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Civil society monitoring report on implementation of the national Roma integration strategy in Poland

*Assessing the progress
in four key policy areas
of the strategy*

Prepared by:
Jaw Dikh Art Foundation
Elżbieta Mirga-Wójtowicz
Monika Szewczyk
February 2019



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**Civil society monitoring report
on implementation
of the national Roma integration strategy
in Poland**

Assessing the progress in four key policy areas of the strategy

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2019

Print	ISBN 978-92-76-08375-7	doi:10.2838/91431	Catalogue number DS-02-19-453-EN-C
PDF	ISBN 978-92-76-08374-0	doi:10.2838/875595	Catalogue number DS-02-19-453-EN-N

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The report has been prepared by NGO *Jaw Dikh Art Foundation* in cooperation with Elżbieta Mirga-Wójtowicz (researcher, PhD candidate at Pedagogical University of Cracow) and Monika Szewczyk (vocational counsellor).

The report has been prepared as part of the Roma Civil Monitor pilot project, 'Capacity-building for Roma civil society and strengthening its involvement in the monitoring of National Roma Integration Strategies'. The pilot project is carried out for the European Commission, DG Justice and Consumers. It is coordinated by the Center for Policy Studies of the Central European University (CEU CPS), in partnership with the European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO Network), the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), the *Fundación Secretariado Gitano* (FSG) and the Roma Education Fund (REF) and implemented with around 90 NGOs and experts from up to 27 member states.

Although the Roma Civil Monitor pilot project, as part of which the report was prepared, is coordinated by CEU, the report represents the findings of the author and it does not necessarily reflect the views of CEU. CEU cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBOS	Research Centre for Social Opinion
MSWiA	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration
NIK	Supreme Audit Office
NRCP	National Roma Contact Point
PiS	Law and Justice Party (<i>Prawo i Sprawiedliwość</i>)
PO	Civic Platform (<i>Platforma Obywatelska</i>)
PO WER	2014-2020 Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development
PSL	Polish People's Party (<i>Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe</i>)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Roma Programme 2014-2020 is a functioning governmental mechanism that follows the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and supports four priority areas: employment, education, healthcare and housing. The implementation of the Programme is financially supported through Poland's State budget and the EU Structural Funds. The Programme does not take into account the issue of antigypsyism and there are no direct references to the situation of Roma women and the improvement of their position. Additionally, the implementation of the Programme lacks comprehensive and holistic approach in addressing situation of Roma, as well as comprehensive local strategies. Overall, mostly well-financed policies still bring insufficient outcomes considering the overall situation of Roma.

Employment

The unemployment rate among Roma continues to be high. The funding allocated to address this priority within the Roma Programme is still low, representing not more than 8 per cent (about 200,000 EUR) of the yearly available funds for implementation of the whole Roma Programme (some 2.5 million EUR yearly). Additionally to this, about 40 million EUR from the ESF are dedicated to tackle the issue of integration of socially excluded persons, in particular Roma, into the labour market.

The vocational activation aimed at enabling long-term unemployed Roma to enter the labour market have been to a large extent ineffective. This also because the developed measures often conflict with social help and support schemes, which makes the vocational activation less attractive than the social income.

Housing and essential public services

Housing remains one of the most sensitive issue to be tackled (among others, because of the required amount of funds). Nearly a quarter (24 per cent) of the Roma Programme's budget is spent on improving housing conditions of Roma families. The Programme's interventions have improved housing conditions of many Roma families in need, especially among *Bergitka* Roma group who lives in the southern and the rural part of Poland (Małopolska, Dolny Śląsk and Śląsk regions). However, such improvements have not turned to be a major factor contributing to more effective social inclusion; the social status and ethnic stigma has not changed with improvement of the housing conditions. A comprehensive approach is still required in future activities in this priority area. It is essential to build a human and social capital of Roma and to progress with social inclusion, especially, interlinked with education and jobs.

At the local context, weakly planned housing interventions can generate or reinforce existing interethnic conflicts as well as intra-ethnic tensions. Solutions need to be supported through political commitments, especially at the local government. Otherwise, one may be faced with troubling cases in which the Programme's funds are used by local government to relocate some families, against their will, to other communes.

Impact of health care policies on Roma

Only 3 per cent of total funds available under the Programme were allocated to this priority area, and this is far too less to register progress or tangible improvements. There are valuable projects implemented, especially for women or elderly Roma population, which included purchase of medicines and financing rehabilitation. Much welcomed are also measures aimed at making dental and ophthalmological care accessible for children and youth. However, health care initiatives rarely address the problem of persistent antigypsyism in healthcare. Similarly, efforts at introducing healthy lifestyles are very limited.

In general, since health situation is linked to the living conditions, employment and the level of education, future actions would require interventions highlighting these links in a comprehensive policy approach. Obviously, much more funding from the Programme's budget needs to be channelled to this priority area especially in the case of the vulnerable situation of elderly Roma people.

Education

About 64 per cent of total funds of the Roma Programme have been devoted to this priority area; funding is provided to about 50 day-care centres for Roma children and some 120 children benefit from preschool subsidies every year. In addition, the Ministry of Education's funds support activities with impact on education of Roma. Some positive outcomes are registered in the area of early childhood education and pre-schooling focused on reducing the number of Roma children in special education. Typically, however, school system and Roma children are less successful when it comes to progress and level of achievements in education and this is happening despite existing several scholarship schemes (for primary school, high school and university students), affirmative in nature and valued by families; this is due to the facts that the staff working with Roma children lacks proper preparation and there are still not enough Roma assistants working in the school system.

Roma positively evaluate the institutionalisation of the Roma school assistant position whose role is to help to increase school attendance and outcomes of education. There is, however, a need to invest more in supporting Roma teaching staff qualified to work in all kind of education institutions. Roma teaching staff, with the help of Roma assistants, can effectively contribute at eradicating many forms of antigypsyism, which can directly and positively impact on the social inclusion or integration of Roma.

INTRODUCTION

This report reviews and assesses the implementation of the “Programme for integration of the Roma community in Poland for 2014-2020”,¹ and refers also to the previous Programme adopted in 2004 and designed for a 10-year period.² The adoption of the first Programme in 2004 coincided with the year of Poland’s accession to the EU.³ In many respects, the this first Roma Programme was positively received as progressive policy document.⁴ It embarked on many discussions and recommendations of the EU pre-accession period that, among others, exposed the scale and variety of the problems and challenges faced by Roma. More profoundly it manifested rather a strong political commitment of the Polish Government to reach tangible improvements in the life of Roma people in Poland.⁵ However, assessment reports indicated that achieved outcomes were rather insignificant compared to the invested money,⁶ and that the Programme’s success depended largely on commitment of local authorities. Despite these shortcomings the assessment recommended continuation of the Programme.⁷

For the assessment of the current 2014-2020 Roma Programme’s implementation, the context of its development must be explained. First, the Programme was designed and adopted by a coalition of political parties *Platforma Obywatelska* (Civic Platform, PO) and *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe* (Polish People’s Party, PSL).⁸ However, the 2015 Parliamentary elections brought to power former opposition party *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* (Law and Justice, PiS) and its coalition partners.⁹ This change in power impacted the

¹ We will refer to it as the “Roma Programme 2014-2020” or simply “Roma Programme”. The Roma Programme is available at: <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/romowie/program-integracji-spol/8675,Programme-for-the-integration-of-the-Roma-community-in-Poland-for-the-period-201.html>

² It was adopted as a decree by the Council of Ministers and relied on state budgetary funding (Polish Prime Minister’s reserve; altogether the government committed itself to provide about 24,000,000 EUR for its implementation). Roma organisations have had a say in its design and implementation (there were consultations within Common Committee and Roma subcommittee).

³ Next year following the Parliamentary act on national and ethnic minorities Roma were officially recognised as ethnic minority in Polish law. More on this can be found in previous Roma Civil Monitor on Poland, available at: <https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-1-poland-2017-eprint-fin-2.pdf>

⁴ *Control of the activities of public administration for the protection of the rights of the Roma minority in Poland from 2015*. Available at: <https://www.nik.gov.pl/plik/id,13073,vp,15485.pdf>

⁵ The decision on the introduction of the governmental programme for the integration of Roma culture in Poland in the years 2004-2013 was undertaken by the Leszek Miller government, the implementation of the Programme was carried out by the Donald Tusk government, and the decision to continue the tasks in the form of the Roma Integration Programme in Poland for 2014-2020 was taken by the government of Ewa Kopacz.

⁶ *Control of the activities of public administration for the protection of the rights of the Roma minority in Poland*. Available at: <https://www.nik.gov.pl/plik/id,13073,vp,15485.pdf>; <https://rownosc.info/media/uploads/raport-z-badania-ewaluacyjnego-programu-na-rzecz-spolesznosci-romskiej-w-polsce.pdf>; https://rownosc.info/media/uploads/raport_po_kl_2008_www_xnha.pdf

⁷ The assessment of the 10-year 2004-2013 Programme by Supreme Audit Office (NIK) was positive. However, it concludes that this period is not sufficient to generate and observe long-term changes in the Roma community and in majority society, among other, diminishing the role social stigma associated with Roma identity. More needs to be done to ensure equality for Roma subjects, combat stereotypes and prejudices, raise up the level of knowledge about Roma in society, etc. It also recommends its continuation.

⁸ Its second edition included the EU recommendations spelled out in the 2011 the EU Framework for National Roma Strategies. In accordance with EC’s requirements, Poland continues to prioritise four key areas, though it has supported also other areas, depending on groups, their geography and needs. Detailed objectives have been defined for each of the areas as well as actions to achieve them. For more on this issue see: <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/romowie/program-integracji-spol/8675,Programme-for-the-integration-of-the-Roma-community-in-Poland-for-the-period-201.html>

⁹ The Law and Justice party formed the so-called United Right coalition with *Solidarna Polska* (Solidary Poland) and *Polska Razem* (Poland Together).

