## **Programmes of Social Inclusion of Roma in municipalities**

In line with the strategic framework, various programmes were initiated in Serbia: a programme of teaching assistants at the Ministry of Education, a project of health mediators at the Ministry of Health and a programme of Roma coordinators within the local governments. The line ministry in charge of employment and the National Employment Service developed additional measures for activation and employment of Roma through the national action plans/employment 2009, 2010, 2011. These programmes are implemented at different pace depending on the sector, municipality, funds and other similar factors.

The latest initiative was launched during the programming of IPA 2012 (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance). The objective is to set up “joint mobile units” for Roma inclusion (JMU), in municipalities with all the five Roma inclusion mechanisms, as stated in the Strategy (National Employment Service, centres for social welfare, teaching assistants, health mediators and Roma coordinators commissioned by local governments). There are 20 of such municipalities at the minimum: Belgrade (municipalities of Čukarica and Barajevo), Pančevo, Zrenjanin, Kovin, Novi Sad, Ruma, Apatin, Sombor, Kikinda, Jagodina, Valjevo, Kragujevac, Kruševac, Kraljevo, Vlasotince, Vranje, Surdulica, Lebane and Bujanovac. The list of municipalities is not yet final as there is a necessity to include municipalities with a large number of Roma (e.g. Palilula and Leskovac).

The subject of this evaluation is to assess the work of each individual mechanism, and their mutual cooperation in the municipalities where these mechanisms and institutions exist.

# PART TWO

## Introduction

Based on the results of field research, this part of the Study presents individual findings and recommendations for each individual mechanism and institution. The interviews were conducted in Pančevo, Novi Sad, Sombor, Zrenjanin, Barajevo, Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Jagodina, Vranje, Surdulica, Bujanovac and Belgrade in October 2012. The municipalities were selected on the basis of income (below or above the average income in Serbia); territorial distribution (Vojvodina, Central Serbia, South Serbia) and the share of Roma and the majority population in the total number of inhabitants in a municipality. Roma men and women - beneficiaries of services of these mechanisms - were interviewed in two focus groups in Vranje and Kraljevo, and in meetings organised in Roma settlements in Bujanovac and Barajevo.

## II. ROMA COORDINATORS

In 2003, a certain number of projects were launched with a view to improving the position of Roma through partnerships of citizens associations and institutions at the local level within the framework of implementation of national strategies for Roma in municipalities and cities.<sup>3</sup> In cooperation with the OSCE Mission to Serbiam, the Directorate, and later Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, took the leading role in these initiatives. The work of Roma coordinators in municipalities was funded until 2007. In 2008, MLESP took over their financing in 20 local government units. Aiming to formalise local action plans/Roma, local governments continued supporting the work of coordinators – 55 of them - in 2009.

### Introduction

The coordinators answered the questionnaire in 10 municipalities representing 90% of the observed sample and 50% of the total number of municipalities in Serbia with all the five mechanisms relevant to inclusion of the Roma ethnic minority. The Roma coordinator for the Belgrade municipality of Barajevo was unavailable for being on maternity leave.

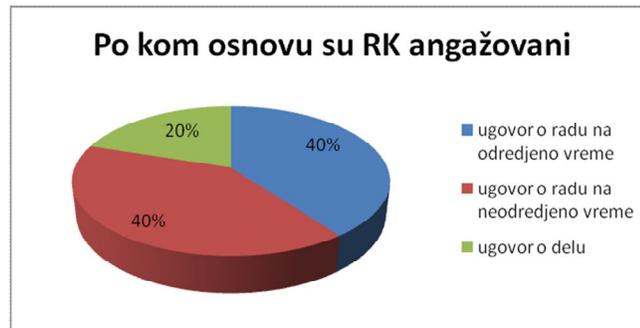
Roma coordinators were engaged in ten of the observed municipalities, with the exception of Jagodina, where the Roma coordinator worked until 2009. Although his contract had not been renewed, the previous coordinator continued performing the job in part, with no clear legal basis or financial compensation. The Roma coordinators interviewed had been operational for 5.33 years on

---

<sup>3</sup> The programme was supported by the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) through OSCE Mission to Serbia

the average, which exceeds the electoral cycle for local government authorities in the Republic of Serbia. A conclusion ensues that, on the average, the electoral cycle had no influence on their position and keeping of the post. Those coordinators who had been commissioned earlier in time were mostly working on the basis of indefinite contracts – as compared to those who were engaged later on.

**Graph 1**



Legal basis of engagement of Roma coordinators  
 -fixed-term contract  
 -indefinite contract  
 -service contract

All the coordinators are employees of municipal administration. Even though engaged by municipalities, the offices of some of them are not located in municipal buildings (Novi Sad, Zrenjanin), and some do not have offices (Kovin and Kraljevo).

Following insight into the employment contracts of the coordinators, one may conclude that there are significant differences in the terms of reference. They vary from advocacy of interests, work on improvement of social and economic situation of the members of Roma ethnic minority, development and implementation of local action plans (LAP) and relevant projects, initiating activities required for inclusion of Roma into local communities, collection of information about the situation, needs and activities of Roma associations and individuals, establishment of database about the Roma population, drafting proposals and initiatives for improvement of the situation of Roma, jobs aimed at implementation of local action plans/Roma, through to coordination and participation in preparation and development of plans for improvement of the situation of Roma.

## **Part one: Process of work of Roma coordinators**

In the majority of cases, Roma coordinators do not have accurate records on the number of Roma on the territory they cover and which they communicate with. Instead, they provided a general assessment of the number of persons they "cover" or have cited official data on the number of Roma in the observed municipality. There are sporadic examples of efforts to establish databases. With the exception of two cases, there exist no defined procedures and aligned practice of assessment of beneficiaries and their needs. Roma coordinators themselves are not responsible for harmonised registration of needs of the Roma population on the territory they are in charge of, and they have no access to other databases of the national institutions (NES, CSR, Ministry of Health, etc.).

Almost all of the Roma coordinators obtain information about the beneficiaries and their needs by visiting Roma settlements minimum once a month. The only exception is the coordinator from Novi Sad who stressed she had no formal obligation to conduct field visits. The findings of focus groups negate, in part, the statements of the coordinators that it is them who go to the settlements. The Roma who participated in focus groups state it was they who initiated contacts more often, and mainly by going to the offices of Roma coordinators. Some of the Roma coordinators believe that they had fulfilled the form – collected the information on the needs of the beneficiaries – in informal talks and interactions. The majority of the coordinators interviewed (70%) stated that Roma beneficiaries had been consulted when establishing the real needs of the Roma population.

With respect to the work process, 60% of the interviewed Roma coordinators said they had work plans. However, clearly defined objectives are lacking in the majority of cases; the planned activities are widely set, except when related to the LAPs (when these are clearly set and measurable). Therefore, effective monitoring of the results of their work is impossible. Sombor and Pančevo are best practice examples with the established procedures of monitoring results against the adopted action plans. Also, due to not sufficiently clearly defined position and terms of reference, 50% of Roma coordinators feel they lack of authority and that their post is inadequate for them to respond to practical challenges (see Graph 2). Seven of the ten interviewed Roma coordinators assessed the professional relationship with their supervisor by an average grade of 3.28. In the past coordinators were offered different trainings, particularly so when the programme was headed by the former Ministry for Human and Minority Rights. Also, 80% of the coordinators state they attended “many trainings”, with only 20% stating they sporadically attended trainings or attended them more frequently in the past but less frequently now.

**Graph 2**



To what extent does your TOR correspond to your capabilities?

- It is below my capabilities
- It is above my capabilities
- It corresponds to my my capabilities

The interviewed coordinators stated lack of funds, their own weak position, lack of financial and human resources, deviations from the formally set terms of reference, educational structure of Roma population, insufficient engagement of the centre for social welfare but also the fact that they did not hold indefinite employment contracts as the most frequent obstacles to their work.

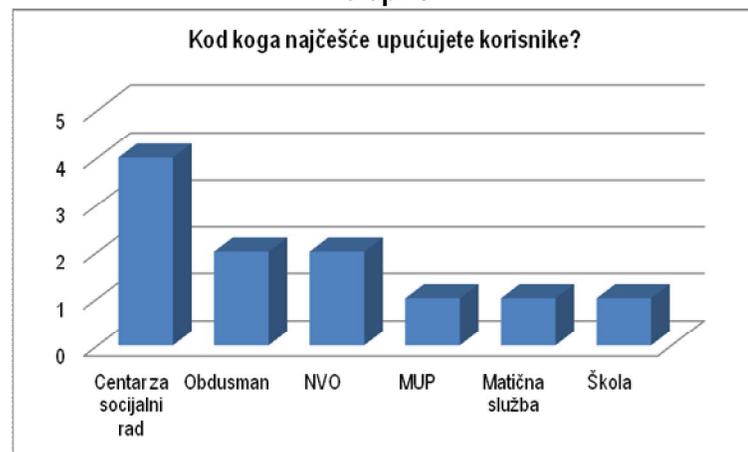
All the Roma coordinators were informed about the key documents for social inclusion of Roma such as the local action plans. The majority had taken part in their development in one way or another, but had only partially participated in their implementation. Although some coordinators have

difficulties to link their work clearly to the objectives from LAPs, the majority stated their terms of reference to be in line with the objectives defined in the municipal/local plan. The insight into the terms of reference of the Roma coordinators confirms this assertion only partially.

## Part two: Cooperation and coordination with other institutions<sup>4</sup>

With respect to referral of Roma to other institutions by the Roma coordinators, centres for social welfare represent the first instance, followed by the Ombudsman and NGOs. Half of the coordinators interviewed mentioned CSWs as the key institution they communicate with. Health centres come next. The majority of coordinators (80%) think that they have performed duties that other institutions: centres for social welfare, schools, MOI, etc, are mandated for. On the other hand, very weak communication and frequent rivalry between the teaching assistants and Roma coordinators was observed. According to the responses of the coordinators, some of the health mediators completely stopped exchanging information with the other mechanisms so as not to expose themselves to the risk of disclosing confidential information.

Graph 3



Whom do you most often refer the beneficiaries to?  
CSW, Ombudsman, NGOs, MOI, Registry Office, school

Roma coordinators lack authority within the system and with respect to other institutions and mechanisms. Roma coordinators (90% of them) do not tend to call coordination meetings for lack of mandate to do so, but do convene meetings about concrete issues. The majority of the interviewed coordinators stated they were not responsible for contacting other institutions and mechanisms, but

---

<sup>4</sup>For the purpose of this Report, the definition of coordination was taken from: Les Metcalfe, "International Policy Co-ordination and Public Management Reform", *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 60, pp. 271–290, Sage, London, 1994. In this part the focus is on planning and alignment of activities of all the relevant subjects directed at maximization of benefit for the beneficiaries with optimum use of resources. The assumption of a successful cooperation would be timely and adequate exchange of information and existence of an integrated mechanism of planning and control of the objectives achieved.

that they did it in view of the need. The problems observed by the coordinators as unresolvable are in the domain of work of other institutions: legalisation of housing, provision of documentation, registration of habitual residence, etc.

Roma coordinators expect a better cooperation of other institutions and recognise this cooperation to be their own success factor. At the same time, they assess it relatively well – the average grade is 3.8. CSWs are an exception to this average, with two thirds of respondents assessing it as positive and one third as a negative exception.

