



DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION 2005 – 2015 PROGRESS REPORT 2011

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

1. BASIC INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION OF THE ROMA MINORITY

Bosnia and Herzegovina joined the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 on 4th September 2008, but it has been made significant progress for the last three years.

The last census in Bosnia and Herzegovina was in 1991 and only about 8.000 Roma declared themselves as Roma. All information from the field stated that there were more Roma in B&H, taking into consideration that Roma are the biggest minority population in the state.

That was the reason that the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina had registration process of Roma population and their needs in 2010.

In 2010 and 2011, the registration data were included in the unique data base. The registration process continued to be opened for each Roma returnee family or other Roma who missed the chance to be registered. Local Social welfare centers have led the registration process and they were delivered technical equipment (computers) in order to establish their data base.

Special attention was paid to data protection, according to the Law on data protection.

Registration of Roma needs was useful for better planning of activities and funds.

Totally about 17.000 Roma were registered and if we take into consideration those that were not registered and were absent, it is estimated that there are about 30 - 40.000 Roma in BiH.

The 2007 Human Development Report "Social inclusion in BiH" (UNDP 2007) has presented three social exclusion indices that have been calculated for 2007 year only, namely General Social Exclusion Index (HSEI-1) that shows that 50.32% of population in BiH was socially excluded in at least one of the following dimensions: the living standard, health status, education, participation in the society, and access to institutions and services.

As per data of the World bank in 2011 and media reports, about 48% of Bosnia and Herzegovina population have lived under the poverty line limit. 18% of the BiH population is at the bottom of living standards, including Roma population.

1. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR ROMA INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION

Ministry for Human Rights of BiH and Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina plan regular financial means on the state level each year (1,5 million EUR), in order to finance implementation of the Action Plan for Roma issues. The financial means are increased by co-financing of other ministries and implementing partners, especially in Roma housing.

The financial means have been increased by donations of international organizations that co-financed our activities. Majority of municipalities on local level allocated funds for improving Roma living conditions or invested them in infrastructure projects.

The Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina regularly applied for IPA means with EC. We got 500.000 EUR by IPA 2008 and it was approved IPA 2011-2013 project in the amount of about 6.000.000 EUR. IPA 2008 project was used to support engaging Roma coordinators on regional and the state level and to facilitate implementation of the Action Plans and logistics activities. IPA 2011-2013 and the amount of 6.000.000 EUR will be used in the following way: 90% of the fund will be used directly for Roma housing, and 10% for workshops, logistics and small activities for the four areas: employment, housing, health care and education. All the funds were planned in close cooperation with Roma representatives in the Roma Board, established by the Council of Ministers.

Planning of funds will be continued on regular basis in the following years. All the funds will be used only for improvement of Roma inclusion in the society, by providing them better living conditions, allocation of small grants for employment, etc.

The Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees applied for financial support of UN organizations, in order to revise the Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for Roma Issues in the Fields of Employment, Housing and Healthcare. The revision will include Strategy of BiH up to 2020. The Ministry signed contract with UN organizations/UNDP and the revision has started as of 1st June 2012 and will be directly supported by their funds. The revision will be ended until the end of the year.

2. EDUCATION

Key barriers that limit educational chances and access to quality education for Roma are extreme poverty, changing of place of residence very often, lack of awareness that education of their children is very important, etc. The state budget means are not enough to implement all measures planned in the revised Action Plan on Roma Education.

In July 2010, Council of Ministers adopted revised Action Plan on Roma Education, consisted of goals and measures to be implemented on the whole territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia and Herzegovina has 12 Ministries of Education and one Department for education in Brčko District of BiH and all of them were responsible for implementation of the Action Plan in 2011.

Results in 2011 were that there was increase of number of Roma children enrolled to elementary, secondary schools and universities. It was visible that number of children that left education was lower. The responsible Ministries paid more attention to have regular meetings with parents of Roma children, in order to inform them that regular primary education was legal obligation for the parents. Many meetings were held with Roma communities and associations, explaining them importance of education for their future.