Programme's implementation;¹⁰ for example, the previous government held regular meetings and consultations between the Joint Commission of the Government and Minorities and the Roma Sub-Committee,¹¹ but in the last few years, the role of the Roma sub-committee was reduced and the meetings turned sporadic.¹² Another change was that after elections in 2015, the central government shifted responsibilities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration for coordination, monitoring and selection of projects for funding to the regional governments; and the personnel at the ministry dealing with Roma was reduced.¹³ With relation to these changes, many Roma activists expressed their concerns in this regard; the Roma topic in social inclusion lost much of its public relevance and acceptance, though, the new government continued with the Programme's implementation.¹⁴

Another contextual change is that since the 2015 migration crisis in Europe, the Roma Programme have been implemented in a political and social climate marked with raising of xenophobia, hate speech and antigypsyism. Despite the European trend of recognising the antigypsyism¹⁵ as a major barrier to Roma social inclusion,¹⁶ the awareness of antigypsyism in Poland remains marginal, though some activities supported by the second *Roma Program*, i.e. those related to promoting the knowledge about Roma in society, included factors usually covered by this concept, such as stereotypes and prejudices against Roma.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the current high level of antigypsyism determines the propensity to migrate among many Roma in Poland.¹⁸

Finally, the current Roma Programme continues to address the Roma communities as main beneficiaries and not designers or implementers of the activities. With such a perspective,

¹⁰ Especially, the PO WER program, a major one to addressing Roma unemployment, started late after completion of first competition for applications in March 2016. See: <https://www.power.gov.pl/nabory/27-zwiekszenie-szans-na-zatrudnienie-osob-szczegolnie-zagrozonych-wykluczeniem-spolesnym/>

¹¹ More on Roma sub-committee in previous Roma Civil Monitor report: <https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-1-poland-2017-eprint-fin-4.pdf>

¹² The Roma Sub-Committee was established in 2010, from its beginning there have been 17 meetings (from 2010 to 2012: 15 meetings, from 2015 to 2018: only 2 meetings). See: <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/komisja-wspolna/zespol-do-spraw-romski/posiedzenia?page=0>.

The Law and Justice's relations with some minority members of the Common Commission (i.e. Ukrainians) turned troubling; see: <http://www.nasze-slowo.pl/news/przedstawiciele-mniejszosci-potepiamy-dzialania-wojewody-czarnka-pl/?fbclid=IwAR3dUb5kPE62HUjA4k5imMqidZQ9xf-D7SajDAZAF0WZyhraysYwbvjyL8>

¹³ In MSWIA usually 3-4 people were responsible for the Roma issues currently one official deals with the affairs of the Roma minority; information based on information from Roma organisations.

¹⁴ First Roma Programme was generally seen as needed and welcomed, it did meet with no public criticism. The situation significantly changed under PiS-led government as right-oriented newspapers and some politicians voiced their disagreement mainly with the level of funding dedicated to Roma Programme. For more information, see: <https://niezalezna.pl/93941-cyganski-biznes-kopacz-i-tuska-dziesiatki-milionow-wyrzucone-w-bloto>

¹⁵ European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network, *Reference Paper on Antigypsyism*. Available at : <http://ergonetWORK.org/2017/06/ergo-network-presents-reference-paper-on-antigypsyism-at-the-meeting-of-cahrom/>

¹⁶ *A persistent concern: Antigypsyism as a barrier to social inclusion*. Available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2018/roma-inclusion>

¹⁷ For example: Permanent public exhibition at the Roma Association in Poland entitled "Roma – history and culture" (see: <http://www.stowarzyszenie.romowie.net/Wystawa--559.html>); organisation of the International Roma Day by the Roma Educational Association *Harangos*; The International Roma Memorial Caravan organized by the Regional Museum in Tarnów.

¹⁸ Kamila Fiałkowska, Michał P. Garapich, Elżbieta Mirga-Wójtowicz, *Continuity or change – anthropological analysis of Polish Roma migration paths to Great Britain. Research report, 2018*. Available at: <http://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Between-tradition-and-change-migration-paths-of-Polish-Roma.pdf>

Roma are envisioned as passive recipients of services, assistance or help in most of the interventions or projects carried out by the state, the local authorities or the civil society. The implementers absorb a part of the Programme's funds for their operation (the same applies for the funding from the ESIF); therefore, they are also beneficiaries, though not main one. The question raised by the Roma leaders and activists refer not to the roles and tasks of implementers, which are obvious – they are needed, but to the amount of funds absorbed to carry out activities that produce no tangible outcomes for the community. In the future, the key challenge here would be to rationalise the relation between final beneficiaries and implementers, including the ratio between funding used to achieve stated objectives and funding absorbed by implementers themselves. Even more challenging would be to have the Roma beneficiaries as active subjects or partners in all projects aimed at helping them.

For the purpose of compiling this report 20 interviews were conducted with organisations, leaders and activists;¹⁹ about 60 per cent of the respondents were Roma women. The organisations implementing the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development (PO WER) were also interviewed.²⁰ Additionally, 30 letters were sent out to state and municipal authorities²¹ and almost all approached offices responded. The Ministry of Interior and Administration and its National Roma Contact Point (NRCP), as main coordinating body of the 2014-2020 Roma Programme implementation, was asked to share its evaluation reports and data illustrating subsequent years of implementation of the Roma Programme. In response, the Ministry shared only the report from 2015 claiming that others are under preparation. In addition, several telephone conversations with officials working on a daily basis with Roma were also carried out. Moreover, reports of the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Supreme Audit Office, the Parliamentary (Sejm) Committee for National and Ethnic Minorities, the Governmental Joint Committee on National and Ethnic Minorities were reviewed for production of this monitoring report, along with academic and popular publications on the subject matter. The report is also based on the knowledge of the authors and on the findings and lessons learned during the implementation of two previous Programmes: "Pilot Programme for the Roma community in the Małopolska region for the years 2001-2003" and "Programme for the Roma community in Poland for the years 2004-2013".²² We would like to acknowledge and thank the Roma and other experts for their contributions to this report.

¹⁹ List included for example: Romano Waśt Association, Dialog Pheniben Foundation, Romani Educational Association Harangos, Jamaro Association, Kałe Jakha Association, Integration Association Sawore, Center for Counseling and Information for Roma in Poland, Association of Roma Assistants in Poland, Karolina Kwiatkowska – Organising Courses and Training, Amaro Drom Association, Mucha Foundation, Roma teacher and school educator, Roma assistants, career counsellors (Chrzanów, Kraków, Kowary, Jelenia Góra), probation officer in Krakow, head of a school and education centre in Warsaw and others.

It should be noted that not all actors contacted responded to the questions. In the case of stakeholders who did not provide contribution, the authors used and analysed the information available online.

²⁰ List included for example: Social Integration Foundation PROM, Consulting and Information Centre for Roma in Poland, Agency Consulting Service Arwi Partner, Karolina Kwiatkowska - Organisation of Courses and Training.

²¹ List included: Małopolski Urząd Wojewódzki w Krakowie, Śląski Urząd Wojewódzki w Katowicach, Departament Wyznań Religijnych oraz Mniejszości Narodowych i Etnicznych Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji, Ośrodek Pomocy Społecznej w Łącku, Urząd Miasta Zabrze, Powiatowy Urząd Pracy w Zabrzu, Powiatowy Urząd Pracy w Jeleniej Górze, Powiatowy Urząd Pracy dla Powiatu Nowosądeckiego, Regionalny Ośrodek Polityki Społecznej Województwa Śląskiego, Regionalny Ośrodek Polityki Społecznej w Rzeszowie, Regionalny Ośrodek Polityki Społecznej w Krakowie, Powiatowy Urząd Pracy w Łodzi, Powiatowy Urząd Pracy w Rybniku, Miejski Ośrodek Pomocy Społecznej w Krośnie, Urząd Miasta w Nowym Sączu, Miejski Ośrodek Pomocy Społecznej we Wrocławiu, Urząd Miasta Kowary, Urząd Pracy w Sanoku, Powiatowy Urząd Pracy w Krośnie, Powiatowy Urząd Pracy w Tarnowie, Urząd Miasta w Szczecinie, Urząd Miasta Olsztyn, Urząd Miasta Poznań, Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy w Szczecinie, Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy w Katowicach, Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy we Wrocławiu, Dzielnica Ursus w Warszawie.

²² Programme available at: <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/romowie/program-na-rzecz-spoile/program-na-rzecz-spoile/tresc-programu-na-rzecz/6670,Tresc-Programu.html>

EMPLOYMENT

According to the latest 2011 census data,²³ 29.2 per cent of Roma in Poland were in pre-working age (up to 17 years old), compared with 18.9 per cent among the general population. At the same time, the level of unemployment among Roma at a working age (18-64) was around 84 per cent compared with 11 per cent among the general population. Since then, little has changed regarding the level of unemployment among Roma, whereas among Poles it has significantly dropped to the level of 5.8 per cent in the third quarter of 2018.²⁴

In the past 10 years, the measures developed through the Roma Programme did not manage to address the high level of unemployment; though according to the 2011 census, data indicates some progress reached in the area of higher education, which is of relevance when accessing the job market. 272 persons, that is 2 per cent of the total number of those self-identified as Roma, declared that have completed higher education compared with only 13 Roma declaring it in the 2002 census.²⁵ Data from the last census revealed also 934 persons, or 7 per cent of Roma, with secondary education, and almost 6 per cent with vocational education. A large majority, about 77 per cent, have had only primary or lower secondary (*gimnazjum*) education.²⁶ However, there is no hard data indicating how the achieved level of education impacts Roma's chances to find employment. Based on the authors' experience from working with Roma, it can be concluded that Roma with university education are in general in employment. However, as one of the interviewees stated, "tertiary and secondary education generally helps in finding a job, but the prejudice and antigypsyism faced, still make it difficult".²⁷ The experience furthermore shows that the situation is different for those with a lower level of education or who dropped out, as they faced serious difficulties in accessing the job market and are subjected to antigypsyism. Consequently, they are forced to seek income from informal economy or opt to migrate.²⁸

²³ In the 2011 National Population and Housing Census, over 17 thousand people declared their belonging to the Roma minority. The majority of Roma lived in three voivodships, in the south of the country: Dolnośląskie (11.9 per cent), Małopolskie (10.2 per cent) and Śląskie (10.2 per cent). More on various data describing Roma minority in Poland in: *Struktura narodowo-etniczna, językowa i wyznaniowa ludności Polski*, NSPLiM 2011, GUS, Warszawa 2015.