There was not a single case when the coordinator maintained coordination between the five state policy mechanisms of Roma inclusion. Cooperation in the field was found to be only sporadic, in as much as the implementers thought it required for successful execution of their own activities. The findings imply the reason for this lack of coordination role of Roma coordinators to be a consequence of systemic solutions, for each of the mechanisms had been established on the basis of independent operation, including the coordinators themselves.

## Part three: Relevance to the beneficiaries

The majority (60%) of the interviewed Roma coordinators consider the greatest importance of their work to lie in the fact that the members of the Roma population have a direct focal point and believe that they will be well represented before the institutions. The coordinators agree that they are the link and the intermediary between the Roma community and the institutions. At the same time, both the coordinators who see their function as a form of technical support (Vranje, Bujanovac, Kraljevo) and those who consider this mechanism should have a mandate for coordination between the Roma community and the institutions at the strategic level (proposal and adoption of strategic documents and monitoring their implementation – e.g. Novi Sad, Sombor) agree the role of an intermediary to be principal in their terms of reference. Only a few mediators (Sombor, Novi Sad, Kragujevac) perceive themselves as safeguarding and/or advocating for the interests of the Roma community through participation in development of public policies and is ready to assume leadership.

The coordinators are focused on providing assistance and support only to the beneficiaries who contact them most often. The free legal assistance in provision of documents and "translation" of requests of the institutions that the beneficiaries fail to understand but not from Roma language: rather from the bureaucratic to the simple language, understandable to simple people - is the most frequent service provided by the coordinators. However, final realisation of the rights that the beneficiaries wish to exercise in individual institutions (CSWs, NES, police, etc.) is out of reach and control of the coordinators although they often do help in making contact. It is only *post festum*, and sporadically that they gain insight into whether a member of the Roma community managed to exercise a certain right and in cases when beneficiaries contact them again.

## Part four: Success factors

The coordinators are, first and foremost, perceived as service providers and they measure the success of their own work by level of beneficiary satisfaction. All the interviewed coordinators believe themselves to be very useful to the Roma community. They state rapport and direct contact with the beneficiaries as one of the success factors of their work, in addition to the fact that they themselves are part of the Roma community they understand well. Half of the interviewed coordinators consider cooperation with other institutions to be the crucial factor of their success. On the other hand, 70% of the interviewed coordinators distrusts political and civic activism of Roma themselves, as they adamantly and negatively evaluated the Roma who are politically active ("they work only for their own benefit") and Roma NGOs. Best practice examples of cooperation with certain Roma NGOs were only sporadically noted.

The key problem that 50% of the interviewed coordinators stress is absence of budget that would be available to them for resolution of burning and unexpected challenges in a community, and their inability to respond to the greatest problems of the beneficiaries. These are, at the same time, the systemic problems of social inclusion of the Roma community: employment and housing. 50% of the interviewed coordinators identify education as a sector in which more progress has been achieved thanks to the affirmative interventions and relative to the other sectors of inclusion (health care, social protection, employment). According to them successful examples of inclusion are very concrete actions that solved some of the basic problems: paving of the streets, access to sewage network, cleaning of Roma settlements, etc.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Local governments, in cooperation with the Office for Human and Minority Rights, should clearly define the role of coordinators in the system, whether or not they are to be municipal employees or have wider duties, to safeguard and promote the interests of the Roma population. The key tasks of Roma coordinators should be that of intermediaries between the institutions and the Roma community. In order to perform this role well, each coordinator should have an office in the central municipal building.
- In line with the future defined objectives, the local governments should systematize the post of coordinators relative to the needs, to clearly define the terms of reference, and thus select coordinators. In addition to the provisions responding to the needs of the Roma community in each community, the employment contracts for Roma coordinators should include a joint minimum prescribed by the Office for Human and Minority Rights, in order to create a harmonised framework for implementation of policies aimed at Roma inclusion at the national level. Also, the number of visits to Roma coordinators to Roma settlements needs to be standardised (as with teaching assistants and health mediators) in order for them to have better insight into the needs of the community.
- The local governments should "link" the work of the coordinators with the local action plans and quantify the results of their work against the objectives of the LAPs.

- The procedures related to the beneficiary assessment conducted by Roma coordinators should be formalised and harmonised in order to establish a comparable questionnaire for beneficiary assessment at national level. The Office for Human and Minority Rights, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy and local governments in consultations with the ministries of health and education should be in charge of this task.
- Protocols on cooperation between municipalities and the relevant ministries (health, education, labour, employment and social policy), aimed at intensification of cooperation between the institutions and Roma coordinators should be introduced. In the case that cooperation is organised through local action plans, these plans should set out the areas of formal cooperation.
- The Ministry of Health should enable the coordinators access to the database fed by the health mediators and taking into account the provisions of the Law on Personal Data Protection, which requires development of a unique software or improvement of the existing one in order to ensure respect of the provisions of the above law.
- It would be desirable for the coordinators to keep records of outcomes of the processes their beneficiaries take part in and to forward these to the local governments who would send them to the proponents of policies and decision-makers in the three key ministries: MLESP, ministries of education and health. Based on these data, better insight would be obtained into the extent to which the institutions respond to the needs of the Roma minority beneficiaries in Serbia and the information about the institutions that Roma have a positive/negative practice of exercise of their rights.
- The Office for Human and Minority Rights in cooperation with the local governments should define the minimum number of trainings that each coordinator should participate in at annual level and that would include trainings on the rights and needs of different subgroups of Roma (women, victims of violence, the disabled, etc.).
- Local governments should have a project budget allocated to inclusion of the Roma minority (in LAPs), and the coordinator should – at the minimum - have the right to initiate actions and propose funds for resolution of the problems observed as key for the Roma community.

### III. HEALTH MEDIATORS

The Ministry of Health has been implementing the Plan for Protection of Health of Roma since 2006. In 2008, the Ministry launched a project of employment and education of health mediators, employing 15 Roma health mediators at the initial stage. The project aims to improve accessibility of health care, improvement of health of women and children, to better inform Roma population and reduce inequalities. Today, 75 health mediators are engaged on the problems of health insurance for Roma and their enhanced access to health care services in 59 Serbian municipalities. The posts of health mediators will be systematized in the Ministry as of 2014.

#### Introduction

Health mediators responded to the questionnaire in 10 municipalities, representing 90% of the observed sample and 50% of the total number of Serbian municipalities where all the five mechanisms relevant to social inclusion of the Roma minority are in place.

Health mediators are the most recent mechanism and have spent on the job 2.3 years on the average. In all the observed cases (100%), their assuming duties coincides with establishment of that post in an observed municipality and has been maintained to date.

**Table 1**

How long have you been working?				
(Average number of years per observed mechanism)				
Roma coordinators	Health mediators	Teaching assistants	Centres for social welfare	Counsellors at NES
5.33	2.3	5.00	17.00	12.00

Health mediators work on the basis of service contracts concluded with the Ministry of Health. Based on these contracts, they have clearly set procedures, methods and objectives. These contracts guarantee only payment for the services rendered but not other employment-related rights. A number of mediators still work with the support of OSCE Mission in Serbia, and their contracts will expire on 29 April, whereafter the salaries for all the 75 of them will be paid from the 2013 budget of the Ministry of Health.

#### Part one: Process of work of health mediators

Recording of the health status of Roma is unified and a procedure has been put in place by the Ministry of Health. The health mediators visit Roma families on the territory of Health Centers, their priority being the Roma living in cardboard settlements, on dumpsites and in urgent accommodation. Beneficiaries are regularly followed up, and reported on to the Ministry on a monthly bases. Registration of the status and needs is conducted in direct meetings with the beneficiaries, in interviews by collecting information about families and the settlement in line with

the defined rulebook. Health mediators (100%) go out into the field every day and must conduct an average of five visits each work day.

As a coordinator of activities of health mediators, the Ministry of Health – in a clearly defined way – inform themselves of the needs of the Roma minority population living in settlements. This mechanism boasts the most thorough database of the Roma population at the level of municipalities. In addition to the health-related information, this database also includes other information. Health mediators also received strict instructions with respect to treatment of the beneficiary information. It is only with the explicit approval of the supervisors from the Ministry of Health that they may share information with the other mechanisms engaged in the domain of Roma social inclusion. Even though not a single mediator invoked the Law on Personal Data Protection as the normative framework limiting them to share beneficiary data, it is evident that the Ministry adheres to the provisions thereof strictly.

With respect to planning of the activities and management, all the interviewed mediators stated they have a work plan and are able to fulfill the objectives set. On the average, they highly assess (4.66) the quality of professional relationship with their supervisors and note the good systemic solution of their position. Though their mandate is limited by the terms of reference, the health mediators consider their job and position within the system of health care of Roma adequately defined. All the interviewed mediators underwent trainings in seminars regularly organised by the Ministry, or attended specialised courses. Based on the responses of health mediators, it is evident that the Ministry of Health paid exceptional attention and systemically defined the domain of their professional preparation for the obligations deriving from their terms of reference. The curricula of trainings for health mediators has been accredited by the Serbian Health Council and the Serbian Medical Chamber, so that doctors, nurses and health mediators are eligible for education.

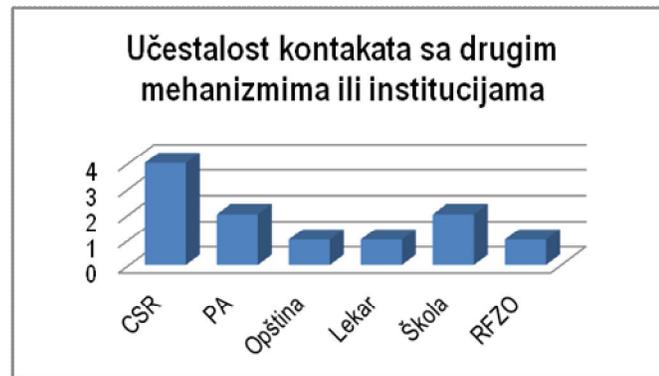
All the health mediators face challenges in their daily work. Most of them point out that part of the problems they face cannot be solved without cooperation with other institutions (identity cards, assistance in purchase of medication). One of the problems is also that the health mediators have no budget for sensitisation of health care workers at secondary and tertiary levels, creating a perception that they have no influence on these institutions but provide their services to the primary health care beneficiaries in health centres primarily.

Relative to the other mechanisms surveyed, health mediators know least about the strategic and action documents related to inclusion of Roma in local communities. As many as 30% of them stated they were not informed about the local action plans. Even when they had heard of LAPs ( 70% of them), they knew little of details thereof and so are not aware whether their work contributes to fulfillment of the objectives set out in action plans.

## **Part two: Cooperation and coordination with other institutions**

The vast majority of health mediators (80% of them) feel they need to contact other institutions, despite the fact they have no formal obligation to do that. Again, the centres for social welfare appear as the institution most relevant when frequency of referral of beneficiaries into other institutions in in question. Next come health centres. As with Roma coordinators, health mediators have the greatest need to communicate with CSWs and teaching assistants.

Graph 4



Frequency of contacts with other mechanisms or institutions  
CSW, teaching assistant, municipality, doctor, school, Republican Fund for Health Insurance

The lowest level of cooperation is that between the health mediators and the National Employment Service as the primary duty of mediators is to link the health care system and members of the Roma community.

Even though the average grade of cooperation with Roma coordinators is quite high (3.88), health mediators have almost no cooperation with the coordinators as they send their beneficiaries directly to other institutions. The findings show that the health mediators, more so than the other mechanisms, focus on their own operation and direct communication with the supervisors at the Ministry of Health and least of all express the need for collaboration and coordination with the other mechanisms of Roma inclusion.