At the beginning of 2011, it was established monitoring team on the state level in order to monitor implementation of the revised Action Plan. The team for formed for the first time on the state level, it was made methodology and created network as support for the monitoring team. Ministries on lower level reported to the higher level competent ministries. Unfortunately, financial means for the activities were not allocated and we didn't have any donor's support.

The Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of BiH made Guidelines to recognize socially excluded children in BiH, in order to monitor exclusion/inclusion of children on regular basis.

The Guidelines are used by the competent ministries and local authorities for all the children

The Ministry also started to develop Guidelines for improvement of position of Roma children, at the end of 2011, and it will be finished until the end of July 2012. The Guidelines will include recommendations for competent ministries and local authorities in order to plan activities for Roma children health care, social inclusion, education, etc.

As per received data, in 2011, 27 Roma children were included in pre-school institutions and 49 Roma children were enrolled in obligatory pre-school education.

2.884 Roma children were enrolled to Primary schools, 216 to secondary education and 17 Roma students attended universities.

As per registration data, got by the registration process of Roma needs, totally 3.693 Roma children should be included in primary and secondary schools, out of which 593 Roma children were not included.

The competent ministries of education and Social welfare centres couldn't provide data on Roma children that were enrolled to education process and Roma associations didn't share their data with local schools.

Regarding statistics data about Roma teaching assistants in education process, only 2 Roma assistants were involved in primary schools. As per legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, only university level of assistants could be included in the education process.

A certain number of Roma assistants was also included in primary education by NGO projects, but we don't have precise data.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are no segregated "Roma" pre-schools, primary or other schools.

Roma children don't attend special schools/classes in Bosnia and Herzegovina unless their health situation requires such education. Tottaly 65 Roma children attended special schools in 2011 (33 of them in Mostar and 27 in Sarajevo), due to their health problems.

The Ministry included 237 Roma children in preparatory classes before elementary education, through UNICEF project and support. The main target was to prepare Roma children to be enrolled to primary schools. The Project was implemented in 11 municipalities with the highest number of Roma children.

Regarding access to counseling services for Roma families with children, mainly Social welfare centres could assist them, but number of Roma families that requested this kind of support was not high.

We planned to open Daily Centres, as one of measures planned in the revised action Plan, but none of them has been opened in Bosnia and Herzegovina so far. IN-Fondation initiated idea to open 4 daily centres for the children and they applied for donation with REF. the Ministry supported the idea.

None of competent Ministries of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina allocated funds for inclusion tools in the education process in their budgets for 2011.

In 2011, only 47 Roma children abandoned primary education and it is 1,6%. In relation to previous years it was considered as progress after adoption of the revised Action Plan. 43 Roma children left secondary schools and drop rate was 2,37%, what also can be considered as progress in comparisson with previous years.

35 Roma were involved in primary education for adults and 224 Roma children were included in the additional primary education, because they missed enrollment to schools.

14 Roma children received scholarships in the Federation of BiH entity /funded by budget means of competent authorities and 38 Roma children, in the Federation of BiH, received scholarships by donors funds. In the Republic Srpska entity, 18 Roma children received scholarships funded by budget means of competent authorities and 1 scholarship was provided by donors funds.

80% of Roma children received a certain assistance related to books, school equipment, transport and meals in schools. 7 Roma students received scholarships.

All the above mentioned results were implemented in 2011 and were direct result of the revised Action Plan for Roma Education, adopted in July 2010 and continued to be implemented in 2011.

3. EMPLOYMENT

The average unemployment rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina is extremely high and in January 2012 it was 44%. The unemployment rate and education level of Roma population determined position of Roma on the labor market and it is the main obstacle for Roma employment in BiH.