²⁴ Information in the media about the unemployment rate available at: <https://www.bankier.pl/wiadomosc/Bezrobocie-w-Polsce-najnizsze-od-28-lat-7616660.html>

²⁵ Programme of integration of the Roma community for 2014-2020, available at: <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/romowie/program-integracji-spol>

²⁶ Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma And Traveller Issues (CAHROM); see: <https://rm.coe.int/16806a9332>

²⁷ Interviews with Roma people with higher education.

²⁸ According to some reports and research, there is high interest in emigration and in some cases (for example Roma in the town of Mława) up to 30 per cent of local population has migrated abroad. For more information, see: Kamila Fiałkowska, Michał P. Garapich, Elżbieta Mirga-Wójtowicz, *Continuity or change – anthropological analysis of Polish Roma migration paths to Great Britain*. Available at: http://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/projects/continuity-or-change-anthropological-analysis-of-polish-roma-migration-paths-to-great-britain-2/?fbclid=IwAR1N5uHU64Y_W2T4WuOs-mmWn3KPrLAnkzclLftpVVUkKyb3Qc9v9YohNew

Improving access to labour market and effectiveness of employment services

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration,²⁹ in 2015 only about 8 per cent of funds from the 2014-2020 Roma Programme (total budget is 2.5 million EUR per year) are spent on this priority area; 22 tasks from the Programme were carried out for the amount of about 180,000 EUR. Most of the measures were implemented in the voivodship of Małopolska, Dolnośląskie, Śląskie, Warmia and Mazury.³⁰ The measures were carried out by 10 local governments and 11 non-governmental organisations, including eight Roma organisations. In the subsequent years, not much has changed in this area, both in terms of tasks realised and regarding their effectiveness, which remains low. In 2017 and 2018, the number of planned tasks were increased to 24, as well as the available funding (approximately 200,000 EUR yearly).³¹ The proportion of implementers was similar: half of them have been local governments and the other half non-governmental organisations; among them the number of Roma organisation grew up to ten. As a result, in 2015, 270 Roma were employed,³² including Roma school assistants.³³ In addition, training in raising and changing professional qualifications and vocational guidance was organised and offered to 178 Roma.³⁴ It was generally ineffective as there were only rare cases that lead to employment. Nevertheless, for some it was seen as having a positive *"impact on socialisation, integration of Roma, who are trying to go beyond their own environment"*, and it was stressed that the *"chance to start employment is much greater than in the absence of any support"*.³⁵

Among initiatives that need to be highlighted as innovative and bringing concrete results for the Roma beneficiaries are those which offered *"work for debts"*. Within this framework Roma were able to repay their rental, gas or water debts when hired by the city or commune offices in three voivodships (Opolskie, Śląskie and Dolnośląskie).³⁶

²⁹ Report on the implementation of the Roma Programme for 2015, available at: <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/romowie/program-integracji-spol/program-integracji-spol/9928,Sprawozdanie-z-realizacji-Programu-integracji-spolecznosci-romskiej-w-Polsce-na-.html>

³⁰ *Idem*.

³¹ No official Ministry of Interior Affairs and Administration (MSWIA) reports available for the period 2016-2018. Own calculations of the *Jaw Dikh Foundation* based on data published by the Ministry of Interior.

³² Employees of day care centres, kindergartens implementing tasks for Roma children, Roma education assistants, coordinators in Roma organisations of work and health projects, Roma employees of tasks carried out by local government like public works mostly in the following voivodships: Opolskie (63 people), Małopolskie (57 people), Dolnośląskie (52 people), Śląskie (32 people) and others.

³³ Employment of assistants is financed from the increased educational subsidy. Money as part of the increased subsidy is obtained for children with various deficits and special needs (children from rural areas, disabled, national and ethnic minorities). The increased educational subsidy was the subject of heated debate in 2008-2012 and is still the subject of discussion, especially at the Joint Government and National and Ethnic Minorities Committee, Roma Group, The Parliamentary (Sejm) Committee for National and Ethnic Minorities, as well as numerous parliamentary interpellations. Roma leaders claimed that the subsidy which is granted for additional tasks for Roma children and youth is not allocated to them, but instead it is spent as the municipality income not necessarily on activities related to Roma issues. The actions of leaders and government authorities have led to the sealing of the system of funds available from the increased educational subsidies in the municipalities inhabited by Roma children where Roma assistants and supporting teachers, all necessary additional compensatory activities financially supported.

³⁴ Report on the implementation of the Roma Programme for 2015, available at: <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/romowie/program-integracji-spol/program-integracji-spol/9928,Sprawozdanie-z-realizacji-Programu-integracji-spolecznosci-romskiej-w-Polsce-na-.html>

³⁵ Interview with Roma activist from Masovian region.

³⁶ Local authorities have communal and social flats in their resources, usually Roma families live in such flats, but they often do not regularly pay for these flats. The project consists in commissioning work to the indebted Roma where part of the salary covers the debt and the other part goes to the employee.

Increased funding was allocated within the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development (*Programme Operacyjny Wiedza Edukacja Rozwoj*, PO WER), measure 2.7 – which is dealing particularly with the issue of integration of Roma workforce into the labour market.³⁷ The programme run by the Ministry of Family, Work and Social Policy (*Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej*) used the EU funds for this purpose, and all together allocated 40,408,868 EUR (including the national co-financing).

The PO WER has a very difficult success rate as a condition for funding, there is a requirement that a minimum of 28 per cent of Roma supported by the end of the project will take up work after leaving the project.³⁸ Roma beneficiaries and implementers remain concerned with these risky and hard to achieve employment condition and results and thus jeopardises projects such as the “Road to Employment”. Beneficiaries in particular maintain that even persons who undergo many trainings still face difficulties in finding permanent jobs due to prejudice and stigma among potential employers. Their employment experiences are usually short (ends with the project’s funding) and it reinforces a feeling of exclusion and discrimination in the labour market.³⁹ Also, the co-financing requirements, as in the case of projects realised within the PO WER’s measure 2.7 (grants represent 97 per cent of the total costs of project and rest are supposed to be covered by implementer),⁴⁰ demotivate Roma organisations in competing with strong and highly qualified bodies or agencies having sufficient funds to cover the requested co-financing.

As a result, only some Roma organisations can fulfil this requirement and in most of instances Roma organisations are pushed to associate with stronger mainstream organisations to be able to access the funding.⁴¹ To date, realised projects provided support to 1,579 Roma out of which 179 Roma gained employment after completing their participation in the project.⁴² The overall evaluation of PO WER, to date, is still under preparation.⁴³

In the Polish context, labour offices deal with unemployed people and provide them with support, especially to the long-term unemployed persons⁴⁴ and those endangered by social

³⁷ Measure 2.7: Increasing the employability of people in particular threatened by social exclusion. As part of the measure, tasks are undertaken under two types of projects:

1. Comprehensive activities to improve the education and employment of members of the Roma community, as well as activities for the removal of barriers that hinder the employment of Roma and integration with the majority community.

2. Comprehensive actions to improve motivation and the ability to take up employment and the functioning of the people serving deprivation freedom, as well as the development of cooperation and partnership in the field of promotion of employing these people.

See: https://www.power.gov.pl/media/66187/SZOOP_POWER_wersja_13.pdf

³⁸ Rules of the competition available at: https://efs.mrpips.gov.pl/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/9941/regulamin_spolecznosc_romska_4.10.2017.pdf

³⁹ Interview with Roma Assistant from Dolny Śląsk.

⁴⁰ Detailed description of the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development available at: https://www.power.gov.pl/media/66187/SZOOP_POWER_wersja_13.pdf page 83.

⁴¹ Source: interviews with Roma leaders and activists. For more about the concerns, see: <http://www.krolewskafundacja.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ZMIANY-1-722x1024.jpg>.

⁴² Information from the Department of Implementation European Social Fund MRPiPS to the Jaw Dikh Foundation dated 10 December 2018.

⁴³ Department for the Implementation of the European and Social Fund is going to release a report “Evaluation of support addressed to the Roma community in Poland from PO WER and other programmes implemented for the Roma”. The results of this study along with recommendations will be basis for the modifying the directions of support for the Roma community.

⁴⁴ Act on the promotion of employment and labour market institutions. (Adopted on 20 April 2004)

exclusion.⁴⁵ Roma are overrepresented in both categories. The labour agency is claiming to follow a “colour-blind” policy and to carry out activation programmes for all unemployed regardless of their nationality or ethnicity. Surprisingly though, labour offices virtually do not participate in implementation of Roma Programme’s activities in this priority area.⁴⁶ Though, they are represented in projects under the PO WER Programme 2014-2020, measure 2.7 as partners to an Interdisciplinary Consulting Group⁴⁷ and in expert capacity (along the local self-government, Roma representatives and NGOs) – a mandatory requirement under PO WER Programme. According to interviewees, their engagement in PO WER seems, however, to be more formal than substantive.