With respect to the challenges related to collaboration with the other institutions, they stated the problems of coordination in the field, work of CSWs that respond to the needs of Roma population inadequately, absence of systemic "top down" regulated coordination and lack of satisfactory financial support for their work. The mediators poorly assess the engagement of other institutions to date with respect to improvement of the situation of Roma, with the exception of teaching assistants. They expect the representatives of other mechanisms to improve the level of collaboration, show more respect for them and get involved in resolving concrete cases.

## Part three: Relevance to the beneficiaries

All the health mediators consider their work extremely relevant for the beneficiaries. Two health mediators noted their contribution to wider socialisation of members of Roma minority. Health mediators are primarily focused on health of women and children and most often reach this group of beneficiaries. They also reach the elderly and the ill. The priorities of health mediators are:

- Children
- Women
- Infants
- Perinatal health care
- Antenatal health care
- Adolescents

- Youth
- Elderly
- Abuse and neglect
- Trafficking in human beings
- Chronic non-contagious diseases...

One of the interviewed mediators (Zrenjanin) stressed the needs of a particular beneficiary group: children with developmental problems, elderly and the ill persons. All the mediators assert high motivation of beneficiaries to cooperate with them and some (Novi Sad) believe it to be their obligation not to allow the beneficiaries to give up on their services. A small percentage of beneficiaries withdraws from this cooperation and the health mediators ascribe this to the culturological factors and lack of care for their own health which often tends to be related with lack of money to buy medication. Even when the mediators are not able to provide concrete help, the beneficiaries welcome talking to them and the care they show.

Health mediators provide various services: they ensure health booklets and vaccination of children, care about female reproductive health, engage in education and prevention. Health mediators prepare beneficiaries for the services provided in health centres, these being institutions that are the most frequent final provider of services as referred to by the mediators. Regular field work and visits to the Roma settlements are the main way that the beneficiaries know about the services provided by the mediators in 100% of the interviewed cases.

In their work, the health mediators use measurable indicators of success (number of inoculated children, the higher number of women visiting gynecologists, etc.) which is not the case with other mechanisms e.g. CSWs (which measure success by the number of the cases processed) and Roma coordinators.

## Part four: Success factors

Most of the health mediators mentioned the following key success factors: personal engagement comes first (good communication with the beneficiaries, willingness and wish to help, the trust the beneficiaries place in them, personal improvement), followed by motivation of beneficiaries to cooperate with them. The importance of cooperation with the other institutions and the place in the system allowing them to obtain support from the other institutions have also been recognised.

The challenges also limiting the effects of their work are systemic problems (poverty, poor infrastructure in Roma settlements, poor housing solutions) that are beyond influence of the health mediators. The mediators also state the needs of beneficiaries for food and medication and believe these to be in the mandate of other institutions (CSWs in the first place).

Asked what else they need to perform their jobs well, the majority of the interviewed health mediators (55%) mentioned use of official vehicle for field work and budget they would be able to use to respond to the needs of beneficiaries in medication and food, but also to administrative needs (e.g. purchase of forms). Next to that come needs related to improvement of their work status and cooperation with other institutions. They also expressed the need for equipment for field work and for appropriate space to work in. For instance, a space where they could organise trainings on sexually transmitted diseases. As they pertain, it is useful and good for coordination when they are placed in ambulances, but this also has its limitations, primarily space limitations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Ministry of Health should systematise posts of health mediators so that they would be able to enjoy all the employment-related rights.
- The programme of work of health mediators should be integrated into strategic and operational plans (e.g. through local action plans) for improvement of the situation of Roma at municipality level, through previously established cooperation between the Ministry of Health and local governments.
- The Ministry of Health should allow access to the database, by upgrading the existing software, filled in by the health mediators to other mechanisms of social inclusion of Roma (CSWs, NES, teaching assistants, Roma coordinators), not violating the principle of protection of extremely vulnerable and personal information, in general.
- Establish a protocol on cooperation between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy, since health mediators face challenges that are within the realm of CSWs (financial assistance for purchase of medications, child allowance, assessment of capacity for work with a view to exercising disability pension, etc.).
- MLESP and the Ministry of Science, Education and Technological Development as well as the Office for Human and Minority Rights should use the database of the Ministry of Health to develop programmes for social inclusion of Roma in other sectors (education, housing, migrations, personal and other documentation, employment, economic activities of Roma, etc.).

## IV. NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

According to the First National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction<sup>5</sup>, adopted in 2011, Roma constitute a particularly vulnerable group on the labour market. The majority of Roma are excluded from the employment system, formally they are not economically active and are predominantly registered as unemployed. Where they are present on the labour market, they usually have the hardest and low-paid jobs. In 2011, there were 19,398 members of Roma ethnicity in the records of the National Employment Service, who voluntarily declared themselves as Roma. Since 2010, NES has been defining programmes for Roma who, being difficult-to-employ, are a priority of all programmes and active employment policy measures. And so, by means of subsidies for employers and self-employment of Roma, 128 and 46 Roma people were employed in 2010 and 2011, respectively. The Second Chance programme was launched in 2011, enabling the completion of primary school. That programme involved 430 Roma men and women.<sup>6</sup> However, active programmes are still not sufficiently focused on members of the most vulnerable groups, and training programmes for the ones with lower education, such as Roma, have been almost completely neglected.

### Introduction

The answers of the National Employment Service representatives to the questionnaire have been supplied in nine municipalities, which accounts for 81% of the observed sample, and 45% of total number of municipalities in Serbia having all the five observed mechanisms relevant to the implementation of public policies aimed at the inclusion of the Roma national minority.

Given the long tradition of NES as an institution, its employees have assumed positions, on average, much earlier compared to coordinators, health mediators and teaching assistants. NES counsellors have been employed for 12 years on average. The method of engagement of employees within NES is unified and the largest number (90%) holds indefinite employment contracts, while only 10% stressed that they had fixed-term employment contracts.

The National Employment Service is a service with a centralised organisation where positions are precisely defined and counsellors cover a wide range of beneficiary groups from the labour market records.

---

<sup>5</sup> The First National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in the Republic of Serbia: Overview and status of social inclusion and poverty 2008 -2010, including the priorities for the forthcoming period, the Serbian Government, March 2011

<sup>6</sup> 2010 Report on the Work of the National Employment Service; 2011 Report on the Work of the National Employment Service;

## Part One: Process of work in NES

There is a unified information system at the National Employment Service which enables provision of beneficiary data, and thus the data about the Roma registered with NES can be obtained. On the other hand, this database is not complete as it involves only those beneficiaries who declared themselves as Roma. According to counsellors' statements, the largest number of Roma applies for registration in the records only to obtain a certificate entitling them to financial social welfare assistance in the centres for social welfare.

With respect to the work process, all the interviewees said that there were clearly prescribed procedures at the National Employment Service for the assessment of and work with beneficiaries, monthly plans, an integrated beneficiary database, as well as managerial monitoring and supervision. Even in the instance where an interviewed employee stated that he was in contact with his superior several times a day because "whenever he has an order to issue, he makes a call", a high rating for professional cooperation was given (4.31). Based on the prescribed operating procedures, unlike the other surveyed mechanisms, counsellors do not visit Roma settlements as it is not within their terms of reference. Yet, one fifth of the interviewees claim that they visit Roma settlements at their own initiative in order to do their job the best they can. Roma have not been consulted in the course of defining the programme of the National Employment Service, the majority of the interviewed employees claim. On the other hand, under the prescribed procedure, all the beneficiaries were asked to identify their needs, and individual plans of activities are compiled for them accordingly, including education and discussion with potential employers. NES employees recognize trainings for work with vulnerable groups as important and consider these would enhance their work with such groups. 60% of the interviewed employees claimed to have undergone some sort of training for work with vulnerable social groups.

As stated by 70% of the interviewed NES employees, the most frequent problems they are faced with in their work are lack of motivation among beneficiaries, discrimination of employers, i.e. prejudices towards Roma and illiteracy of Roma population. In 10% of the surveyed cases the problem lies with the excessive number of beneficiaries per counsellor. Systemic problems which counsellors have no influence upon are the unfavourable educational structure of Roma, lack of language knowledge and lack of personal documents, which is the case with internally displaced persons from Kosovo.

As for the familiarity of NES with the strategic and action plans related to social inclusion of Roma at the local level, the interviewed counsellors (80% of them) are familiar with the existence of such documents and they were familiar with NES participation in the process of preparing such documents. 40% believes that their terms of reference comply with LAP, 30% considers it does not, while the rest was not able to reply. According to the statements of the interviewees, they are not obliged to harmonize their work objectives with the objectives set in local strategic and action plans.

## **Part Two: Cooperation and coordination with other institutions**

The majority of interviewed NES employees (60%) stated that there was an obligation to consult other institutions when assessing the beneficiaries, but only when determined as necessary. However, as counsellors claim, they mostly do not need to include other mechanisms or institutions. Just like with coordinators and health mediators, the centres for social welfare feature as the institution that NES counsellors have the greatest urge to consult - in 70% of cases. It is very rarely that NES counsellors feel they need to cooperate with teaching assistants and Roma coordinators, while the coordination with health mediators has not been established at all.

NES employees expect from other institutions and mechanisms a more intensive work through thematic meetings, more intense engagement on motivating the beneficiaries to actively seek jobs, but also to become educated, and to increase enrollment of Roma in secondary schools in order to improve their employment opportunities.

## **Part Three: Relevance to the beneficiaries**

As NES counsellors believe, the majority of Roma are not active job seekers, and NES records serve them rather as a prerequisite for obtaining financial social welfare assistance. Two interviewed counsellors have stated that the operation of a NES branch office is not relevant for Roma as beneficiaries or that they are not sure if it is relevant. Yet, the majority believe the work of NES to be important for Roma, at least for those 20–30% who, according to their assessments, are "genuine" job seekers. Likewise, as noted by some counsellors, a restriction in work with Roma lies in the fact that NES is not a guarantor that registered persons will become employed, since the role of NES is only that of a mediator role and it primarily focuses on employers.

As many as 60% of the interviewed counsellors explain the limited outreach of NES work with Roma by lack of motivation on the part of Roma to make progress and change the circumstances of their own lives, where such change would be effected through employment. In their opinion, motivation is the key issue and the Roma focused programmes fail as they are not motivated. The counsellors note that financial social welfare assistance which beneficiaries use within the social welfare system on a monthly basis, together with the proceeds they generate on the black market (most frequently through sale of secondary raw materials) suffice to make employment an unnecessary and even an undesirable option. As assessed by three counsellors, unlike some other beneficiary groups, Roma rarely accept trainings of 3-6 month duration as they expect immediate aid and the aforementioned period is too long for them. Also, if no remuneration is secured during the training, the entire family supported by the trained member is deprived.

A half of the interviewed counsellors consider the assistance of Roma coordinators in the process of assessing the beneficiaries who would like to join the Roma employment and activation programmes as beneficial. It is presumed that they are well familiar with the beneficiaries and that at the same time this fact provides a room for cooperation with them.

## Part Four: Success factors

The counsellors emphasised the motivation of beneficiaries as the factor which influenced their success and the success of NES programmes. According to the opinion of counsellors, lack of motivation of beneficiaries to seek and find jobs is indeed one of the reasons for their failure in mediation activities.