Here is analysis of Roma employment:

- The biggest number of Roma population is socially vulnerable category
- Number of employed Roma in public sector is unsatisfactory (2-3%)
- Number of firms and private trade companies owned by Roma is very low.
- The only income for Roma families is through self-employment, collection of raw materials, etc.

The action Plan on Roma employment planned various activities and targets, including

- To increase Roma employment (through small grants)
- To facilitate private business and self-employment
- To encourage Roma to be included in employment process

As it was mentioned, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, allocated the funds for Roma issues, for the first time, in 2009. For Roma employment, it was allocated 360.000,00 EUR.

The means were used for Roma employment through relevant institutions for employment in both entities and Brčko district of BiH. The Ministry signed Memorandum of understanding with all of them.

Totally 119 Roma were employed in 2009, on temporary basis.

In 2010, we started with co-financing of companies in order to employ Roma, such as follows:

- 2.500,00 EUR as per person in duration for 12 months
- 4.000,00 EUR as per person in duration for 24 months
- 6.000,00 EUR as per person in duration for 36 months

Total budget financial means for 2010 were 450.000 EUR.

In 2010, totally 93 Roma representatives were employed through supporting employers and self-employment.

There were no budget means allocated in 2011, but the cycle will be continued in 2012.

4. HOUSING

The Action Plan on Roma Housing that was adopted in 2008 continued to be implemented in 2011.

As we reported in the previous reports, the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina decided to plan in the state budget 1.500.000 EUR for Roma issues, each year. Out of the amount, 1.000.000 EUR was allocated for Roma Housing.

Based on the planned budget means, the Ministry announced Public Call for submitting Roma housing projects and received 34 project proposals. 9 projects could be funded by the state budget and 8 Roma housing projects were additionally funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency –SIDA.

Besides of the state budget funds and SIDA funds, municipalities and local and international NGOs, as implementers of the projects, participated with their own means through co-financing. Taking into consideration all invested funds in Roma housing in 2009, it was totally spent about 3.000.000 EUR.

Priority was given to construction of houses for Roma, reconstruction and improvement of living conditions and infrastructure.

The following criteria were applied:

- the means were used for the most vulnerable Roma families that could confirm ownership, or for Roma homeless if municipalities allocated location (like in Zenica example),
- co-financing was crucial in decision making process,
- attention was paid to number of housing units and costs per Roma housing units in the projects,
- infrastructure connections were obligatory (in some locations it required reconstruction of electricity network or other infrastructure and the process was delayed –delays were not long and everything was done respecting legal deadlines),
- Two Roma representatives on local level were included in the Commissions for selection of beneficiaries, etc.

When a project was approved, Commission on selection of beneficiaries, consisted of municipal representatives, Social welfare center representative, implementing partner (if it is not the municipality) and Roma representatives, selected the most vulnerable Roma families, as beneficiaries of the projects. The Ministry representatives were observers of the process of selection.

Approved Roma housing projects in 2009 were realized in 2010, taking into consideration that the implementers had to respect all legal procedures for selection of construction companies, public procurement procedures, etc.

Construction/reconstruction of Roma housing units was done in accordance with Regulations on unified housing standards and conditions for reconstruction (minimum living conditions as per BiH legislation).

In the Regulations, all construction conditions were prescribed (inner walls, roof, isolation, bathroom equipment, infrastructure connections, etc).

TOTAL RESULTS FOR 2009:

- 211 Roma housing units were constructed/reconstructed
- 182 Roma families were beneficiaries of infrastructure projects for Roma

In 2010, the Ministry allocated, again, 1.000.000 EUR for Roma housing and the Federation Ministry for Spatial Planning joined their fund in the amount of 150.000 EUR.

The Commission on selection of the projects received 41 projects and 13 was approved to be funded.

Realization of Roma housing projects from 2010 was continued in 2011. In 2011, totally 70 housing units for Roma were constructed or reconstructed.

