



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA PROGRESS REPORT 2013

BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE POSITION OF ROMA ETHNIC MINORITY

The last census in Bosnia and Herzegovina was in 2013 and results of the census are still being processed. In the previous census in 1991, only about 8,000 citizens declared themselves as Roma. All reports from the field indicated that there was a larger number of Roma in BiH, taking into account the fact that Roma are the largest ethnic minority in the country.

This was one of the reasons why the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees conducted the Program of Recording the Roma Needs in 2010 with a view to better planning future activities.

In 2010 and 2011 the data obtained in the process of recording needs of the Roma are compiled in a single database called “Roma Needs Recording“- RNR. RNR remained open for every returnee Roma family or Roma who missed the chance to be recorded while the process lasted and for later recording by the Centres of Social Work. The Centres for Social Work carried out the recording locally, together with representatives of Roma associations. The Centres got IT equipment in order to establish the RNR.

Special attention was paid to the protection of personal information in accordance with the Law on Personal Data Protection.

The establishment of RNR has provided a basis for more realistic and efficient planning of the implementation of the Action Plan for Roma in housing, employment, health care and other needs.

Consolidated data after the process of recording indicated that in Bosnia and Herzegovina 16,771 Roma and 4,308 households were recorded. Now, after training of social workers in keeping and updating the database, there are 17,164 Roma recorded who are in some need.

If we take into account those who did not register because they were absent, it is estimated that there are between 30-40,000 Roma in BiH.

Roma have remained the poorest and most vulnerable minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND FUNDING OF ROMA INTEGRATION

The Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of BiH and the Council of Ministers adopted the Revised Action Plan for Addressing Roma Issues in the Field of Employment, Housing and Healthcare of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: the Revised Action Plan for Roma in Employment, Housing and Health Care of Bosnia and Herzegovina) in December 2013. Representatives of Roma and Roma NGOs actively participated in this process. Prior to this, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees held four regional meetings, in Banja Luka, Tuzla, Zenica and Sarajevo, in order to present the draft action plan and possible corrections. They also held two meetings of regional operational teams in Teslić and Sarajevo, in order to inform representatives of Roma and representatives of relevant institutions about activities to revise the Action Plan and establish a monitoring system.



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Bosnia and Herzegovina has established several institutional mechanisms, i.e. bodies responsible for matters of national minorities, and Roma are the largest ethnic minority.

There are Councils of National Minorities at the state level and in two Entities, which act as advisory bodies, give opinions and suggestions for solving problems of minorities.

The Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees leads and coordinates all activities relating to the promotion and protection of human rights of minorities, monitors and reports on the activities of the Decade, CAHROM and other bodies. The Human Rights Department of the Ministry is responsible for providing professional, administrative and operational support and monitoring, promoting and protecting of the rights of Roma.

The Roma Board, an advisory body of the Council of Ministers, is responsible for systematic monitoring of the Action Plan implementation, the adoption of action plans and proposing measures for improving the situation of Roma, initiating the provision of budgetary resources for Roma and the like.

The Ministry has involved a lot of Roma in the fieldwork at the local level, particularly in the selection of beneficiaries of housing. In this way it has ensured massive participation of Roma representatives in the decision-making process.

Monitoring is done on the ground in different directions by several actors. Independent monitoring is performed by Roma representatives and independent experts, experts in particular areas coming from local and national institutions and others, then by the Roma Board as an advisory body of the Council of Ministers, which monitors activities addressing problems of Roma. International organizations monitor the scope of their activities.

The Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH and the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina plan funds at the state level each year, amounting to EUR 1.5 million, to fund the Roma Action Plan implementation. These funds are increased through a system of co-funding by other ministries and implementing partners, particularly in Roma housing.

The funds are also increased with donations from international organizations that co-fund our activities, too. Most municipalities allocate funds at the local level to improve the living conditions of Roma and invest their funds in infrastructure projects.

The Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina regularly applies for IPA funds from the European Commission. The European Commission has approved the EUR 5 million IPA project and the implementation of the EUR 2.5 million first stage began in the second half of 2013. Most of these funds, i.e. 80%, will be put in Roma housing and living conditions improvement.