As claimed by NES counsellors, the key issues in the work of NES with Roma are systemic problems which this beneficiary group is faced with (lack of education, long-term exclusion from the labour market, prejudices and discrimination by employers). It is followed by poor job offer and a low number of NES programmes which would recognize specificities of Roma as beneficiaries. The majority of the interviewed counsellors assess the programme for additional education "Second Chance" as one of those which are of greatest relevance for Roma as beneficiaries. Likewise, 33% of the interviewed counsellors referred to the success of public works programme, and some of them note that it is necessary to work more with employers and that the key to success of the programmes offered by NES might lie exactly there.

Observations of the employment counsellors indicate that they need financial resources, a better and more diverse job offer, and additional trainings that would equip them for work with Roma as a special group with specific cultural factors.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- It is necessary for the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy to establish a mechanism of integrated model of provision of social services, binding upon both CSW and NES, to seek solutions more actively for their beneficiaries who, being fit to work, receive financial social welfare assistance on regular basis.
- The National Employment Service should intensify training programmes for Roma beneficiaries, such as additional education through the "Second Chance"<sup>7</sup>, and thus gradually influence their work activation.
- It is necessary for the National Employment Service to extend the range of programmes which identify Roma as a special beneficiary group, particularly in municipalities with a significant Roma community.<sup>8</sup>
- The cooperation between the National Employment Service, as the centralised service at the level of the Republic and local government, should be systemically defined. NES should rely on the work of Roma coordinators for a more accurate identification of Roma motivated for the involvement in the NES programmes. The local action plans for social inclusion of Roma should be an instrument for such cooperation.
- NES should introduce trainings for its employees in charge of work with vulnerable groups, as well as education on the topic of discrimination.

---

<sup>7</sup> The program is implemented with the Ministry of Science, Education and Technological Development

<sup>8</sup> This recommendation stems from the Directions for Action as presented in the First National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in the Republic of Serbia (2011).

- It is necessary for NES to organize training for employers who would thus be sensitised to employ Roma.
- NES should consider announcements and promotion of its programmes through Roma language broadcasts, and through notice boards and presentations in Roma settlements.

## V. TEACHING ASSISTANTS

The programme of teaching assistants is one of the key programmes for the inclusion of Roma men and women in the education system. Initially, this pilot programme was implemented by non-governmental organizations, and since 2007 it has been implemented by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the OSCE mission in the Republic of Serbia, supported by the then European Agency for Reconstruction. The assistants have been initially engaged in schools where Roma pupils were enrolled. They take part in teaching at regular classes where they provide additional assistance to Roma pupils who have difficulties in following the classes, they organise additional (remedial) classes, assist children in doing their homework and visit their parents once a week. In September 2010, the name "Roma assistant" was changed to "teaching assistant", and their target group were no longer only Roma but all children with difficulties in following the school curriculum. As of April 2011, the position of teaching assistants was classified within the Ministry of Education. All the teaching assistants have secondary education at the minimum and their salaries are disbursed from the budget of the Republic of Serbia. There are total of 170 teaching assistants.

### Introduction

The answers of teaching assistants to the questionnaire have been supplied in six municipalities, which accounts for 54% of total observed sample (11 municipalities), or 30% of total number of municipalities in Serbia with all five mechanisms of relevance for the Roma minority inclusion. As compared to other observed mechanisms, by far the lowest response was among the teaching assistants.

The employed teaching assistants have occupied their positions for five years on average, which is considerably shorter than the average of the representatives of NES and centres for social welfare.

In all of the observed municipalities, the teaching assistants were engaged based on the fixed-term employment contract, the duration of which varies from two months, six months, up to one year. All the representatives of this mechanism were engaged on the posts of a teaching assistant by the schools they work in. The school announces a vacancy and subject to the approval of school administration, it grants fixed-term employment contracts. Depending on the number of Roma children enrolled in a specific school, the number of children taken care of by the teaching assistants varies. Thus, there is a significant difference between assistants working for instance with 40 pre-school children (Vranje) and those who have 450 Roma children enrolled in a school (Novi Sad).

### Part One: Work process of teaching assistants

The majority of teaching assistants dispose of accurate data on Roma children who attend the schools where they are engaged. A discussion with children and parents, aided by teachers and psychologists, is a method of obtaining information about children. In 60% of the cases, teaching

assistants have their own database of the children they follow. In a half of the cases, the database is not available to other mechanisms and institutions "due to possible misuse".

With respect to the work process, all the six interviewed teaching assistants said they had a work plan. In most instances, the goals are set on a monthly basis, and they are decided on by the manager of the institution – school headmaster, who conducts supervision as well. The average grade of professional satisfaction by superiors has been highly rated by 4.58. All the surveyed teaching assistants have declared that the field work is a part of their activities, at least once a week. Yet, the largest portion of their work is conducted in schools. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development has prepared and published the Rules on the Training Program for Teaching Assistants (December 2010), and based thereon, a modular training programme has been accredited within the work of the Lifelong Learning Centre at the University of Kragujevac.

There are numerous obstacles that teaching assistants face in their work: lack of working premises in schools, insufficient proficiency for the work with children with different needs, insensitivity of other colleagues, difficult financial circumstances of Roma children's families, lack of cooperation between the centres for social welfare and other. A frequent cause of non-attendance of Roma children are seasonal migrations of their parents, which are particularly expressed in municipalities in the south of Serbia.

Two thirds of the surveyed teaching assistants are familiar with the existence of local action plans and they consider that their work contributes to the implementation of goals in the field of education. However, the vast majority points to the fact that considerable portion of Roma population needs is not covered by LAPs, and that their mandate and LAP are not in complete conformity, as the teaching assistants are under the jurisdiction of the Republic, while local action plans are endorsed and implemented by a municipality.

## **Part Two: Cooperation and coordination with other institutions**

The institutions which teaching assistants predominantly contact are non-governmental organisations, followed by the centres for social welfare. NGOs, according to their claims, are the most reliable providers of financial aid required for Roma in schools, but they also provide additional training programmes. All the teaching assistants consult parents on a regular or as-needed basis. Consultations with health mediators are less frequent, as claimed by a half of the surveyed, and these are most frequently related to children vaccination issues. The assistants are not obliged to contact other institutions or mechanisms in their work, but almost all of them do that since it is needed.

Two thirds of teaching assistants believe that they perform the work of other mechanisms, while one third fails to do so. They mentioned they most often perform the duties related to social assistance, documentation, part of the work of Roma coordinators or health mediators. The majority of the interviewed assistants stated specific problems emerging as a result of insufficient cooperation with other institutions, such as inability to procure books or medicines.

The teaching assistants do not have a mandate to convene coordination meetings, but they can initiate them by forwarding a proposal to the school headmaster. Other institutions and mechanisms are not obliged to cooperate with the teaching assistants who thus feel, just like the Roma

coordinators, as being deprived of authority towards other institutions. As regards the work with other institutions, the teaching assistants expect that the needs of Roma as beneficiaries be recognized in a better way, and that Roma should be more frequently employed with other mechanisms as well for the purpose of increased sensitivity of institutions for Roma needs.

### **Part Three: Relevance to the beneficiaries**

In addition to direct benefit for children and their parents, some teaching assistants believe that they enhance community integration since they prevent discrimination of Roma in schools and introduce Roma children in a social integration system, thus combating segregation in educational system and also in broader sense. Their direct beneficiaries are children whom they help in getting along in the school environment and overcoming various problems, from unfamiliarity with the language to combating discrimination in schools, but also parents who regard the teaching assistants as advisors for the entire area of family life and social rights. The interviewed assistants stressed that they worked both on motivation of parents and children, whom they have to approach as different beneficiary groups.

As claimed by majority of teaching assistants, children mostly do not give up regular classes on their own, but rather under the influence of their parents who either deprive them of the right to education as a consequence of cultural factors and the approach of parents of female pupils that the "sufficient" and desirable educational level is reached in some of the higher grades of primary school, after which they prepare the children of such age "for marriage"– or they are under the influence of social and economic factors they have no influence upon (e.g. seasonal migrations during which parents take their children from the place of residence often without prior notification of the assistant and school). Another problem for children not wanting to attend classes is poor infrastructure and hygiene in settlements due to which children come to classes dirty, ridiculed by other children.

As for the children who are excluded from the educational system, for any reason whatsoever, the assistants are almost completely powerless. The result is that they invest efforts only when children who are already in the system are concerned, where there is a threat of them potentially abandoning regular classes.

Just like the health mediators, the teaching assistants measure the success of their work by specific indicators (for instance, the number of children enrolled in pre-school institutions, primary and secondary schools, passing quarterly marks, etc.).

### **Part Four: Success factors**

The teaching assistants state that two key factors have contributed to their successful work in the past: personal factors (love for the job, good communication, work with children), as claimed by a half of interviewed assistants, and the support of professional services, school headmaster and the Ministry of Education, as claimed by a fourth of them. On the other hand, the majority of interviewed assistants is dissatisfied with the work of other institutions who failed to resolve social and economic problems of Roma due to which the assistants themselves suffer failure in their work.

Compared to other mechanisms, teaching assistants have more often underscored concern for their own position. The reasons are non-harmonized positions and the term of contracts which the assistants have, which depends on the decision of schools where they are engaged. Another ground for concern is an expectation/announcement that the Ministry will prescribe new conditions for hiring teaching assistants (education level) which the current assistants would not be able to meet.

As for the needs, the teaching assistants primarily emphasise the equipment for work (didactic material, company phones, fieldwork vehicles), and also more adequate premises and trainings. Namely, the workplace for assistants is in schools where they usually lack sufficient space for the work with children and parents.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The Ministry of Science, Education and Technological Development should harmonize the contract terms for hiring teaching assistants and notify the school institutions accordingly.
- The Ministry should clearly present to teaching assistants a work plan for the forthcoming year and thus respond to the concerns and ambiguities as regards future requests for hiring assistants.
- The Ministry of Education should level up the number of children per teaching assistant. The problem can be resolved by additional employment of assistants.<sup>9</sup>
- It is necessary for the Ministry to align the criteria for keeping a database on Roma children (with the Ministry of Health) and monitoring their success.
- Transition from dealing only with Roma children to the work with children from various vulnerable populations should be properly planned, and the application made in stages, accompanied with intensive qualification trainings and supervision of trainees.
- The work of teaching assistant should be "linked" to the objectives of local action plans related to education of Roma through cooperation protocols between the Ministry of Education and local governments.
- The Ministry of Education prescribed the work with parents in the work plan of teaching assistants in the Rules. Consequently, the schools and school administrations need to follow up the application of these standards of the Rules. An alternative solution is higher engagement of Roma coordinators who would take the lead role in the work with adults. Such cooperation should be prescribed and defined through cooperation protocols between the Ministry and local governments and then through employment contracts for assistants and coordinators.<sup>10</sup>
- The Ministry of Education and local governments should jointly engage teaching assistants and Roma coordinators in order to incorporate the children who have been left out of the primary education system into the education system.

---

<sup>9</sup>. This recommendation is in conformity with the findings from the seminar "Social inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia", June 2011.

<sup>10</sup> This recommendation is in conformity with the recommendations from the roundtable **Implementation of Measures, Activities and Services for the Roma Population at the Local Level** organised by the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, 20 – 22 February 2012

- Establish exchange of information among school administrations in the regions where seasonal migrations of Roma were detected, and thus enable continued schooling of children at a new, temporary address. In pursuit of work, parents migrate in spring and summer either to the north of the country or abroad, which results in children's absence from school.