Typically, most of the projects funded under PO WER’s measure 2.7 aims at activation of Roma for labour market. For example, the project “Road to employment” implemented by the *Foundation for Social Integration Prom* from Wrocław expects an increase in the social and professional activation of the group of 45 Roma (30 women and 15 men) the Dolnośląskie Voivodship (the towns of Strzelin, Wrocław and Kłodzko) aimed at increasing their chances for finding jobs by the end of the project (February 2019).⁴⁸ Within the project, each beneficiary receives several forms of support: meetings with vocational counsellor, psychologist, job assistant and lawyer, soft skills training (motivational coaching and social skills training), vocational training (50 hours per person on average) as well as a 4-months professional internship. The project expects that thanks to the newly acquired qualifications, knowledge, skills, the participants will be aware of their potential and will be able to establish professional development paths, take up internships, which may translate into finding jobs after the project.

The low effectiveness of many projects is usually explained by officials and by politicians but also by some researchers,⁴⁹ referring to Roma culture and traditions (following here the “blaming the victims” theory) or formal education (lack of skills due to low level of education).

Overall, it indicates the importance of targeting the issue of antigypsyism in activation projects. Not recognising it or not dealing with the issue exposes weak part of activities realised, to date – few Roma who participate in numerous trainings and re-trainings find a way to find permanent employment. Those unemployed Roma prefer working in the grey zone or leave the country. Many Roma have migrated or declared willingness to migrate, especially to the UK. Paradoxically, poorly educated and skilled Polish Roma are able to find jobs there.⁵⁰

Part of this experience is an important lesson learned: changing the surrounding towards more tolerant and multi-ethnic one opens new opportunities, also, to find a job. As one of our Roma assistants said: *“Many Roma migrate abroad, because they will not meet with racism and rejection there, it will be easier to find jobs and they will not be judged by their origin. It seems to me that in Poland it is worse and harder.”*⁵¹

⁴⁵ Act on amending the Act on Social Assistance (adopted on 8 February 2018).

⁴⁶ Similarly, they did not participate in the implementation of previous Programme either.

⁴⁷ The requirement to appoint a consultative board available at: https://efs.mrpips.gov.pl/_data/assets/pdf_file/0023/9941/regulamin_spolecznosc_romska_4.10.2017.pdf

⁴⁸ Project website: <http://www.fundacijaprom.pl/projekt-droga-zatrudnienia/>

⁴⁹ Local governments, labour market offices.

⁵⁰ Kamila Fiałkowska, Michał P. Garapich, Elżbieta Mirga-Wójtowicz, *Continuity or change – anthropological analysis of Polish Roma migration paths to Great Britain*. Available at: http://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/projects/continuity-or-change-anthropological-analysis-of-polish-roma-migration-paths-to-great-britain-2/?fbclid=IwAR1N5uHU64Y_W2T4WuOs-mmWn3KPrLAnkzcILftpVVUkKyb3Qc9v9YohNew

⁵¹ Interview with Roma Assistant and activist from Śląsk region

The perception that Roma do not work and remain clients of social welfare is dominant among the majority of Polish society.⁵² It includes and builds on various elements of prejudices and stereotypes, part of antigypsyism, but misses an important aspect – the fact that the reality is that some of the typical type of jobs Roma have, does not necessarily equate with formal employment.

Traveller/wandering community among Roma – which was subjected to the state coercive settlement and 'productivisation'⁵³ policy during communist times – they have actively defended their own ways of 'working' in so-called cooperatives (for example: working with metal), engagement in merchandising or various forms of entertainment. These groups were opposing 'formal' employment requirement, and some continue until now. They still prefer merchandising, though, profits are smaller here as the markets are full of staff and all can be bought online.

Members of the *Bergitka* Roma group were more dependent on formal employment. In fact, they were mostly affected by high unemployment rates after the transition. They are also numerous among beneficiaries of activation projects implemented under the current Programme. The low effectiveness of these projects (as only few Roma manage to get permanent jobs) make public works to often be used as a scheme offered by communes of town offices to the unemployed Roma. Especially, that they see it as opportunity of making use of financial opportunities.⁵⁴ However, this form of support is, in the opinion of many Roma, considered ineffective. The work is low-paid and limited in time (in some cases only 20 hours a month for 200 EUR).⁵⁵

Scrap collection is another opportunity to seek income among unemployed Roma. This is a practise, in particular, among members of *Bergitka* Roma in several communes in southern Poland (Małopolska voivodship). However, recovering raw materials require, burning them out from the non-metal parts, which are seriously harmful for the environment (air pollution).⁵⁶ As a result, it is a source of income but also a source of tensions and conflicts with surrounding majority and some Roma neighbours. Some of these tensions remain unresolved to date.

Fight against discrimination in employment and antigypsyism at workplace

Roma Programme for 2014-2020 only indirectly addresses issues concerning antigypsyism, for example, fighting with prejudice and stereotypes as part of sharing

⁵² *Stereotypes about Roma in Poland. Results of the online survey*. Available at: http://cbu.psychologia.pl/uploads/f_bulska/Raport_Romowie_Ariadna_PDF.pdf.

Ł. Kwadrans, *Nietolerancja wobec mniejszości narodowych i grup etnicznych: przykład Romów*, „Sprawy Narodowościowe. Seria Nowa” 2004, p. 24-25.

FRA's Fundamental Rights Report 2018. Available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/annual-reports/fundamental-rights-2018#roma>

⁵³ “In 1952, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWS) adopted a law (no. 452/52) entitled, 'On Helping the Gypsy Population to Adapt to Settled Life' (*W sprawie pomocy ludności cygańskiej przy przechodzeniu na osiadły tryb życia*) and began the process of forced sedentarization of Polish Roma, as part of the process of 'Roma productivization',” Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka and Elżbieta Mirga-Wójtowicz “The Roma Movement in Poland”. See : <https://www.romarchive.eu/en/roma-civil-rights-movement/roma-movement-poland/>

⁵⁴ Act of 20 April 2004 on the promotion of employment and labour market institutions (Journal of Laws of 2018 item 1265, as amended) – art. 2 para. 1 point 26, art. 51, art. 56, art. 59 and art. 59a - 59c; Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 24 June 2014 on organising interventions and public works and a one-off reimbursement of costs in respect of social security contributions paid (Journal of Laws of 2014, item 864).

⁵⁵ Interviews with Roma leaders, activists.

⁵⁶ Media information at:

knowledge about the Roma. The postgraduate Roma Studies at Pedagogical University in Krakow,⁵⁷ financed by the Roma Programme, include a component of anti-discrimination education in the workplace for future Roma assistants and supporting teachers.

The labour offices, among other, tasked to monitor discrimination at the labour market, do not monitor the situation of Roma, due to their interpretation of the General Data Protection Regulation (RODO) stipulating that this is not legally possible.⁵⁸ As a result, they do not take any action to eliminate discrimination against Roma on the labour market.

Polish law defines discrimination and mobbing, and the employers are obliged to counteract discrimination in employment; however, only a small number of cases have been reported to the courts and acted upon. As statistics show (unfortunately, they do not indicate how many, if any, of the cases concerned Roma), the trend in numbers of reported cases is falling: in 2014, 1,001 cases concerning discrimination or violation of the principles of equal treatment were filed with the court in Poland, of which 400 cases were rejected, dismissed or remitted, and only 52 cases were settled with employee claims. But, in 2016, only 788 cases were filed with the court of which 292 cases were rejected, dismissed or remitted, and only 43 cases were settled with employee claim.⁵⁹

Labour offices and employment agencies do not undertake additional activities (such as initiating cooperation with Roma organisations, actively offer jobs to unemployed Roma, etc.) on their own initiative, explaining that a special offer for Roma would be an act of unlawful ethnic profiling.⁶⁰

Antygypsyism represents a major barrier that needs to be addressed, both in practise and in the law, in all future interventions within priority areas. In the first Roma Programme 2004-2013, some institutions (Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment in the Prime Minister chancellery responsible for the matters gender equality, human rights officers in the Police) were addressing issues of discrimination and prejudices faced by Roma. In the last few years most of these programmes diminished in relevance for the Roma community. Still, the cooperation between the Ministry of Home Affairs and Administration (supervising over police services) and the ODIHR in the field of training police officers about working with the Roma community is successfully continued.⁶¹

http://podhale24.pl/aktualnosci/artykul/44111/Romowie_z_Ochotnicy_Gornej_zatruwaja_swoich_sasiadow_niebezpiecznymi_spalinami.html;

<https://www.polskieradio.pl/5/3/Artykul/1043492,Romowie-zatruwaja-powietrze-Spor-polskocyganski-w-Maszkowicach>

⁵⁷ One-year postgraduate programme "Situation of Roma in Poland – history, law, culture, ethnic stereotypes" at the Pedagogical University in Krakow, since 2004. What is very important, educated Roma lecture these courses, which are attended by different people: teachers who work with Roma children and youth on a daily basis, civil servants, PhD students, social workers, journalists etc.

⁵⁸ The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union 27 April 2016 Regulation on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data and the repeal of Directive 95/46/EC (general regulation on data protection).

⁵⁹ Data from the Ministry of Justice for the first half of 2017 show that the average length of proceedings in cases of discrimination is around 19 months, and the unequal treatment 13 months, if the applicant is a woman, or 16 months for men (for comparison, total procedural cases in the field of labour law last an average of 9.4 months). See: <https://serwisy.gazetaprawna.pl/praca-i-kariera/artykuly/1091941,sad-odszkodowanie-z-tytulu-dyskryminacji-dla-pracownika.html>

⁶⁰ Arguments presented by labour agencies.