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In 2013 there were several referral meetings with Roma representatives and local authorities, in order to better coordinate activities.

Funds planning will continue regularly on a yearly basis. All funds are used solely to improve the inclusion of Roma in society, by providing better living conditions, awarding small grants for employment and improving health care and education.

2. EDUCATION

Education in BiH is regulated by framework BiH laws, laws at the entity level in the Republika Srpska, cantonal laws in the Federation of BiH and the Law of Brcko District governing pre-school, primary, secondary and higher education,.

When it comes to the state level, this area is monitored and coordinated by the Ministry of Civil Affairs, i.e. a separate Department of Education.

Responsibility for the implementation of educational policies is determined by the BiH Constitution, the constitutions of the entities and cantons and the Statute of the Brcko District of BiH, while development of educational policy is a responsibility of the lower levels of government, as by entities:

- a) the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where education is a decentralized system in ten cantons. The Federation Ministry of Education and Science has a coordinating role in planning and implementation of activities related to education policy in the Federation. Cantonal ministries of education are responsible for designing educational policies, including the enactment of legislation on education and the provision of education in each canton individually,
- b) Republika Srpska, where the educational system is centralized and
- c) Brcko District, which also has its own educational system.

In July 2010 the Council of Ministers adopted the Revised Action Plan of Roma Educational Needs of BiH (RAP) which includes goals and measures to be implemented throughout the country. BiH has 12 relevant ministries of education and one Department of Education in the Brcko District, which have not made specific plans and programmes to support the education of Roma, but are focused on the implementation of this RAP.

A decision of the Minister of Human Rights (2011) issued at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina appointed a team of experts, which prepares for each school year a report on the implementation of the RAP and BiH Roma educational needs and submit it to the Council of Ministers.

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

Roma children do not attend school for children with special needs in BiH, unless their health situation requires so.



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According to the report on the implementation of the RAP for the school year 2012 / 2013, the situation is the following:

Pre-primary and primary education:

In academic year 2012/2013, the focus was on training of Roma parents in the obligation of primary education, the importance of programmes related to early childhood and development, training of teachers, parents and students in human rights and the rights of the child, as well as stereotypes and discrimination in education of Roma and how to overcome them.

Some progress has been made in a continuous increase in the number of Roma children enrolled in pre-school institutions and compulsory pre-school education and in education in the year before enrolment in primary school.

The progress made in academic year 2012/2013, when it comes to primary education, is taking incentive measures by the competent educational authorities and local communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which are primarily budget allocations for the purchase of textbooks and providing snacks for Roma children going to school.

This type of incentives was provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republika Srpska, local communities, ministries of education and governments of two cantons in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brcko District Government and, partly, projects of four NGOs.

Free textbooks were provided to 95% of primary school students and the funds, together with funds for school meal and transportation, amounted to BAM 95,000.00 and were appropriated in the budget.

Scholarships for 25 primary school students were appropriated in the budget, too.

The Federation Ministry of Education and Science implemented the "Support to Education of Roma Children and Other Ethnic Minorities and Disadvantaged Groups" programme, providing rewards for excellence to Roma students at the end of the school year and funded projects aimed at increasing rates of preschool, primary and secondary school attendance of Roma children and their better integration into the educational system.

Secondary and Higher Education:

In general, it can be concluded that there has been some progress in taking incentive measures by local communities and ministries of education, which awarded scholarships to Roma secondary school and university students.

Scholarships for 20 secondary school students and 10 university students were funded from institutions' budget and for this purpose BAM 41,700.00 were appropriated.

Examples of good practice are:



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The City of Banja Luka awards scholarships to all Roma secondary school and university students who have applied for scholarships. The City of Prijedor awards scholarships to all Roma who enrol university studies.

In 2012 the Federation Ministry of Education and Science appropriated a total of BAM 95,000.00 for the "Support to Education of Roma Children and Other Ethnic Minorities and Disadvantaged Groups" programme. A total of BAM 58,600.00 were put in projects aimed at improving access to and conditions of education to Roma and other ethnic minorities and BAM 36,400.00 were put in rewards of **77 Roma primary and secondary school students** for excellence at the end of the school year.