## VI. CENTRES FOR SOCIAL WELFARE

The current social welfare system is based on the Law on Social Welfare endorsed in 2011. The rights to financial support, caregivers' allowance, assistance in training for work, accommodation in a social welfare institutions or another family and social welfare services in performing public authorities assigned by this Law represent the rights of public interest and they are ensured by the Republic of Serbia. Ensuring the right to assistance at home, day-care, temporary accommodation in a shelter and reception centres, the equipment of beneficiaries for accommodation in social welfare institutions or another family, and other social welfare services are ensured by the local governments, in keeping with this Law.

Financial social welfare assistance is envisaged for citizens who are not capable to secure livelihood, due to their unemployment or permanent unfitness for work. The right to family assistance belongs to the individuals and families whose total monthly earnings are below the threshold established by the law for a specific number of household members. Social welfare in a form of financial social welfare assistance is funded from the budget of the Republic of Serbia and is utilised through the centres for social welfare. A minor part of allowances are secured by local governments in the form of a supplement to permanent financial assistance.

According to the data from the Strategy for Improvement of the Position of Roma (2009), social assistance is received by some 80% of the deprived Roma households. Around 16% of the poor Roma do not receive any assistance. The same source states that the amount of social allowances for all poverty-stricken citizens does not correspond to the needs – it amounts to merely 4% of their expenditures. However, social welfare in the Republic of Serbia prevents further increase of poverty among Roma, since, according to the estimates, the share of poverty of Roma would rise up to 73% in absence of so organized social welfare.<sup>11</sup>

### Introduction

Responses of the representatives of the Centre for Social Welfare to the questionnaire have been secured in nine municipalities, which accounts for 81% of the observed sample and 45% of total number of municipalities in Serbia with all five observed mechanisms of relevance for the inclusion of Roma minority.

Taking into account that the centres for social welfare are institutions with decades-long experience, the employees in CSWs have occupied their positions for 17 years on the average, which is significantly longer than the average duration of Roma coordinators, health mediators, teaching assistants and the representatives of the National Employment Service. According to the method of engagement, considerable level of correspondence has been observed, as 89% of the interviewees said that they held indefinite employment contracts.

---

<sup>11</sup> Strategy for the Improvement of the Position of Roma in the Republic of Serbia, 2009.

## Part One: Process of work in CSWs

The centres for social welfare do not have separate records on Roma as beneficiaries since they do not keep records on beneficiaries as per their nationality. Therefore, this study mostly deals with the estimates of the employees in CSWs who recognize Roma as the largest group of their beneficiaries.

With respect to the work process, the employees in the centres for social welfare work under clearly prescribed procedures for work with beneficiaries applicable across all the municipalities. Likewise, there are managerial monitoring and supervision, and clearly established and classified work posts. At the same time, they lack monthly plans (there are only individual plans for beneficiaries), an integrated database on beneficiaries, and recognition of Roma as a separate beneficiary group. All the surveyed individuals have attended some sort of training over the previous period. Yet, only 44% have attended the training pertaining to the work with Roma population or some other vulnerable group.

**Table 2**

Are you professionally satisfied with the relation with your superior (1-5)?				
(Average rate per observed mechanism)				
Roma coordinators	Health mediators	Teaching assistants	CSW employees	NES counsellors
3.28	4.66	4.58	4.2	4.31

As for the visits to Roma settlements, they are an integral part of the work in the centres for social welfare. However, compared to the Roma coordinators, the teaching assistants and the health mediators, such visits are fairly rare – several times a year. The findings from focus groups corroborate these claims – the surveyed persons are those who go to the premises of centres, while their employees visit them quite rarely, in special circumstances. According to 44% of statements of the surveyed representatives of centres for social welfare, Roma beneficiaries have been consulted in defining the needs, either by being directly asked or through Roma associations and NGOs.

A systemic problem that persists is a generation-long dependence on the social welfare system which does not encourage the beneficiaries to find a job. Likewise, inability to register the place of residence (Zrenjanin, Novi Sad, Bujanovac) is one of the problems that Roma from illegal settlements are faced with in exercising their rights. The initiative of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy (MLESP) that Roma should register at the address of centres for social welfare in their home towns has been finally accepted in December 2012 through the adoption of common Rulebook of MOI and MLESP enabling such procedure.

Other problems of beneficiaries that the social welfare centres are faced with, and which cannot be properly addressed are: resolving the housing problems of beneficiaries, financial means for education and health care, resolving non-hygienic living conditions and training for work. The most frequent problems that the employees encounter in their work are of financial nature. In 56% of the surveyed cases, lack of money and other financial means is described as the major problem. Likewise, poor cooperation with other institutions and long-term court proceedings hamper the work of social welfare centres. Lack of professional staff and adequate work premises is evident in Zrenjanin. In Surdulica and Kraljevo, the work with Roma is claimed to be very hard as a consequence of their customs and tradition, poor education, etc.

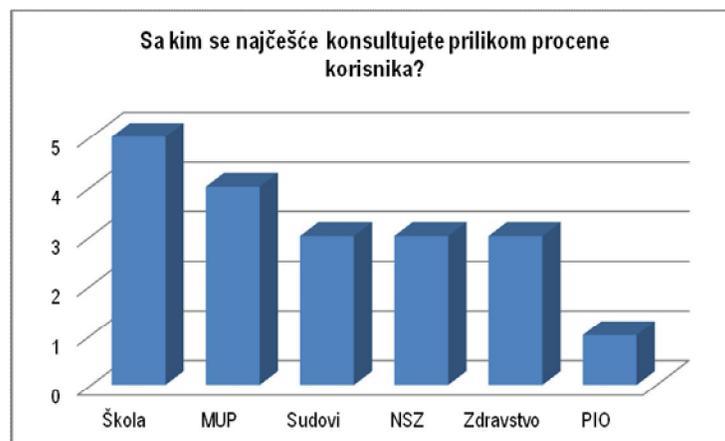
As regards the familiarity with strategic and action plans related to social inclusion of Roma locally, the interviewees provide different answers: one third of employees is familiar with the existence and content of the local action plan, 22% is partly familiar, while 44% have no idea about that. On the other hand, as stated by the employees in CSW, the data from the beneficiaries centres are regularly used for planning of actions on municipal or city levels, but the centres are not obliged to "report" on the achieved results to municipal/city administrations, but only to the line ministry.

## Part Two: Cooperation and coordination with other institutions

The employees of the centres for social welfare cooperate, to largest extent, with the National Employment Service and Roma coordinators on the municipal level (when social inclusion of Roma mechanisms is at issue). The level of cooperation with the teaching assistants and the health mediators is extremely low. Cooperation between the centres for social welfare, as well as centralised services at the level of the Republic of Serbia and local governments is almost exclusively focused on resolving specific cases, part through the Department for Social Affairs and Department for the Protection of Veterans and the Disabled for the most.

As regards referrals of beneficiaries to other institutions, there are clear rules in place. In more than 50% cases, the employees in CSWs claim to have contacts with schools and the Ministry of Interior. Of other institutions, references were made of courts, prosecution offices, the National Employment Service, healthcare institutions and the PDI Fund.

Chart 5



Whom do you usually consult when assessing beneficiaries?

School; MOI; Courts; NES; Healthcare; PDI

In the majority of the visited municipalities, the employees of the centre for social welfare convene meetings with other institutions for the purpose of sharing the information or coordinating the issues of improving the position of Roma. In that regard, CSWs are the most active mechanism.

A big issue, as set out by the representatives of the centres for social welfare in all the municipalities, refers to poor cooperation with the representatives of other sectors. The problems are related to education, assessment of caregivers' assistance, and poor exchange of information, unwillingness of healthcare institutions to provide assistance and educational institutions to put an end to peer violence.

The majority of CSW employees feel overwhelmed by their work, and a large number believes that they perform the tasks exceeding their competence, mostly from the domain of health care and obtaining of documents.

### **Part Three: Relevance to the beneficiaries**

The interviewed CSWs consider the work of CSWs as very relevant and beneficial for Roma since it addresses some of their concrete problems. The CSW representatives believe that Roma - as their beneficiaries - are well familiar with their rights and opportunities offered by the centre. The findings derived from work in focus groups indicate that beneficiaries have high expectations from CSW. Such expectations refer to direct financial social welfare assistance. Beneficiaries are informed (Kraljevo), but also critical of the work of CSWs, pointing to the behaviour of their employees whom they consider discriminatory (Vranje).

The question of beneficiary motivation appears to be a dilemma: is the reason for the beneficiaries contacting the centres for social welfare their motivation or are they compelled to do so by the circumstances. In Pančevo, for instance, they claim that motivation disappears when Roma beneficiaries are asked to make a specific change in their lifestyle. One of the current ideas, which has been implemented in particular situations (Vranje), is making of financial social welfare assistance conditional upon fulfilment of certain commitments in other domains of social inclusion (enrolment and regular attending of school, children's vaccination), but also making of social welfare assistance conditional upon work engagement in the public works system (this is beyond the current legal standards).

CSWs can measure the success of their work only through the numbers of resolved cases versus the number of applications submitted. One of the challenges in the work, identified in CSW Zrenjanin, is that they do not know how to deal in circumstances when the standards of common law and cultural factors directly contravene the normative framework.

### **Part Four: Success factors**

The principal dilemma in assessing the success of CSW work is the following question - what can be considered success in their work? Is it possible to say that CSW is successful in work with Roma as beneficiaries in the municipalities where majority of Roma population is involved in the social welfare system since they are the most disadvantaged group in terms of social and economical position? As noted in some centres, for as long as those fit to work are under the authority of CSWa, it is difficult to present success and interpret indicators about the number of beneficiaries.

The employees in CSWs state that they are exposed to immense pressure on a daily basis. A third of the surveyed considers that the new Law (of 2011) is a factor that contributed to still more workload assigning new competences and tasks in various areas to the CSWs. A third of the surveyed say that the results of the work of centres with Roma are disparaged by the fact that Roma are not in the focus as a separate beneficiary group. An example of best practice is CSW Kraljevo and the action of reconstructing the houses of Roma population after the earthquake, taking into account the needs of Roma as a special beneficiary group. The employees in CSWs also point to a lack of specialised

trainings for work with vulnerable groups (60%), as well as the trainings for work under pressure and large amount of stress.

As regards the results, the employees in CSW state that they need more resources (44%), more employees (22%), but also a better organisation (33%) in order to respond more successfully to the needs of all their beneficiaries.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Protection should introduce the possibility for the beneficiaries to state their nationality in order to have a more precise insight into the needs of the Roma beneficiaries and based on that create appropriate programmes. Based on these data the local CSW should develop and offer services for special beneficiary groups, since they have all the necessary authorisations for that.
- The already initiated cooperation between the CSWs and NES on delivery of integrated social services should be improved in case of able-bodied Roma - recipients of financial social welfare assistance. This requires joint planning at the level of line ministries as well as at the local level between the Centres and NES branch offices.
- Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Protection and NES should monitor the impacts of practice in some municipalities that are introducing the conditioning of social welfare assistance with fulfilling certain obligations in other areas of social inclusion (enrolment and regular school attendance, vaccination of children) but also conditioning of social welfare assistance with work engagement although this exceeds the current legal norms.
- Visits to Roma settlements should be introduced as a regular obligation of the CSW employees (once a month/every two months) since that would provide insight into the beneficiaries' needs and actual situation regarding their families.
- Cooperation should be strengthened and common goals of the centres for social welfare should be established, as a centralized service at the level of the Republic and local government through the instrument of local action plan or other similar instruments.<sup>12</sup>
- Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Protection should improve the human resources management and work organisation of the centres for social welfare. CSWs should consider introducing monthly activity plans and not only for individual beneficiaries.
- Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Protection should organise training for CSW employees in working with the Roma population that would also include antidiscrimination trainings. Furthermore, introduction of specialized training in working under pressure and in stressful situations for employees of the centres for social welfare should also be taken into consideration.
- Ministry of Interior should be additionally sensitised about the issue pertaining to registration of residence of Roma from informal settlements in order to consider the registration of residence at the CSW address.