⁶¹ Media information on training projects for police officers organized in Poland in cooperation with ODIHR and Polish Police at: <https://malopolska.policja.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/szkolenie-we-wspolpracy-z-biurem-instytucji-demokratycznych-i-praw-czlowieka>; <http://malopolska.policja.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/szkolenie-we-wspolpracy-z-biurem-instytucji-demokratycznych-i-praw-czlowieka-0>; <http://gazeta.policja.pl/997/informacje/163914,O-Romach-i-Sinti-w-Zakopanem.html>; <http://jelonka.co.pl/blog/2018/12/10/szkolenie-w-zakresie-utrzymania-porzadku-i-bezpieczenstwa-w-spolecznosciach-romow-i-sinti/>; <https://wmeritum.pl/policja-romowie-polin/257532>

Apart from these factors, there are others that work as disincentives to seek formal employment. The key ones are social benefits, in particular *Programme Family 500+*: combined allowances can exceed the amount of potential earnings in case of a large family.⁶² It can be considered as a rational choice, especially, considering disadvantage in the job market due to antigypsyism. In many instances, activation projects clash with social benefits and *Programme Family 500+* (combined allowances can exceed the amount of potential earnings in case of a large family. And Roma families are usually big families).

⁶² As the large families are more common among the Roma families, they receive support within the *Programme Family 500+* as high as 500 PLN, or 120 EUR for each child per month.

HOUSING AND ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES

Roma in Poland are not a homogeneous community in terms of economic and living conditions; they are also a highly urbanized minority. The so-called *Bergitka* Roma, traditionally a settled community, have usually lived in extreme conditions, most often in rural communes with limited access to basic amenities. The “wandering” or “traveller” Roma groups (*Polska Roma*, *Lovara* and *Kelderara* or *Chaladitka Roma*),⁶³ were the main targets of settling and productivisation⁶⁴ policies under the communist regime realised since 1960s. Most of them were moved to live in old buildings or barracks where they stayed for a long period of time. Throughout this “productivisation” period and especially after the fall of communism, the living conditions of former “wandering” Roma were improving faster than among *Bergitka* Roma (a good example is provided here by Roma community in the town of Mława in central Poland, otherwise known from the ethnic conflict in 1991).⁶⁵ Therefore, it is rather obvious, that *Bergitka* Roma of southern and rural part of Poland (Małopolska, Dolny Śląsk and Śląsk regions) were the main beneficiaries of the first and current Roma Programme interventions in this priority area. The rest of Roma community in Poland makes different claims regarding what is needed or requested, for example, investment in Roma culture and identity.

Improving access to secure and affordable housing

Like any other citizens, Roma in Poland are entitled to receive housing allowances and social support if they face a difficult socio-economic situation (unemployment, hard housing conditions, numerous families, health problems, disability, single parent, pregnancy). Roma Programme is aimed to cover gap in this area between Roma and non Roma. Many local authorities turned to the Roma Programme and effectively used offered funding for this purpose. Support interventions include purchase and construction of residential premises, reparations and constructions of illumination, sewage and waste-water treatment plants, construction of playgrounds, etc.

As indicated in the Ministry of Interior and Administration report,⁶⁶ annually housing is absorbing about 24 per cent of all funds of the Roma Programme.⁶⁷ According to the Ministry, apartments for 514 Roma were granted or renovated in 2015. Altogether, 25 local governments and three non-governmental organisations, including two Roma organizations,⁶⁸ were engaged in implementing this intervention mostly in Roma communities in Małopolska, Śląsk and Dolny Śląsk regions. For example, 36 projects were

⁶³ For more information about Roma in Poland, see: Mirga Andrzej & Mróz Lech, 1994, *Cyganie: odmienność i nietolerancja*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

⁶⁴ In 1952, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWS) adopted a law (no. 452/52) entitled, ‘On Helping the Gypsy Population to Adapt to Settled Life’ (W sprawie pomocy ludności cygańskiej przy przechodzeniu na osiadły tryb życia) and began the process of forced sedentarization of Polish Roma, as part of the process of ‘Roma productivization: work for the common good was meant to include all citizens’: <https://www.romarchive.eu/en/roma-civil-rights-movement/roma-movement-poland/>

⁶⁵ A. Giza-Poleszczuk, J. Poleszczuk, *Cyganie i Polacy w Mławie – konflikt etniczny czy społeczny?* [w:] A. Jasińska-Kania, (red.): *Trudne sąsiedztwa, z socjologii konfliktów narodowościowych*, Warszawa 2001.

⁶⁶ Report on the implementation of the Roma Programme for 2015 available at: <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/romowie/program-integracji-spol/program-integracji-spol/9928,Sprawozdanie-z-realizacji-Programu-integracji-spolecznosci-romskiej-w-Polsce-na-.html>

⁶⁷ In the report on the implementation of the Programme in 2015, the indicator is the number of Roma who were renovated or granted new housing, the value of the indicator was 514 people : <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/romowie/program-integracji-spol/program-integracji-spol/9928,Sprawozdanie-z-realizacji-Programu-integracji-spolecznosci-romskiej-w-Polsce-na-.html> page.30

⁶⁸ *Idem*.

planned for about 730,000 EUR (2,861,379 PLN) in 2017, and 41 projects for about 830,000 EUR (3,291,070 PLN) in 2018.⁶⁹

Such activities did improve the living conditions for a number of Roma families (for example in case of Roma community in Ochotnica Górna where housing issues have been addressed; some 16 families (about 70 people) benefited from both Programmes (Roma Programme 2004-2013, Roma Programme 2014-2020)).⁷⁰

All of these interventions are welcomed and, in fact, demanded by Roma beneficiaries. However, this kind of support continues the approach and practise set up during implementation of the first Roma Programme in this area. When assessing it, the Supreme Audit Office concluded that it was "rather an element of social and material support for the Roma community", but not a tool of social integration. Similarly worrying, has been the absence of local Roma integration strategies⁷¹ that would comprehensively address the resolution of Roma problems.⁷² In some cases, however, the local authorities aimed at buying a real estate outside of the commune's territory that is using the Programme's funds to *de facto* expel Roma families from the local community, as in the case of Roma families from Limanowa commune, still in progress, not closed.⁷³

There are legal issues connected with the improvements to be made in the Roma occupied housing that are owned by the municipalities (social housing). Therefore, Roma raise concerns that the local authorities should invest their own resources for these purposes instead of applying for Roma Programme's funds, while officials claim that Roma families do not properly care about newly renovated apartments.

The conclusion of the Supreme Audit Office Report,⁷⁴ especially, the part related to Malopolska region, still holds its value today as none of the audited communes launched local comprehensive integration strategies or approached it in a systemic and long-term perspective. In reality, some local authorities utilised the Roma Programme's housing priority, however, they were undertaking responses on *ad hoc* basis and such approach did not generate tangible outcomes nor mobilised Roma to become active partners in all activities realized within the Roma Programme.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ No official Ministry of Interior Affairs and Administration (MSWIA) reports available for the period 2016-2018. Own calculations of the *Jaw Dikh Foundation* based on data published by the Ministry of Interior.

⁷⁰ For more information see the NIK report from 2017, available at: <https://www.nik.gov.pl/plik/id,13984,vp,16428.pdf>

⁷¹ There is possibility in Roma Programme to address the solutions by one project for example to write application for running a nursery. But also, it is expected from local government, to write a local strategy for Roma community to address for example education, health and housing and plan activities and budget for maximum 3 years.

⁷² NIK report from 2017, available at: <https://www.nik.gov.pl/plik/id,13984,vp,16428.pdf>

⁷³ In 2015, the city of Limanowa bought two houses for the needs of two Roma families in two other municipalities. The authorities of the Limanowa Commune claimed that, taking into account the amounts of subsidies received under the 2014-2020 Roma Programme, there was no possibility of improving housing conditions in this area, including construction or purchase of residential buildings. One family refused to move to a new place, after the Mayor of that new commune issued a ban on the settlement in the new property.⁷³ At the request of the Commissioner for Human Rights and the Governor of Małopolska, the Provincial Administrative Court in Cracow reasonably cancelled this decision. The case is still not resolved and opinions on it are divided. According to the Commissioner for Human Rights, funds from the 2014-2020 Roma Programme should serve the Roma, that new commune issued a ban on the settlement in the new property. At the request of the Commissioner for Human Rights and the Governor of Małopolska, the Provincial Administrative Court in Cracow reasonably cancelled this decision. The case is still not resolved and opinions on it are divided.

⁷⁴ NIK report from 2017 available at: <https://www.nik.gov.pl/plik/id,13984,vp,16428.pdf>

⁷⁵ *Idem*.

The case of Romanian Roma in Wrocław (described in I report CMR),⁷⁶ was eventually, approached differently: the “Pilot Programme for Romanian Roma Residents of Wrocław”⁷⁷ was launched as a joint effort of the city and Roma and civil organisations. It enabled Romanian Roma families to move to apartments rented by the Peace Foundation in Wrocław. The city authorities and the Roma themselves share the costs of their maintenance. In fact, Romanian Roma received comprehensive support: at the level of health care, enrolment of children in schools or provision of various types of documentation related to work and stay in Poland.⁷⁸

Fight against discrimination, residential segregation and other forms of antigypsyism in housing

In southern part of Poland, where Roma continue to live in rural areas, improvement in housing conditions takes place in segregated setting. Neither the previous, nor the current Roma Programme alter this situation. Migration to the cities or abroad remains an opportunity undertaken by many. For other urbanised Roma groups, the situation is different as some families are dispersed among non-Roma or clustered together in particular streets. They suffer from visibility and stigma associated with their identity (intolerance) and eventually, chose also to migrate abroad.

Taking into account the Roma beneficiaries, the first Roma Programme was more flexible in terms of what funding for this priority area could be used (more often the implementers of housing projects were Roma non-governmental organizations, there was no specific requirement for own contribution). The current Roma Programme is more rigorous in this respect, and therefore rather eliminates Roma entities that would like to implement construction projects of housing. In fact, the 10 per cent own contribution, required for building investments, effectively excludes from the process the Roma organisations, but also the mainstream civil society organisations. NGOs do not have the competence, structure and own resources to properly perform such tasks.⁷⁹ However, in the light of the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, Roma are guilty of “passive attitude” in this regard.⁸⁰ The government rather sets conditions in a way that de facto exclude Roma NGOs.