In 2013, for the implementation of the programmes, a total of BAM 95,000.00 was appropriated: BAM 51,777.00 to fund projects that aim to increase the rate of attendance of Roma children in pre-schools, primary and secondary schools and their better integration into the education system and BAM 43,223.00 to reward **103 Roma students** for excellence at the end of the school year in primary or secondary schools.

Under the "Boost to Roma Education, BiH Citizens Who Study in Public Higher Education Institutions in the Federation" programme in academic 2012/13, the Federation Ministry of Education awarded scholarships to three Roma students Roma who responded to a public invitation to the extent of BAM 2,000.00 each.

In Herzegovina-Neretva Canton the Municipality of Jablanica has established a Roma Scholarship Fund.

It can be said that in academic year 2012 / 2013, significant budget appropriations occurred but they have not been sufficient yet to meet the needs of Roma children so that they can have full and equal access to education because of the hidden costs of education.

The preservation and promotion of the Romany language, culture and history:

In 2013 the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees took an initiative with the University of Sarajevo for the introduction of the optional course of language, culture and literature of Roma, for the purpose of training teachers of the Romany language and to work with Roma children.

Ministries of Education states that a number of Roma children in schools do not identify themselves as Roma, that some schools do not keep records on nationality and it is reasonably possible that a significantly higher number of Roma children is enrolled in primary schools.

Guidelines for improving the situation of Roma children - social inclusion were made within the MHR, **with support from UNICEF within the SPIS programme**, and the Minister of Human Rights approved them in a decision issued on 30 October 2013 and published in Official Gazette of BiH No. 101/13. This document contains guidelines for relevant ministries and local authorities when planning activities related to: the registration of children at birth, early growth and development, family economic status, housing of children, health care for



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Roma children, education of Roma children, child trafficking, child's labour - begging, Roma children asylum seekers, refugees and internally displaced children, children without parental care and provides general guidelines and envisages monitoring and evaluation.

Conclusion:

Key barriers that limit the opportunities and access to quality education for Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina are extreme poverty, changing of place of residence, a lack of understanding of the importance of education for their children and so on. Financial resources at the state level are not sufficient to implement all the measures planned in the Action Plan on Roma Education.

At the state level in 2012 or 2013 no funds were appropriated to support the implementation of any measure under the Revised Action Plan of Roma Educational Needs of BiH. However, the respective Ministries appropriate budget funds, but they are still not sufficient to support the enrolment, attendance and completion of school by all Roma children.

3. EMPLOYMENT

The adoption of the revised 2013-2016 Action Plan for Roma in Employment, Housing and Health Care help continuing activities to improve Roma employment.

In the period from 2009 to 2013 approximately BAM 3,000,000.00 were appropriated for employment.

Two measures under the Action Plan were implemented: co-funding of employer's costs and funding of self-employment of Roma. The Roma Employment Programme was implemented by Entity Employment Institutes and the Employment Institute of the Brcko District of BiH, based on the Memorandum of Understanding on the programme implementation that is signed with the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees every year. The Institutes committed themselves to have representatives of non-government sector sitting on the panels for selection of beneficiaries of funds meant for Roma employment, which has been the case so far.

Following the adoption of decisions on the appropriation of budgetary resources for Roma employment, housing and health care in 2013, BAM 710,000.00 was appropriated for Roma employment and the Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the Action Plan for Solving Problems of Roma in Employment was signed. The memorandum stipulates that the funds will be allocated in the following manner: Roma employment in FBiH - BAM 450,000.00, Roma employment in RS - BAM 220,000.00 and Roma employment in BD – BAM 40,000.00. In early 2014 the Institutes started the procedure of calling and selection of beneficiaries. The deadline for submission of the report on the 2013 spending is September 2014.



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An overview of the total allocations for addressing Roma employment in the period from 2009 to 2013.