Total results up to May 2012, including 2009-2012, are as follows:

- **330 Roma housing units constructed/reconstructed**
- **More than 270 Roma families have been beneficiaries of infrastructure projects.**

The Ministry was approved to get IPA funds in the amount of 6.000.000 EUR, and 90% will be used for Roma housing in the following three years.

We are constantly improving our methodology based on lessons learned and previous experience. The problem is still how to solve Roma homeless people, because municipalities have to be willing to allocate locations. Zenica municipality was good example.

Here are some examples of Roma housing in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- *Jajce before and after sanation*



- *Zenica – social housing*



6. HEALTH

Implementation of the Roma Action Plan for Healthcare was continued in 2011. Special efforts were devoted to decrease health issues among Roma population

In 2011, certain and measurable results were achieved in local Roma communities in order to improve health situation of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Taking into consideration that BiH state institutions had limited and temporary budget for 2011, there was no allocation of financial means for Roma healthcare. All activities were continuation of remaining financial means from 2010.

The ensured financial means for Roma healthcare were spent based on signed Memorandum of Understanding with responsible Ministries and institutions for healthcare in both entities and Brcko district BiH.

The remaining funds from 2010 were used in 2011 mainly for implementation of the **Goal 3 of the Action Plan, i.e. Ensuring preventive measures in order to improve health condition for Roma population, as it was planned in the Action Plan, for immunisation, and in Republic Srpska and Brcko district of BiH for some epidemic diseases, oral health protection and preparations of programmes for improvement of health conditions as per specific requirements in Roma local communities.**

In Republic Srpska, the funds were spent on preventive measures in order to improve health situation of Roma in 7 Roma communities (in Banja Luka, Gradiska, Bijeljina, Doboje, Modrica, Vukosavlje and Prijedor). The municipalities were chosen as local communities with high number of Roma population. The main target was to protect Roma children by implementation of the following goals:

1. To increase Roma children awareness regarding importance of regular hygienic protection of mouth, teeth and throat by education of the children;
2. To increase Roma children awareness regarding bad influence of cigarettes and alcohol on health;
3. To increase Roma children awareness through media.

Health Institution in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina implemented the Project: **Improvement of vaccination of Roma children**, during November-December 2011. The main target of the project was to ensure access to vaccination and preventive measures with Roma children, their inclusion in the health system and education of mediators regarding importance of immunization. Two meetings were held in Tuzla municipality (20 December 2011) and in Kakanj (22 November 2011), covering Tuzla Canton, Zenica-Doboje Canton, Middle Bosnia Canton, Hercegovina-Neretva Canton and Sarajevo Canton.

In Brcko district of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the funds were used for ensuring preventive measures in order to improve health situation in three Roma settlements. The following targets were realized:

1. Education session on importance of vaccination, preventive measures and hygienic of mouth in children age;
2. Additional immunisation for Roma children younger than 7 years age;
3. Examination of teeth and oral hygiene of Roma children between the first and fourth classroom of primary school.

The allocated funds were also used for raising awareness of doctors and nurses in order to prevent prejudices about Roma, on education of Roma educators in local communities regarding preventive measures and on media campaign.

Majority of activities were done directly in local communities.

The Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in close cooperation with responsible health institutions and ministries and with financial support of the World Vision in Sarajevo, worked on four program issues in 2011, from the following fields:

1. Reproductive health and maternity;
2. Sexual diseases including AIDS;
3. Early discovery of tuberculosis;
4. More children included in immunisation.

Development of the above models will be useful for the revision of the Action Plan and for future planning of activities.

The Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina has also started, in cooperation with World Vision in Sarajevo, activities on realization of a new project on improvement of healthcare for Roma. The main goal is to explore key obstacles for healthcare for Roma population on local level, by engaging expert teams in seven regions and reporting about it including recommendations.

We want to point out that the authorities of BiH are in constant contact with Roma NGOs and other actors in order to improve health situation of Roma in BiH.