---

<sup>12</sup>This recommendation is in accordance with the findings of the seminar "Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia", June 2011.

## PART THREE – GENERAL FINDINGS AND SURVEYS

### VII. Introduction

In review of achievements in strategic areas of social inclusion of Roma, the interviewed representatives of local governments, Roma coordinators and representatives of the Roma community, state education and health as areas in which the greatest progress was accomplished. On the other hand, solving the housing problem is slower while the issue of employment remains unresolved.

In the opinion of local government representatives and Roma coordinators in the 11 visited municipalities, the greatest progress in the area of social inclusion of Roma in their environments was accomplished in the area of education. Various indicators partially support those statements: on one hand, they indicate the increased number of Roma children that attend school on regular basis and achieve good results, and on the other, they show that there is a decreasing percentage of Roma children dropping out of schools. UNICEF MICS<sup>13</sup> data from 2005 and 2010 suggest that in the last five years there was a huge improvement regarding the primary school attendance among Roma children and that the rate was increased from 74% to 88%. The general population coverage was 96% in 2010. The data are not so optimistic in the case of education continuance rate for Roma children in secondary school. While that percentage amounted to 73.4% in 2005, it was 68.1% in 2010.<sup>14</sup> It is assumed that introduction of teaching assistant mechanism corresponded with a series of affirmative measures in the area of education, the same as the quotas for enrolment of Roma children and scholarships for very good and excellent students of Roma nationality, through cumulative effects but also through perception on the importance of investing into education, showed some noticeable results.

Findings of this and other surveys also confirm the results in the area of health. The mechanism of health mediators is the best organized programme, in terms of systemic approach to planning and unification of the process of work and supervision. As stated in the analysis of the Institute of Economic Sciences, the introduction of the health mediator mechanism had the effect of prolonging the Roma life expectancy, prevention of cancer in female Roma and the like. The introduced mechanism realized the positive net present value i.e. the realized gain from its introduction exceeds the cost of its application.<sup>15</sup>

Almost all interviewees also state the areas in which there is evident stagnation, like employment and housing. Poverty and high Roma illiteracy rate are still identified as serious problems by all persons interviewed. Unemployment among Roma is still very high and it is caused by numerous factors. Improvement of living conditions in Roma settlements is very slow as well as the legalisation of structures in which Roma live. The stated findings greatly coincide with the conclusions from The

---

<sup>13</sup>Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, UNICEF.

<sup>14</sup> General population rate was 97.2% in 2005 and 98.1% in 2010.

<sup>15</sup>M. Dinkic, A. Brankovic, *Economic Analysis of the Introduction of Roma Health Mediators in the Public Health Institutions System in Serbia*, Belgrade, 2011.

First National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in the Republic of Serbia, with regard to Roma (2011).<sup>16</sup>

Besides these general and above all sector oriented findings, this survey also identified the following:

## I. GENERAL FINDINGS

**DISCRIMINATION.** Although discrimination was not the topic of this survey, it is mentioned by almost all the collocutors. The findings suggest the Roma are still exposed to all kinds of discrimination in the areas of social inclusion of Roma. As teaching assistants state, the segregation is still present and evident in schools and Roma children are often exposed to mockery and rejection. NES indicates problems with employers, who are frequently not willing to employ the members of this national minority. Roma coordinators and health mediators especially underline discrimination of some CSW employees towards Roma. Similar problems are also evident in the health sector, especially in clinics and hospitals, primarily due to the lack of funds for sensitisation of health workers in hospitals.

All interviewees still claim that there is no discrimination in their institutions and that they did not notice it among their colleagues. At the same time, only the Ministry of Health systematically trained the mediators to recognise beneficiary discrimination and formally react to it. Furthermore, the mediators conclude their contracts with the Ministry and not with primary health centres, which ensures a higher degree of freedom in fight against discrimination unlike the teaching assistants who conclude their contracts directly with schools. The Ministry of Education states there are procedures to enable the teaching assistants to report discrimination to the school headmaster but the assistants are afraid to do so due to the potential loss of contract. Other institutions and mechanisms did not address this issue nor was it a part of their action plan.

**IMPROVEMENT OF ACCESS TO DATA ON THE NEEDS AND SITUATION OF ROMA.** There is an information asymmetry regarding the registration of beneficiaries and their needs, in this case the Roma. Thus, neither the Roma coordinators nor the local governments have data on the profile and the needs of Roma minority, nor the access to the databases of other institutions. NES and CSWs keep records on their beneficiaries, although those databases are limited: when Roma are identified as a specific category (NES registries), it is only those that declare themselves as Roma. CSWs do not keep registries based on ethnic affiliation. The most informative database about the Roma population is that of the Ministry of Health, since health mediators are obliged to keep clear and precisely defined records on the Roma population that they enter into the Ministry's centralized electronic database. It was not observed in a single institution that information from the database is used for further continuous analysis and targeted programme tailoring.

---

<sup>16</sup> The First National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in the Republic of Serbia, Government of the Republic of Serbia, March 2011.

**PROGRAMMATIC ASYMMETRY.** There exists a programmatic asymmetry between the observed mechanisms. While teaching assistants, health mediators and Roma coordinators are programmes of line ministries and local governments that target Roma problems, the National Employment Service and to a greater extent centres for social welfare are institutions dealing with different vulnerable categories but their programmes do not specifically or only partially (NES) recognise Roma as a beneficiary group. The result of these different approaches is a significantly different understanding and treatment of the Roma population as target group in the programmes by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and local governments on one hand, and in operation of NES and CSWs on the other. Establishment of specific programmes for Roma minority resulted in other “non-observable” positive effects, since Roma with additional understanding of the importance of their mission were hired in programmes intended for Roma. This programmatic asymmetry additionally impedes comparison between the mechanisms and institutions, since different units of measurement are in question.

**COOPERATION.** All mechanisms and institutions are primarily directed to cooperation with the centres for social welfare. This points to the fact that the needs of Roma are still primarily in the CSW work domain, and regardless of their partial autism, the key institutions in charge of the Roma basic subsistence problems are the CSWs. The interviewed representatives of mechanisms understand cooperation as communication with another institution regarding the need to resolve an individual case. Although it was not explicitly said, positive cooperation is the one suggesting that the beneficiary’s problem will be taken into consideration but not necessarily resolved.

The runners-up are the different institutions depending on the identified specific needs and mandates of the mechanism: for example after CSWs, the health mediators most frequently cooperate with teaching assistants, while cooperation with the National Employment Service and the Roma coordinators is symbolic. The teaching assistants most frequently contact the non-governmental organizations since they are recognized as the most reliable provider of financial assistance to Roma in schools, but also as an additional educational instrument. For teaching assistants the work with centres for social welfare comes second and then consultation with the health mediator, most frequently on the issue of vaccination of children. Teaching assistants cooperate with NES and Roma coordinators the least. On the other hand, Roma coordinators cooperate with NES but not continuously while they have low cooperation with teaching assistants and health mediators. NES most often contacts and cooperates with the centres for social welfare. Sometimes Roma coordinator is mentioned in relation to beneficiary activation programmes. In some municipalities NES cooperates with teaching assistants who help in identifying attendees for the “Second Chance” programme. Finally, centres for social welfare most frequently cooperate with the National Employment Service and sometimes with Roma coordinators. As for the cooperation with teaching assistants and health mediators, it is at a very low level. The respondents consider it necessary to establish formal protocols on cooperation between the institutions, as well as clear directives from the institutions’ headquarters.

**IMPORTANCE FOR BENEFICIARIES.** All mechanisms consider their work as important for Roma beneficiaries, but the replies differ. While some see their work as technical support (NES and CSW), other mechanisms think that besides specific mandate they contribute to a wider goal of mainstreaming the Roma minority. However, not a single mechanism has an established system of regular monitoring of the Roma population needs, nor do they conduct surveys to see if their beneficiaries are satisfied with services delivered although the Ministry of Health stated in its plan

for 2013 that Roma should assess the satisfaction with the services in a questionnaire on the degree of beneficiary's satisfaction with services rendered.

**PROCEDURES IN ASSESSMENT AND WORK WITH BENEFICIARIES.** These procedures are considerably different depending on the institution: while NES, CSWs and health mediators have clearly set rules and protocol for work with the beneficiaries, teaching assistants and coordinators do not have those procedures or harmonised practice. That leaves space for free interpretation of needs assessment. Furthermore, centres for social welfare are the only ones with clearly defined rules for consultations with other institutions on beneficiary assessment but the problem is that they do not recognise Roma as a separate target group. Other mechanisms do not have that obligation. The isolation of institutions is noticeable in that domain as well. The assessment quality was not taken into consideration in this analysis so the question remains as to how many relevant pieces of information have been included in beneficiary assessment in the abovementioned institutions, and how many of them were not considered.

**TRAINING.** Various mechanisms and institutions in most cases and to a different extent lack training, as well as education for work with vulnerable groups. Based on the health mediators' responses it was observed that only the Ministry of Health systemically regulated the area of their professional education. That ministry organises work seminars every two months and they are used at the same time for information exchange between the mediators and supervisors. The Ministry of Science, Education and Technological Development also acknowledges the importance of trainings that are mostly accredited but organized sporadically depending on the funds. Most of the CSW employees did not attend trainings. The coordinators attended different educational trainings but that was prevailing in the past and the situation is the same in NES. In general, there is awareness on how important the training for work with vulnerable groups is for achieving high-quality results. Trainings are identified as one of five main factors of success for work with vulnerable groups.

## II. SUCCESS FACTORS

None of the identified factors *per se* was recognised as a guarantee of success of operation of the five mechanisms, though some may be assumed to be preconditions. These are primarily local action plans for any of the areas of the social inclusion of Roma and the budgets adopted for the implementation thereof. Personal involvement and sensitisation for work with the Roma, as well as motivation of beneficiaries have been identified as very important to the efforts towards a successful programme implementation. A coordinator who is more involved contributes to the visibility of Roma problems in a local community. The support and understanding of local government is an important link for both the operation of coordinators and adoption of LAPs, as well as for planning budgets for their execution.

Criteria used for selection of municipalities appeared not to be relevant for success factors since almost none of them showed consistency. The criteria are as follows: 1. Territorial division (Vojvodina, Central Serbia, South Serbia); 2. Above average and below average participation of Roma in local environment; 3. Earnings below or above average earnings in Serbia; and 4. Majority population share smaller or bigger than national average. The highest level of consistency is noticed only in municipalities with below average Roma participation regarding the successful resolution of

current and urgent Roma issues. For a more successful detection of correlations or causalities, additional surveys and analyses would be required.

**LOCAL ACTION PLANS AND BUDGET FOR THEIR IMPLEMENTATION.** The existence of the local action plans within the individual or “umbrella” strategies for social inclusion of Roma and budget for their implementation appears to be the key precondition for resolving the Roma issues. Regardless of their quality as documents, LAPs have a cohesive function. They become a reference framework for the programmes and activities dealing with social inclusion of Roma and finally they appear to be political and social documents bringing the Roma issues and needs to the foreground.