YEAR	AMOUNT	NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES
2009	BAM 702,000 BAM 440,000 FBiH BAM 220,000 RS BAM 42,000 BD	119 Roma
2010	BAM 700,000 BAM 440,000 FBiH BAM 220,000 RS BAM 40,000 BD	93 Roma
2012	BAM 710,000 BAM 450,000 FBiH BAM 220,000 RS BAM 40,000 BD	122 Roma
2013	BAM 710,000 BAM 450,000 FBiH BAM 220,000 RS BAM 40,000 BD	Public calls are being published

Given the political and economic complexity and the current conditions of the market economy no significant increase in Roma employment is expected in the future.

The current approach to Roma employment achieves results, but the indicators of the sustainability of such funds investment significantly reduce the effectiveness of this grant and for that reason an integrated approach to social employment of Roma is proposed to be taken in the next grant. We need to create new ways to get the available grant funds channelled directly through municipalities/municipal employment offices onto programmes supported by the local community, which will contribute to their sustainability.

Difficulties in the implementation of previous employment programmes that the Institutes/ Employment Offices have faces indicate several critical moments that new programmes should pay more attention to. The difficulties are:

- low qualification structure of registered unemployed Roma (*inter alia* because of the lack of educated Roma registered with Employment Offices);
- incompetence and a lack of knowledge and skills necessary to work independently among applicants for funds for self-employment;



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- employers' poor interest in hiring Roma;
- a lack of coordination with local authorities in helping Roma to set up their own businesses through the support in business registration and licensing;
- a lack of good communication and coordination in monitoring the programme implementation for those Roma who were employed thanks to the programme (number of Roma who remained in their job after completion of the programme, communication with employers, business start-up counselling).

4. HOUSING

The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the Revised Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for Addressing Roma Issues in the Field of Employment, Housing and Healthcare in December 2013, with the aim to provide real planning of activities, budget, and to establish better indicators in order to be able to evaluate results.

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 EUR 1,500,000 for Roma issues, each year. Out of the amount, EUR 1,000,000 was allocated for Roma housing each year. The same amount was planned and allocated to implementing partners for Roma housing projects in 2013.

Based on the planned budget means, the Ministry announced Public Call for submitting Roma housing projects each year and it was also done in 2013. The Public Call lasted for a month, after that Commission on selection of the projects checked all locations from the submitted projects and based on confirmed priorities in the field, the Commission recommended 24 projects to be funded by the budget means of 2013. Implementation of the projects has been continued in 2014.

Municipalities, cities, entities, local and international organizations, institutions and donors and Roma NGOs could submit their applications. All projects were based on co-financing by implementing partners and in this way available budget means could be increased.

Priority was given to construction of Roma houses, 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, Bihac, Mostar, etc.),
- co-financing was crucial in decision making process,



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- 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),
- 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.

Realization of 24 housing projects from 2013 has been continued in 2014, and it will be finished until December 2014.

TOTAL RESULTS UNTIL JANUARY 2014:

- Totally invested budget means, donations and co-financed funds by implementing partners, from 2009-2013, amounted about **8.200,000 EUR** (including funds for 2013),
- Housing projects were realized in **60** municipalities or locations,
- **TOTALLY 582 housing units were constructed or reconstructed**, while out of them 107 housing units is still in the phase of construction (budget means from 2013)
- **TOTALLY 400 Roma families were beneficiaries of infrastructure projects.**

The Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina applied for IPA funds on regular basis. In 2012, the Ministry was approved 5 million EUR, through IPA 2011-2014. In 2013, the first phase of the IPA project started, in the amount of 2,5 million EUR and 80% will be invested in Roma housing. It is planned to construct or reconstruct 150 housing units by the IPA funds.

Good practice in Roma housing, especially for Roma homeless families without property, i.e. social housing, were realized in Zenica, Bihac, Mostar and Teslic municipalities. The municipal authorities allocated locations for Roma homeless families and housing units were constructed by the budget means.

We are constantly improving our methodology based on lessons learned and previous experience.