Roma are dependent on what municipalities, local governments are able to offer, or willing to apply for a Roma Programme’s funding in housing priority. While some local authorities express willingness to access Roma Programme’s funding and implement the projects in this area, others continue to object to or seek ways to push out Roma families from their territories (as in cases of Lacko and Limanowa communes).⁸¹ In addition, non-Roma

⁷⁶ Roma Civil Monitor first report on Poland, available at: <https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-1-poland-2017-eprint-fin-4.pdf>, page.16

⁷⁷ More information at: <http://wroclaw.wyborcza.pl/wroclaw/7,35771,23199391,jak-wroclaw-pomaga-romom-rozmowa.html>

⁷⁸ More information at: <http://wroclaw.wyborcza.pl/wroclaw/7,35771,23199391,jak-wroclaw-pomaga-romom-rozmowa.html>

⁷⁹ Interviews with Roma leaders, activists.

⁸⁰ MSWIA in response to Dezyderat No. 6 of the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnicity of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on professional activation of Roma under the Roma Community Integration Programme for 2014-2020, adopted at the meeting on March 21, 2018. Available at: [http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/opinie8.nsf/nazwa/MNE_20180426_d6/\\$file/MNE_20180426_d6.pdf](http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/opinie8.nsf/nazwa/MNE_20180426_d6/$file/MNE_20180426_d6.pdf)

⁸¹ Media reports on the housing situation of the Roma in Limanowa and Maszkowice available at: <http://sadeczanin.info/gospodarka/zadyma-o-nowy-dom-dla-romow-i-straszenie-prokuratorem>; <https://sadeczanin.info/wiadomosci/zamiast-osady-w-maszkowicach-cyganie-i-mieszkancy-lacka-razem-w-nowym-bloku>

neighbours often protest against settling Roma families in their communities.⁸² As a result, some percentage of the funds available for housing under the current Roma Programme were not used (for example, only 56 per cent of funds were spent for this priority in Małopolska voivodship in 2016).⁸³

The improvement of housing conditions concerns mostly existing premises of particular families and eventually infrastructure that impacts neighbourhoods. It rarely entails regeneration of entire Roma neighbourhoods (for example, Roma community in Ochotnica where several blocks of flats were constructed, and nearly entire community transferred there). More often, however, local authorities and local mainstream community would like to see “problematic” Roma families or entire Roma community relocated to another commune (Maszkowice⁸⁴ or Limanowa⁸⁵).

⁸² Media reports about protests against Roma residents:
<http://krakow.wyborcza.pl/krakow/1,44425,20711562,mieszkancy-tymbarku-nie-chca-romskiej-rodziny-z-koszar.html>

⁸³In 2016 in Małopolska region only 56 per cent of housing resources have been used:
<https://www.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/1025691,sejmowa-komisja-samorzady-nie-wykorzystaly-dotacji-na-integracje-romow.html> ; <https://limanowa.in/aktualnosci/gorzkie-slowa-o-programie-integracji-romach-i-osiedlu-w-koszarach-quot-oni-tam-zyja-jak-zwierzeta-quot/35952>

⁸⁴ Media reports on the situation of the Roma in Maszkowice available at:
<https://sadeczanin.info/gospodarka/juz-koniec-romskiego-osiedla-w-maszkowicach-osada-do-egzekucji-zdjecia>

⁸⁵ Media reports on the situation of the Roma in Limanowa available at:
<https://www.rpo.gov.pl/pl/content/rpo-broni-romow-z-limanowej-przed-eksmisja>

IMPACT OF HEALTH CARE POLICIES ON ROMA

Ensuring equal access to public health care services

Only 3 per cent of total funds available under the current 2014-2020 Roma Programme were allocated to this priority field every year, between 2015-2018.^{86, 87} This has been far too little to build on some positive developments supported in the previous Roma Programme or ensure tangible improvements as the results of activities under this Programme. In general, the current Programme continues and repeats the activities started and implemented in the previous Roma Programme in the area of health.

To date, most of these funds have been directed to Roma in Małopolska and Śląsk regions, where most deprived communities live and were used for prevention, including examination or check-ups and immunization. For example, in 2015, 25 projects were carried out (of a total budget of about 85,000 EUR) in both regions.⁸⁸ In the subsequent years, the amount of funds used in this priority area were slightly increased but the number of supported measures decreased; for example, 22 projects with a total budget of 86,000 EUR were carried out in 2017 and 20 project supported with a total budget of 95,000 EUR in 2018.⁸⁹ The projects were implemented by ten local governments and 11 non-governmental organisations, including eight Roma organisations.

These projects included rehabilitation stays for seniors, periodic examinations, organisation of the so-called "white days" (free access to specialists, examination and vaccinations), examining children and youth in the areas of ophthalmology, laryngology, and dentistry, meetings and preventive examinations in the fields of gynaecology, pregnancy, and vaccinations for infants and children. In 2015 the number of people covered by these preventive examinations, including vaccinations under the Roma Programme, amounted to 1,604 people.⁹⁰

In this priority area civil society organisations, including Roma ones, have carried out additional tasks, as for example, equipping Roma families, especially seniors, with medicines.⁹¹

As a part of the current Roma Programme (as well as, with the previous one) Poland participated in the meeting of the Council of Europe (CoE) programme ROMED which provided training to Roma health mediators with a medical or social welfare professional background – so-called "environmental nurses", whose responsibility is to monitor the Roma families' health, provide advice and help, provide them with hygiene and basic medical supplies, and guide them to outpatient departments for specific examinations and

⁸⁶ The same level of financing for health projects took place in the Roma Programme 2004-2013, for more information see: <https://rownosc.info/media/uploads/raport-z-badania-ewaluacyjnego-programu-na-rzecz-spolecznosci-romskiej-w-polsce.pdf>

⁸⁷ Report on the implementation of the Roma Programme for 2015, available at: <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/romowie/program-integracji-spol/program-integracji-spol/9928,Sprawozdanie-z-realizacji-Programu-integracji-spolecznosci-romskiej-w-Polsce-na-.html> and own calculation of *Jaw Dikh Foundation* regarding the year 2016-2018.

⁸⁸ Report on the implementation of the Roma Programme for 2015, available at: <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/romowie/program-integracji-spol/program-integracji-spol/9928,Sprawozdanie-z-realizacji-Programu-integracji-spolecznosci-romskiej-w-Polsce-na-.html>

⁸⁹ No official MSWIA reports available for the period 2016-2018. Own calculations of the *Jaw Dikh Foundation* based on data published on the pages of the Ministry of Interior

⁹⁰ Report on the implementation of the Roma Programme for 2015, available at: <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/romowie/program-integracji-spol/program-integracji-spol/9928,Sprawozdanie-z-realizacji-Programu-integracji-spolecznosci-romskiej-w-Polsce-na-.html>

⁹¹ For example: Association of Roma in Krakow, Małopolska Association of Roma Jamaro.

visits. However, contrary to the CoE's ROMED programme's aim to support Roma's participation, there has been only one "environmental nurse" of Roma origin in Poland, the rest are non-Roma nurses.⁹²

Small percentage of the Roma Programme's funds dedicated to this priority area raises obvious questions: why it is so low if it is a priority area. Part of the answer is the provision of the healthcare services as part of the mainstream policy for the general public. In principle and according to the laws everyone has access and entitlements to health cares and health services,⁹³ but in practise this is most costly and troubling area for everyone and even more for disadvantaged Roma families. As a consequence, when families or local authorities have to decide what to choose as most urgent and needy to be solved, priorities in fields of education, housing and employment prevail over the healthcare. This logic is also driven by the idea that improvement in education or housing condition will positively impact on health status or lifestyles (low level of education determines also unhealthy habits or lifestyles).⁹⁴

Fight against discrimination and antigypsyism in health care

There have been valuable projects realised under the current 2014-2020 Roma Programme that are appreciated by Roma beneficiaries. However, health care projects rarely address antigypsyism in accessing and use of medical services.

The 2014-2020 Roma Programme has no direct references to empower Roma women or to deal with their specific problems. It contains only the statement that particular attention should be paid to the participation of Roma women in activities under planning. Despite a lack of exact data on this, by the authors' experience, it is usually Roma women who initiate and implement projects in the field of health.

According to the information provided by Roma organisations, the situation of the senior members in the Roma communities is becoming more difficult. As part of the Programme, purchase of medicines and medical supplies for seniors has been subsidised, for example within activities of Roma organisations from Kraków (*Sawore Integration Association*) or Andrychów (*Jamario Association*). However, the limited number and scope of these projects does not match needs, which are bigger as Roma leaders state. Romani leaders say that income and pensions are very low and health problems are serious. Moreover, these initiatives continue to face a lack of funding as the public authorities argue that Roma have the same access to the health system as anyone else and thus additional support is not necessary.⁹⁵ It is true that, according to the law, Roma have the same access to the health care system as any other. But, as the Roma argue, the aim of the health field under the Roma Programme is to change the health situation of Roma by increasing the availability of medical services and prevention. With this option, they want to use it in accordance with current needs that concern Roma seniors.

Finally, there are no significant initiatives in preventing and combating the use and spreading of drugs despite the fact that drug problems in marginalised Roma communities

⁹² In Nowy Sącz, Maszkowice, Koszary, Limanowa.

⁹³ The conditions and scope of providing benefits are specified in the Act: Compulsory health insurance assumes that everyone who is subject to the health insurance obligation (e.g. employees, persons running business, unemployed persons, pensioners) as well as a family member of the insured. Everyone has the right to benefits from the moment of reporting health insurance (regardless of whether he or she pays the premium), see for example, Art. 3 ust. 1 i art. 66 ust. 1 ustawy z dnia 27 sierpnia 2004 r. o świadczeniach opieki zdrowotnej finansowanych ze środków publicznych (Dz. U. z 2016 r. poz. 1793, z późn. zm).