LAPs do not exist in the majority of cities (six out of eleven) either because they were never adopted (Novi Sad, Surdulica, Zrenjanin), because their timeframe had expired (Bujanovac, Kragujevac), or because they were never “derived” from the existing municipal strategies although Roma were recognized as a priority category (Jagodina). The cities without adopted local action plans and budgets automatically put less emphasis on the resolution of Roma issues regardless of the fact that in Surdulica, for example, the mayor wholeheartedly supports different initiatives for improvement of the Roma status in the municipality.

In other cities (Sombor, Vranje, Kraljevo, Pancevo) there are LAPs with appropriated budget funds, except in Barajevo that has no budget for LAP. Some cities have adopted LAPs only for a certain area. Thus, Sombor has LAPs for education and Vranje has a LAP for refugees and internally displaced persons. One can conclude from the talks that LAP defines a framework for resolving Roma issues in a certain area and then those topics receive priority while other problems the Roma community is faced with remain less noticeable. Only Kraljevo and Pancevo have current LAPs that cover several areas important for social inclusion of Roma.

As already mentioned, LAPs for all four areas of inclusion (education, health, housing and employment) also exist in Bujanovac, but in this municipality the LAP expired in 2011. There are plans for new ones but the preparation has still not begun. Two plans were adopted in Barajevo in 2010, one for improvement of Roma status and the other for Roma women. However, no funds were allocated for their realization. A plan identifying the problems of a wider Roma community but Roma women as well as a separate group with specific problems was also adopted in Kragujevac. The LAP also expired in this city in 2011 and the new one is under way.

Budgets exist in the majority of municipalities (six out of eleven), even in those in which the plans expired last year (Bujanovac and Kragujevac). Municipalities without budgets are also those without adopted plans (Zrenjanin, Novi Sad, Surdulica), but those with the plans as well (Barajevo).

Kragujevac allocated the greatest amount (6.3 million RSD in 2012), Pancevo (4.55 million RSD in 2012) and Sombor (2 million in 2012). It is interesting to note that those municipalities have below average number of Roma in the total population according to the data from the 2011 census.<sup>17</sup> Only Pancevo out of these three municipalities generates earnings above the average in the Republic.

---

<sup>17</sup> The population of Sombor is 85,906 and out of that number there are 1,015 Roma. Pancevo has 123,414 inhabitants, out of which 1,368 Roma. According to the census Kragujevac has 1,482 Roma out of the total population of 179,417.

Then follow Vranje (3.0 million in 2012), Kraljevo (1.7 million in 2012) and Bujanovac. According to the data from 2011, Vranje and Bujanovac are the municipalities with a higher than average share of Roma in the total population: while 2.05% is the average in Serbia, Vranje has around 5% and Bujanovac over 10% of Roma.

It appears that the municipalities with smaller number of Roma were more agile in formulation and realization of plans and allocating funds for their realization.

**ROMA COORDINATORS.** Although the institution of a Roma coordinator seems to be of a relatively limited scope, the importance of coordinators' work is certainly not irrelevant since the visibility of Roma problems in the local community depends also on the involvement of the coordinator. The following conditions were identified as important for successful work of a coordinator: their job must be systematized with clearly set goals and objectives and their work must be monitored thorough the local action plans. It is important to have a budget for the realization of LAP but also for the operation of coordinators themselves. Successful coordinators have at least two roles – as intermediators but also as advocates of Roma rights in the community. Moreover, the support of municipal structures is important for their work.

As already mentioned, Roma coordinators see themselves most often as intermediaries between the Roma population and government bodies, who mediate or provide assistance to the parties. Fewer coordinators take on the role of protector and/or promoter of the Roma community interests by participating in definition of public policies, and a few of them show readiness to take on a role of a leader. A woman coordinator from Pancevo and male coordinators from Sombor and Kragujevac are examples of good practice in terms of advocating the interests of the Roma community. A procedure for monitoring the work of coordinators has been established in Sombor and Pancevo by way of adopted local action plans.

The findings indicate that the reason for the lack of coordination role of Roma coordinators is the result of systemic solutions, since each of the mechanisms is set up as independent activity including the coordinators themselves. For example, there is rarely a coordinator with a mandate to convene coordination meetings. Those who regularly do that are coordinators from Sombor and Kragujevac. In Sombor the coordinator convenes meetings during the drafting of the Poverty Reduction Strategy i.e. the Local Action Plan. The result of such a meeting is to influence the formulation of policy goals dealing with poverty reduction i.e. inclusion of the Roma population.

In Pancevo, Sombor and Kragujevac the coordinators are visible as part of the municipal structure since their offices and jobs are positioned in that way. The coordinator from Bujanovac also has an office within the municipality building. Coordinators from Vranje are located in a Roma settlement. For example, the coordinator in Pancevo works behind the window, so she is easily accessible. Her location is visible as part of the municipal info desk. Such positioning of a coordinator sends a signal to both Roma and non-Roma community on the importance that the municipal structure attributes to solving of Roma problems. Unlike these examples, the offices of some coordinators are outside the municipal administration building/complex (Novi Sad and Zrenjanin) while some do not have an office at all (Kovin and Kraljevo).

Positions of coordinators are organised best in municipalities that earmark the highest amounts in the budget for LAPs such as Kragujevac, Pancevo and Sombor. Those are also the municipalities with below average share of Roma in total population.

**KNOWING ONE'S BENEFICIARIES AND SENSITISATION FOR WORKING WITH THEM.** Although all representatives of institutions and mechanisms highly evaluate their own involvement regarding the success of the programme, knowing the beneficiaries' specific features and sensitisation for working with them is the necessary link without which success is not possible. The analysis shows that NES and CSWs are institutions that pay least attention to the specific characteristics and needs of Roma. Although, for example, the Roma represent the majority of centres' service beneficiaries, they remain almost invisible as a separate category assisted by CSWs. Thus, these centres have neither insight nor do they systematically follow up on the results of their services and programmes with respect to this population.

Compared to NES and CSWs, the remaining three mechanisms are much more familiar with the needs of their beneficiaries, the best informed being the health mediators. Since they are obliged to regularly visit the Roma settlements, they enter the houses of Roma and are familiarised with their living conditions. Regular beneficiary update also contributes to good familiarisation with the beneficiaries: the mediators collect a great number of personal data on the beneficiaries and their families (number of household members, age, number of children, data on illnesses, income and lifestyle). Finally, by taking care of their health and whether or not they visit the doctor, their illnesses etc. the health mediators build up a personal relation with the people they assist.

Teaching assistants show similar involvement in the lives of their beneficiaries since working with children includes, as stated several times already, serious work with the parents. Teaching assistants visit the families regularly and in that way, get insight into their habits and problems.

Roma coordinators are by nature of their work directed to mediation between the Roma community and institutions in order to solve primarily basic subsistence problems of Roma. However, the highest oscillation is regarding the coordinators' familiarity with the needs of Roma community since it mostly comes down to their impressions and not analysis of data on the key problems of Roma population. The cause of the problems in the Roma coordinator operation is their exceedingly comprehensive mandate. Neither the work plans nor terms of reference provide a basis for more detailed and systematic examination of needs and their prioritisation.

Taking in consideration analyses by municipalities, the differences do exist: for example in Sombor all mechanisms, even CSWs and NES (to a lesser extent though) are familiarised with the needs of Roma who were also consulted in defining the programmes. CSW in Jagodina regularly surveys its beneficiaries regarding their needs. Most respondents in Vranje state they had consulted Roma in connection with LAPs.

All representatives of mechanisms in Sombor, Jagodina, Pancevo, Surdulica, Kraljevo and Vranje attended the training for work with vulnerable groups.

They are less informed about Roma problems in Zrenjanin, Bujanovac, Pancevo, Surdulica, Kragujevac, Novi Sad and Barajevo and they did not consult them in defining the programmes. The NES and CSW employees in Zrenjanin and Barajevo did not attend training for work with vulnerable groups. The situation is similar in Bujanovac and Novi Sad in which the NES advisors did not attend training unlike the rest. However, in Kragujevac it was the CSW employees who did not attend training while everyone else has.

**PARTICIPATION AND MOTIVATION OF BENEFICIARIES.** All the institutions and mechanisms believe motivation of beneficiaries to participate in programmes to be the key to their success. While all the

other institutions perceive this motivation to be very strong and thus the infrequent drop out from programmes, the majority of respondents at the NES see motivation as a crucial problem and believe that the programmes targeting Roma are not successful for their lack of motivation to partake in them. Certain surveyed advisors perceive financial social welfare assistance obtained by the beneficiaries within the social welfare system and earnings from informal economy as sufficient enough for employment to be seen as unnecessary or even unwanted option.

The work of Roma coordinators is focused on the basic subsistence problems (housing conditions, hygiene in settlements, and access to social welfare) so the Roma cooperating with the coordinators are motivated to get their problems solved. Trust and credibility are perceived by beneficiaries as very important elements of that cooperation. Health mediators also assess the motivation of their beneficiaries as high "since they (mediators) are of assistance and help them in a concrete way". A small percentage of beneficiaries give up on cooperation with the mediators and when this happens it is attributed to cultural factors or lack of care for their own health that is often related to the lack of money to buy medicine. Even when the mediators are not in a position to provide concrete assistance, the beneficiaries enjoy the conversation and care they demonstrate.

In the opinion of teaching assistants, the children's motivation to attend school is indisputable. It is mostly the parents who cause the children to drop out of school. That is why, the coordinators say, they spend equal amount of time and sometimes even more working with parents instead of children.

Whether we ascribe the high interest for CSW services to motivation or to compulsion to seek assistance, expectations of Roma in any case exceed what is being offered to them. The CSW employees claim that success of their work greatly depends on the beneficiaries, i.e. the services of their centre are the most useful to those beneficiaries who are ready for long-term changes.

### III. FAILURE FACTORS

**SYSTEMIC REGULATION OF COORDINATORS' POSITION.** Although the analysis of questionnaires may imply that existence of an efficient system of management does not suffice for success of a particular mechanism, absence of this factor evidently and largely precludes success. Therefore, absence of efficient management has been identified as one of the notable factors of failure, and that on the example of Roma coordinators' work. Inefficient management is reflected in the vaguely set objectives, non-existence of work plans, lack of transparent control and a clear hierarchy. Finally, this results in inability to adequately respond to the beneficiary needs.

The questionnaires indicate that as many as three-fifths of Roma coordinators think that their terms of reference are not in line with their capabilities and even greater percentage think that they are not in line with the beneficiaries' needs. As to a clear hierarchy, the analysis of the replies points to the fact that it does not exist in case of Roma coordinators since only 30% of them stated they complained about the problems in their work to their immediate manager. Other mechanisms clearly see their superiors as points of complaint about problems in operation. At the same time, 40% of Roma coordinators said they did not have a work plan since they mostly react to the needs of beneficiaries and are not in a position to anticipate that. Those who have a work plan in most cases think that the goals are set too wide, that they cannot be quantified and therefore are difficult to measure except when they are directly related to implementation of the local action plan (such as in Pancevo and Sombor).

Comparing the success in operation of Roma coordinators from different municipalities, it can be concluded that the more efficient the management system exists, the more successful the coordinators are. For example, the coordinator in Sombor who was characterized as an example of good practice on several grounds, has far more developed systems of planning, control and transparent hierarchy than others. In order to identify the actual needs in Sombor, there was a systematic survey of Roma on two occasions covering around 90% of population. A procedure for monitoring results was established according to the adopted Local Action Plan. The Roma coordinator convenes the meetings in the course of drafting the Poverty Reduction Strategy, i.e. Local Action Plan and there is a clear hierarchal operation control.