Here are some examples of social Roma housing in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



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Bihać Municipality, a total of 6 new housing units built and 14 ones are still being built



Trebinje Municipality, a total of 4 new housing units built



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City of Mostar, a total of 24 new housing units built



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6. HEALTH CARE

The end of 2013 Revised Action Plan for Roma Health Care takes into account the needs and positive experiences of other countries of the Decade, tends to be realistic and enforceable and contains priorities in line with the needs expressed by the representatives of Roma and all other relevant participants in the review process. Access to and coverage with health care as a top priority and training and prevention in this area are the backbone of the new Revised Action Plan in the part respecting health care. Its implementation will enable equality, improve the overall health situation of the Roma through access to health care, enable obtaining important baseline data on specific diseases and achieve a higher level of awareness of health care and the right to health care.

The Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina allocates certain financial resources as an incentive to competent medical institutions to carry out certain actions to improve access to and have better health care for Roma minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

An overview of the total allocations for addressing Roma health care in the period from 2009 to 2013

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
ROMA HEALTH CARE	BAM 135,000	BAM 200,000		BAM 210,000	BAM 210,000	BAM 755,000

The earmarked funds for Roma health care in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2013 were spent by relevant institutions on the basis of signed Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the Action Plan for Roma Health Care of BiH signed between the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Public Health Institute of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Public Health Institute of the Republika Srpska and Brcko District Government, the Department of Health and Other Services of the Brcko District of BiH.

In 2013 the Memoranda of Understanding provided for spending of the amount of BAM 210,000 for achieving **Objective 2** in the Federation of BiH: Raising awareness of health care and specifically in relation to measure 2: Carry out information campaigns on the right to health care and work to raise awareness about the importance of health care in the Roma minority and to carry out health training by local trainers about the importance of prevention in health care; **Objective 3** in the Republika Srpska: Ensure and implement preventive measures aimed at improving the health status of the Roma minority and specifically in relation to measure 1.9. Other programmes for the improvement of health in accordance with the needs and specificities of the local community such as the organization and implementation of preventive screening for women (breast cancer and cervical cancer) and the organization and implementation of preventive screening for men (prostate cancer and



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colon cancer); **Objective 2** in BD: Raising awareness of health care and specifically in relation to measure 4. Carry out health training by local trainers about the importance of prevention in health care and **Objective 3**. Ensuring and implementing preventive measures to improve the health status of the Roma minority and specifically in relation to measure 1.5, addictions, measure 1.6. Greater coverage of children with immunization and measure 1.8 oral health (diseases of oral cavity).

The 2013 Memoranda are being implemented The 2013 Memoranda were signed in late 2013 (due to a delay in adoption of the budget of the Council of Ministers in 2013.). The deadline for submission of financial and narrative reports under the Memoranda is 30 June 2014.

The Memoranda are being implemented in the Republika Srpska, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Brcko District.

Most of the specific activities envisaged for 2013 are implemented in the field, in local Roma communities for the promotion and improvement of health care for Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In 2013 significant results were achieved in the implementation of the Action Plan for Roma Health Care of Bosnia and Herzegovina with funds allocated for 2012.

A particularly significant progress was made in raising awareness about the importance of health care of the Roma minority, immunization of Roma children, reproductive health and maternity care, in training of Roma civil society in local communities in health care, as well as in the inclusion of many Roma families into the mainstream health care system in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

7. ANTI-DISKRIMINATION AND GENDER EQUALITY

All the measures listed above have been taken in order to reduce poverty and social exclusion of the Roma population. Regular budget planning and implementation of the Action Plan for Solving Problems of Roma in four areas lead to the elimination of discrimination and inequality in society. Obviously, it is necessary to proceed with faster implementation of the above-mentioned measures.

A separate department for the elimination of all forms of discrimination operates within the Institution of the Ombudsman.

The Law on Gender Equality, which was passed in 2003, is the most important tool for raising awareness on gender issues.



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A lot of implementing partners and international organizations in BiH are implementing projects related to the prevention and elimination of violence, equal inclusion of Roma women, economic empowerment etc. In 2013 CARE International completed a project of economic empowerment of Roma women with an aim of better inclusion of Roma women.