⁹⁴ It is indicative that Roma themselves did not rise up the issue of health during the visits of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in a number of Roma villages or neighbourhoods, for more see: 2015 Report of the Supreme Audit Office on the protection of the rights of the Roma minority, available at: <https://www.nik.gov.pl/plik/id,13073,vp,15485.pdf>

⁹⁵ Interview with Roma leader from Małopolska.

are often unofficially signalled by Roma activists. No action is taken to investigate this problem and to counteract it. Sexual education is taught at schools in Poland as part of the so-called *Education for life in the family*. However, the NGOs in Poland criticise that this education has nothing to do with reliable sexual education.⁹⁶ This is so because it lacks the sensitivity of the issues on health literacy, including reproductive health. Roma organisations are not part of the civil society actors in planning and implementing these measures.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Article about the Ponton Sexual Education Group available at:
<https://www.newsweek.pl/polska/spoleczenstwo/edukacja-seksualna-w-szkole-ponton-alarmuje-o-niewiedzy/0ewhdgc>

⁹⁷ Due to the fact that sex and related issues for a rather traditional Roma community in Poland are still a taboo.

EDUCATION

Improving access to quality preschool education and care

Same as in the previous one, the education is a priority in the 2014-2020 Roma Programme. Around 65 per cent of the total funds for the Roma Programme are allocated to this policy area.⁹⁸ In 2015, for example, its implementation included 258 tasks with a total budget of approximately 1,750,000 EUR.⁹⁹ Most of the tasks were implemented in the voivodships of Małopolska, Dolny Śląsk, Zachodniopomorskie and Śląsk. The tasks were carried out by 60 local governments and 62 non-governmental organisations, including 42 Roma organisations. As result of these initiatives, according to the MSWIA, the number of Roma students equipped with school kits amounted to 2,455 children in 2015¹⁰⁰. In addition, 2,360 students benefited from additional tasks aimed at maintaining ethnic identity and supporting the education of these pupils (also funded by the educational subsidy).

The 2014-2020 Roma Programme within this education priority pays attention to early childhood and pre-school education and allows to support it as costs borne by parents to ensure it are relatively high.¹⁰¹ From 1 September 2017 pre-school education became obligatory and free of charge for children aged 6,¹⁰² which should improve the educational opportunities of Roma students. From the information provided by the Education Superintendent of the Małopolskie Voivodship in Krakow, it appears that the number of children using pre-school education is increasing in Małopolska: in 2014 there were 81 children, in 2016, 91 children and in 2018 already 95 children.¹⁰³ In the areas where there are no kindergartens or access to them it is somehow difficult (for example, Roma live in remote settlements), the preschool education is provided by various types of community centres. This type of establishments is run mostly by Roma associations, municipalities and cities or other entities, like churches.¹⁰⁴ In addition, 174 children benefited from subsidies¹⁰⁵ for kindergartens as part of the Roma Programme.¹⁰⁶ In the subsequent years 20016-2018,¹⁰⁷ the amount of funds dedicated to and the number of tasks realised were similar to those in 2015.

Thanks to the implementation of the Roma Programme (and financing kindergartens, day-care centres, scholarships at every level of education, etc.) and the work of Roma school

⁹⁸ Almost the same level of financing for education projects: 64 per cent took place in the Roma Programme 2004-2013, available at: <https://rownosc.info/media/uploads/raport-z-badania-ewaluacyjnego-programu-na-rzecz-spolecznosci-romskiej-w-polsce.pdf>

⁹⁹ Report on the implementation of the Roma Programme for 2015, available at : <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/r7omowie/program-integracji-spol/program-integracji-spol/9928,Sprawozdanie-z-realizacji-Programu-integracji-spolecznosci-romskiej-w-Polsce-na-.html>

¹⁰⁰ *Idem*.

¹⁰¹ The cost of maintaining a child in a state kindergarten is from PLN 320 including meal costs (about 80 EUR). Unfortunately, places in these kindergartens are less than willing and private pre-schools are very expensive.

¹⁰² Act on the Education System available at: <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU19910950425/U/D19910425Lj.pdf>

¹⁰³ Letter from the Małopolskie Kuratorium Oświaty SEPZ-I.1331.105.2018 DZ date: 22.11.2018 r.

¹⁰⁴ In these places, Roma and non-Roma children in all age ranges receive comprehensive educational assistance.

¹⁰⁵ The aim of the subsidies is to make kindergarten free of charge for Roma (tuition and meals)

¹⁰⁶ *Idem*.

¹⁰⁷ No official MSWIA reports available for the period 2016-2018. Own calculations of the *Jaw Dikh Foundation* based on data published on the pages of the Ministry of Interior.

assistants and supporting teachers, the attendance of Roma students has increased, from the level of 84 per cent in 2013 to 93 per cent in 2015.¹⁰⁸ This is also reflected in the school results of children and adolescents, information from Roma assistants and Roma leaders show that the systematic use of day care centres improves their grades and passing of exams. For example, in an integration and educational day-care centre Čavengry in Koszary,¹⁰⁹ a specialised pedagogical staff with a Roma assistant help a group of 24 children learn Polish, English, mathematics, computer science and other school subjects. There is a computer lab working at a day-care centre. There is a music and dance club in the dayroom. In addition, several adults participate in the Polish language classes. The day-care centres are also spaces of reintegration of Roma children who have returned from migration, for example from Great Britain. After a longer stay in England, children have problems with Polish language, speaking good English and Romani, they make up for language and programme differences in these educational institutions.¹¹⁰

Both changes in the law (since 2013 the Roma school assistants are authorized to participate in a child diagnosis or mechanism allowing for a child re-diagnosing)¹¹¹ as well as in practice (day centres,¹¹² Roma school assistants, supporting teachers) helped to reduce the number of Roma children in special education institutions. In 2013, about 17 per cent of Roma children were following special education programmes, whereas in 2015 the Ministry of Interior and Administration reported that there were 280 Roma students in special schools, what constitutes 6.9 per cent of all Roma students attending school.¹¹³ Much can be assigned to the work of Roma school assistants and supporting teachers. Many Roma organisations were engaged in providing trainings for them, for example: in Wrocław by the Association of Roma Assistants in Poland; the Roma Association in Poland in Oświęcim;¹¹⁴ Central Roma Council in Warsaw in cooperation with the University of Social Sciences and Humanities;¹¹⁵ in Krakow by the Villa Decius Association;¹¹⁶ and lately by Jamaro Association in Andrychów.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁸ Report on the implementation of the Roma Programme for 2015 available at: <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/romowie/program-integracji-spol/program-integracji-spol/9928,Sprawozdanie-z-realizacji-Programu-integracji-spoleczności-romskiej-w-Polsce-na-.html>

¹⁰⁹ More about day-care centre Čavengry in Koszary available at: <http://www.ziemialimanowska.pl/pl/860/14392/swietlica-cavengry-w-koszarach.html>

¹¹⁰ Interview with Roma leaders and activists, Roma assistance.

¹¹¹ Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 30 April 2013 on the rules for the provision and organization of psychological and pedagogical assistance in public kindergartens, schools and facilities. U. of 7.05.2013, item 532).

¹¹² In 2015, 67 per cent Roma children were attending day centres, see: <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/romowie/program-integracji-spol/program-integracji-spol/9928,Sprawozdanie-z-realizacji-Programu-integracji-spoleczności-romskiej-w-Polsce-na-.html>

¹¹³ Report on the implementation of the Roma Programme for 2015, available at: <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/romowie/program-integracji-spol/program-integracji-spol/9928,Sprawozdanie-z-realizacji-Programu-integracji-spoleczności-romskiej-w-Polsce-na-.html>

¹¹⁴ Information about the training of Roma education assistants and support teachers, available at : <http://www.stowarzyszenie.romowie.net/index.php/czytnik-rocznicy-miesiaca/items/Warsztaty-dziennikarskie-51.html>

¹¹⁵ Information about the training of Roma education assistants and support teachers available at: <https://www.swps.pl/artykuly-archiwalne/165-archiwum-konferencji-wprawa/2450-konferencji-romowie-w-szkole>

¹¹⁶ <https://www.nck.pl/projekty-kulturalne/projekty/dialog/aktualnosci/szkolenia-dla-nauczycieli-i-asystentow-pracujacych-z-dziecmi-z-mniejszosci-romskiej>

¹¹⁷ <http://www.romowie.com/old/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1557>

Improving quality of education until the end of compulsory schooling

There are currently about 50 integration day-care centres for Roma children funded by 2014-2020 Roma Programme,¹¹⁸ where children can do homework after school lessons with the help of a teacher and participate in other activities, like learning foreign languages, playing computer games, taking part in organised summer camps and trips, integrating with non-Roma peers, etc. In addition, day care centres cooperate with Roma assistants and supporting teachers, very often additionally hiring them for this work.¹¹⁹

The 2014-2020 Roma Programme aims at improving the quality of education and at increasing the level of children's educational achievements. Especially the second goal still remains a challenge as the level of progress reached and the percentage of those who successfully end compulsory education and continue with higher education is far from satisfactory – despite all the extensive and affirmative efforts in this area. Some 82 per cent of all Roma children attending schools took advantage of such support to date, which includes scholarships schemes, school supplies, teaching aids, gym clothes and cleaning products, lunches at school, etc.