The absence of management, especially coordinators for Roma issues, is one of the key failure factors in operation. The solution is to be found in a systemically regulated post of a coordinator with clear goals and plans in order to avoid the situation in which they "wander" between the role of an assistance provider or an intermediary between the beneficiaries and the government bodies and a protector and/or promoter of Roma community interests through participation in designing public policies.

**LACK OF COORDINATION.** As already mentioned, in not one single case has coordination between the existing mechanisms been identified - neither at national nor at the local level.

**Cooperation was ascertained as a sporadic phenomenon only, and in as much as the actors thought it necessary for completion of tasks. The reason for this lies in systemic solutions, as each of the mechanisms was established on the basis of independent actions be it through the operation of line ministries or municipal administration.**

Coordination bodies are established on a national level: Council for Improvement of Roma Position was founded in 2008 as a mechanism for planning and monitoring the success of operation performed by individual ministries and agencies dealing with social inclusion of Roma. Coordination of implementation of the Strategy for Improvement of the Position of Roma was also institutionalized through the Administration for Human and Minority Rights (within the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government). The established coordination mechanisms managed to address the issues only partially: for example, the Council played an important role in the first two years but due to the changes in management that role was considerably diminished. Since then each ministry has continued with its usual way of operation within its own system. There was no exchange of experience and even less joint engagement, not even in the situations that naturally called for that. Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, for example, established each its own procedures for the work of teaching assistants and health mediators and design of trainings as well as keeping beneficiary database without using the opportunity to optimise results through the exchange of experience or even joint work.

Isolated work and failure to recognize other institutions as potential partners on a national level is reflected in municipalities' operations as well. Mechanisms of social inclusion of Roma cooperate with each other "when the need arises", mostly on a case-by-case basis. Joint assessment of beneficiaries, referral to another institution in order to solve the beneficiary's problem, regular exchange of information and identification of common goals are not defined as obligatory for a single mechanism. Only the centres for social welfare have established procedures for beneficiary assessment and referral to another institution should the need arise but since they do not recognise Roma as a separate beneficiary group it is difficult to measure the effects of such work.

Coordination as planned activity of all relevant entities is not identified in a single municipality, although they all recognize cooperation as important and as a precondition for success. For example, health mediators recognise the need for enhanced coordination since some of the problems they are facing in their work cannot be solved due to the issues belonging to other institutions' competence (personal ID cards, assistance in purchasing medicines).

Coordination, local action plans and other reference documents for Roma inclusion are all directly related. The municipalities that do not have LAPs or other documents for inclusion of Roma, do not recognise coordination as a success factor (Novi Sad, Surdulica, Zrenjanin).

**ABSENCE OF INTEGRATED LABOUR MARKET SERVICES AND SOCIAL PROTECTION SERVICES.** The least successful area in terms of social inclusion of Roma is employment. There are various reasons for that: low educational attainment of Roma, scarce demand for such labour and discrimination by employers. However, another thing contributing to programme failure is the absence of mechanisms committing both CSWs and NES to a more active search for solutions for their able-bodied beneficiaries who continuously receive financial assistance. In such a setting, an unemployed beneficiary is referred to social benefits and the recipient of social welfare assistance is not motivated to find a job.

Therefore, the NES representatives in all municipalities are the only mechanism indicating the low motivation of their beneficiaries and suggesting that Roma register only to obtain financial assistance in centres for social welfare. On the other hand, not a single interviewed CSW

representative has stated as a problem the fact that there is only a small number of beneficiaries managing to find work or in some other way cease to be recipients of social welfare assistance despite them being able-bodied. Beneficiaries leaving the CSW's patronage are not seen as an accomplishment, the same as the beneficiaries receiving social welfare assistance for many years are not seen as system failure.

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

A series of recommendations towards improvement of operation and programmes of individual mechanisms for social inclusion of Roma have been developed on the basis of the findings of the survey. The recommendations are addressed to the decision-makers in line ministries and to local governments.

**MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT.** The system of management needs to be improved and these improvements must be reflected in the clearly set objectives, work plans, transparent control and clear hierarchy within each of the observed mechanisms. All the existing mechanisms of Roma inclusion must be viewed as parts of a comprehensive support package. Their roles and relationships should be further developed relative to this. Since the management problem is the most pronounced among the Roma coordinators, this mechanism deserves particular attention. This recommendation is addressed to local governments and the Office for Human and Minority Rights.

**REDUCTION OF DISCRIMINATION.** Aiming to enhance the role of teaching assistants in prevention of discrimination within their own institution, the possibility of concluding contracts and supervision must be considered as per the model of the Ministry of Health i.e. health mediators. This recommendation is addressed to the Ministry of Science, Education and Technological Development.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF TRAININGS AND INTRODUCTION OF ANTI-DISCRIMINATION-RELATED PROCEDURES.** Regular anti-discrimination trainings in the institutions observed need to be organised with a view to raising awareness of the employees about the problem of discrimination of the Roma population. With respect to NES, consider training for employees who take part in NES Roma activation and employment programmes. In addition, introduce Rules of Procedure and the protection mechanism in cases of discrimination into all the institutions, and take advantage of the importance and role of the Commissioner for Protection of Equality and the possibility of sending complaints to her address.

**IMPROVEMENT OF ACCESS TO DATA ON THE NEEDS AND SITUATION OF ROMA.** It needs to be enhanced by allowing access to the database of the Ministry of Health. By way of precondition, improve the existing software in order for all the relevant actors to be able to use and add to it. Conditions of access to the said /developed database for representatives of other bodies need to be clearly defined so as to prevent violations of the law governing personal data protection. This recommendation is addressed to the Ministry of Health and all the other observed mechanisms and institutions.

**PROFILING OF THE ROLE OF ROMA COORDINATORS.** In addition to the role of intermediaries between the Roma population and the state bodies, the role of Roma coordinators needs to be clearly defined relative to other mechanisms and in implementation of LAPs. This means that the relationship between the coordinators and the other ministries funding the mechanisms needs to be defined. With respect to this, coordinators should perform the duties of a "secretariat" to LAPs. Along these lines, harmonise and set out their terms of reference. This recommendation is addressed to the Office for Human and Minority Rights and local government units.

**PREPARATION OF LOCAL ACTION PLANS.** LAPs need to be adopted as part of documents related to any area of social inclusion of Roma with mandatory adoption of the budget for their implementation in local government units. This recommendation is addressed to the local governments.

**LIAISING LOCAL AND NATIONAL INSTITTUTIONS.** All the mechanisms – relevant ministries and local government units alike – must, in the TORs of their employees include work towards the objectives set out in LAPs, so as to allow for their direct involvement in execution of the planned programmes. The local government units should develop LAPs in the way as to adequately include the mechanisms developed at the national level. This recommendation is addressed to all the observed mechanisms and institutions. Also, adequately coordinate mechanisms for implementation of policies dealing with Roma inclusion at the central level in order for this coordination to come down to the local level.

**DEVELOPMENT OF PROTOCOL ON COOPERATION.** Develop protocols on cooperation between the implementers of Roma social inclusion public policies at national and local level. The instruments for cooperation of national mechanisms with the municipal ones should be the local action plans for social inclusion of the Roma.<sup>18</sup>

**Protocols on cooperation may also represent an important tool to encourage cooperation and exchange of information between the mechanisms.**

**CENTRES FOR SOCIAL WELFARE.** All the institutions need to establish protocols on cooperation with the social welfare centres in the municipalities with the established mechanisms for social inclusion of Roma. The special role of the centres in resolution of the basic problems of Roma must be recognised through their greater and more active involvement in local action plans for social inclusion of Roma. This recommendation is addressed to local governments, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Protection, social welfare centres, NES, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Science, Education and Technological Development.

**Social welfare centres are the key actors for resolution of Roma problems in all the mechanisms. With respect to that fact, formal cooperation between CSWs as an institution and other national and local mechanisms needs to be established.**

**COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL INSTITTUTIONS.** The Ministry of Health on the one side, and the Ministry of Science and Education on the other should, separately, establish and develop modes of cooperation between the health mediators and the teaching assistants with a view to monitoring medical status and needs of school children. Education of parents to support education of their children calls for joint efforts of the teaching assistants and the Roma coordinators. Therefore, the Ministry of Education, local governments and the Office for Human and Minority Rights need to harmonize it.

The cooperation of NES and the teaching assistants is rendering good results with respect to identification and motivation of Roma to complete primary education. Also, the cooperation of NES with the Roma coordinators is useful for a swifter identification of those members of the Roma community who are interested in taking part in the NES programmes. This recommendation is addressed to all the observed mechanisms and institutions.

---

<sup>18</sup>This recommendation is in line with the recommendations of the round table “Implementation of Measures, Activities and Services for Roma Population at the Local Level” organised by the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration of the Republic of Serbia, 20- 22 February 2012.

**INTEGRATION OF LABOUR MARKET AND SOCIAL PROTECTION SERVICES.** The cooperation initiated between the CSWs and the NES with respect to provision of integrated social services for the able-bodied Roma – recipients of social welfare assistance – must be enhanced in order to promote continued employment of Roma. For this, planning at the level of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Protection is required as well as joint implementation through social welfare centres and NES.

**REGULAR FOLLOW-UP OF BENEFICIARIES.** **Regular consultations with the beneficiaries must be conducted** and systemic surveys of their needs **undertaken** with a view to precisely defining the outstanding needs of the Roma population that the mechanisms failed to respond to. Adequately developed programmes, established on the basis of the needs of Roma population, may result in an increase of motivation among the beneficiaries and also lead to improved functioning of the mechanisms that this was the main limiting factor to (NES) to date. This recommendation is addressed to all the observed mechanisms and institutions.

**PROCEDURES.** The procedures and mode of work of the Roma coordinators and the teaching assistants should be harmonised at the national level in order to ensure comparability of data about the problems and the needs of the beneficiaries. This recommendation is addressed to the Ministry of Health, the Office for Human and Minority Rights and the local governments.

**TRAININGS.** Additional trainings as well as those for work with vulnerable groups in all the institutions and CSWs and NES in particular should be introduced. Other mechanisms need to consider approach to trainings of their employees as per the model of the Ministry of Health and adjust them to their own needs. A sustainable mechanism or one training curricula for all the mechanisms needs to be established. This recommendation is addressed to all the observed mechanisms and institutions.

As this study shows, since 2005 a series of programmes aimed at social inclusion of Roma have been established in the Republic of Serbia. Each of them has contributed to the improvement of the social situation of the Roma minority in Serbia as compared to that of seven years ago. While some of the programmes (NES, CSWs, Roma coordinators) still only partially respond to the deeply rooted social and economic problems such as unemployment and/or poverty, the programmes in the area of social protection and education (contributing to improvement of a social and economic position of Roma in Serbia) have been developed and put in place.



Government  
of the Republic  
of Serbia



SOCIAL INCLUSION  
— AND —  
POVERTY REDUCTION  
U N I T

Social Inclusion  
and Poverty Reduction Unit  
Palace of Serbia  
Bul. Mihajla Pupina 2  
11 070 Beograd, Serbia  
Tel: +381 11 311 46 05  
e-mail: [sipru@gov.rs](mailto:sipru@gov.rs)  
Twitter: @inkluzija, FB: SIPRUnit  
[www.inkluzija.gov.rs](http://www.inkluzija.gov.rs)



**CENTAR**  
ZA ISTRAŽIVANJE  
JAVNIH POLITIKA