Since 2005, the Scholarship competition for Roma students particularly talented has also been offered as part of the Roma Programme.¹²⁰ The scholarship is for Roma students of primary schools who are particularly active and achieve good results in various fields, for example singing, dancing, music, playing an instrument, fine arts or humanities. The project has been carried out for many years by the Roma organisation Advisory and Information Center for Roma in Poland (*Centrum Doradztwa i Informacji dla Romów w Polsce*) from Pabianice.¹²¹ On average, about 25 pupils per year are awarded scholarships.¹²² What is very interesting in this competition, is that after selecting the finalists of this competition, pupils and their parents are invited to Lodz for a few days, where they present their talents during the gala concert. It is an opportunity to present the pupils on the big stage, and to meet other Roma scholarship recipients.

Support of secondary and higher education particularly for professions with high labour market demand

Available data indicates that there were only 13 Roma persons with completed higher education in 2002,¹²³ and this number has increased up to 272 (or 2 per cent) in 2011.¹²⁴ In the same year of 2011, 934 or 7 per cent of Roma had completed secondary

¹¹⁸ For example, in Kraków, Nowy Sącz, Nowy Targ, Tarnów, Limanowa, Koszary, Ochotnica Dolna, Wadowice, Andrychów, Warszawa, Lublin, Chełm, Nowa Sól, Wrocław, Głogów, Kamienna Góra, Brzeg, Strzelce Opolskie, Bydgoszcz, Szczecinek, Poznań, Jasło, Bytom, Gliwice, Zabrze etc.

¹¹⁹ Roma education assistant became an official profession in Poland in 2004. For almost 10 years, the number of Roma employed education assistants has remained at the level of around 100 people nationwide. In 2015, there were 106 assistants working in Poland. The work of assistants and teachers is highly appreciated. What is more, the Roma employed in this way are role model for young people, they are breaking the stereotypes and fighting prejudices against the Roma.

¹²⁰ More about scholarship system at: <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/romowie/programy-stypendialne-d/programy-stypendialne-m/stypendia-dla-uczniow-r/8036,Nowa-edycja-konkursu-stypendialnego-dla-uczniow-romskich-szczegolnie-uzdolnionyc.html>

¹²¹ Website of the Advisory and Information Centre for Roma in Poland: <http://cdirp.pl/>

¹²² More information at: <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/romowie/programy-stypendialne-d>

¹²³ National Census of 2011 available at: <https://stat.gov.pl/spisy-powszechne/narodowe-spisy-powszechne/narodowy-spis-powszechny-2002/wyniki-narodowego-spisu-powszechnego-2002-narodowosci-oraz-jezyka/>

¹²⁴ <https://rm.coe.int/16806a9332>

education,¹²⁵ comparing to 247 persons in 2002.¹²⁶ This significant increase can be associated with the impact of the first Roma Programme and, especially, scholarship schemes for Roma in higher and secondary education.¹²⁷ The 2014-2020 Roma Programme continues with these scholarships or support schemes.

Motivational scholarships for high school students are intended for those students who, in accordance with the regulations, have excellent grades, very high attendance at school, take part in competitions, or have sports or artistic achievements.¹²⁸ An additional advantage is the work for the Roma community. The positive trend is that the number of high school students obtaining the scholarship is rising. For example, in 2015, 51 students were granted, in 2016, 57, and in 2017, already 58 students.¹²⁹

The scholarships for Roma students at Universities has been part of both the previous and the current Roma Programme. Between 2004 and 2017, altogether around 736 Roma university students were supported;¹³⁰ an average of 52 students receive the scholarships annually.¹³¹ The highest number of Roma students at higher education were supported in 2009 – 80 Roma students. In the period of the current Programme 2014-2017, approximately 63 per cent of supported persons were full-time students, while almost 37 per cent were part-time students. Interestingly, 60-70 per cent of the supported students belonged to the *Bergitka* Roma group, the rest were *Polska Roma*, *Sinti* and others.¹³² Contrary to some general views of Roma and their culture among the beneficiaries of scholarships schemes 60-70 per cent were girls.^{133,134} Whereas in the previous Roma Programme, the most-chosen field of study was pedagogy, in the current Roma Programme, their choices are more diversified and Roma students study political science, Polish philology, psychology, journalism, biology, law, art, economy and computer science.¹³⁵

Many of the Roma leaders, currently representing the Roma communities or implementing projects from the Roma Programme, are in fact alumnae of these scholarships; they emerge as the minority's future leaders and partners for the central and local authorities. It should be also underlined here that scholarship schemes for secondary and higher education students does not include mentoring or tutoring elements. It does, however, require volunteering or work for the Roma community as one of the conditions to be granted the scholarship. There is no mechanism to monitor the career paths of young Roma supported by the governmental Programme. Moreover, there are no initiatives

¹²⁵ *Idem*.

¹²⁶ Roma Programme 2014-2020 available at: <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/romowie/program-na-rzecz-spole/program-na-rzecz-spole/tresc-programu-na-rzecz/6670,Tresc-Programu.html>

¹²⁷ In Poland, the scholarship programme for university students has been run continuously since 2004 by the Polish Roma Union with headquarters in Szczecinek.

¹²⁸ Rules for granting motivational scholarships of the Minister of Interior and Administration for students of Roma origin studying at upper-secondary schools, see: <http://www.romowie.com/old/stypendia2/regulamin.pdf>

¹²⁹ Information on scholarships on the website of the Union of Polish Roma available at: <http://www.romowie.com/old/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=160&page=2>

¹³⁰ Information from Polish Roma Union with headquarters in Szczecinek.

¹³¹ *Idem*.

¹³² *Idem*.

¹³³ *Idem*.

¹³⁴ Even higher number of Roma women are among those who work as Roma school assistants – 71 per cent of them are Roma women. Source: Justyna Matkowska, "Situation and ethnic identity of women of Roma origin" in *Romano Atmo* nr 5/2016 (65).

¹³⁵ Interview with Roma leaders and activists, Roma assistance.

integrating the scholarship community of young Roma to exchange experiences and work together for the Roma.

Fight against discrimination, segregation and other forms of antigypsyism in education

Even though the issue of “Roma schools” or systemic segregation in education seemingly belongs to the past,¹³⁶ the problem of the so-called “Roma classes” persists as demonstrates the case from Poznań, where a separate class for Romanian Roma was created for year 2015-2016. The Commissionaire for Human Rights intervened in that case and the Poznań authorities explained that it was a temporal solution aimed at including a group of Romanian Roma students into the system of general education.¹³⁷ The Commissionaire for Human Rights decided to call upon the Ministry of Education to investigate the matter. According to the information provided by the City of Poznań, the Roma class that had operated for two years is closed, and currently Romani children who have studied in this class continue their education in general classes.¹³⁸

Despite success in desegregation, the antigypsyism in schools remain a problem, yet often not systematically monitored. Roma parents point out that more needs to be done in order to overcome teacher’s biases and prejudices or antigypsyism that still continues to largely impact the outcomes of the education process. As concluded by one of the Roma assistants: *“Nasty behaviour of a Roma and non-Roma child ends with a more lenient punishment for a non-Roma child [...] teachers belittle or not react at all to the Roma child reporting that he is being stigmatized, being called: a black man, a nigger, a thief.”*¹³⁹ Another typical example of antigypsyism was what happened to one of the Roma families in Warsaw, as described in an newspaper interview with an expert on the Roma community: *“Employees from the district Social Welfare Centre became interested in their [family’s] situation and it turned out that the children really wanted to go to school. Unfortunately, the parents of the [non-Roma] students of this school did not agree. They organised a meeting and forced the director not to accept the Roma children to the class their children attend”*.¹⁴⁰ The cases illustrate that the phenomenon of antigypsyism is constantly present in Polish society and the Roma Programme does not directly address it.

Since 2007, a very interesting project aimed at fighting antigypsyism within the educational tasks of the Roma Programme has been implemented in Zabrze.¹⁴¹ Roma football team was created with 30 older and younger. The objectives of the activity were to counteract the marginalisation of Roma youth, to facilitate the integration of Roma and non-Roma youth, to learn to cooperate in a group, respect for other, and to enable young people from dysfunctional families to participate more fully in the social life of the city or

¹³⁶ In the 1990s, the so-called “Roma classes” were introduced in the whole country, the aim was to adapt Roma children to Polish schools. In the school year 1994/1995 there were 25 of them, and 430 children were studying in such classes. In grades I-III, the youngest children were helped to overcome educational and adaptive barriers and were prepared for learning in older classes, in an integrated system. At the beginning of 2000, there were a dozen or so Roma classes (seven in the Małopolskie Voivodship). Children and youth of various ages, at various levels of advancement (about 200 students) studied there. Ultimately, by 2010, with the participation of the Committee for Human Rights and Roma leaders, all previously operating “Roma classes” were systematically abolished.

¹³⁷ Letter: XI.037.8.2017.MS December 4, 2017 from the Office of the Ombudsman to the chairman of the Jaw Dikh Art Foundation.

¹³⁸ Letter from the Municipality of Poznań ASS-XII.8133.2.6.2018 date: 27.07.2018.

¹³⁹ Interview with Roma Assistant from Małopolska.

¹⁴⁰ An interview about the Roma community in Warsaw available at: <https://pl.aleteia.org/2017/03/24/fantastycznie-miec-cygana-za-sasiada-co-jest-mitem-a-co-prawda-o-romach/>

¹⁴¹ Project description “Football Team FC Roma” at: <http://www.mopr.zabrze.pl/fc-roma.html?page=2>

"go beyond" the district in which they live. The FC Roma football helps to break stereotypes: *"For me, the whole undertaking is about an attempt to change the stereotypes concerning the Roma minority. After all, Roma are still exposed to social exclusion. The point is that they want to do something themselves, not what they impose. It seems to me that this is the case here. Maybe in the future it will be possible to make the acquired skills help them find a place,"* says Piotr Paczulla from the Municipal Family Assistance Centre in Zabrze, who coordinates the implementation of the "Football Team FC Roma" project.¹⁴²

¹⁴² Media information about the club's activities at:
<http://katowice.wyborcza.pl/katowice/7,35055,24004477,jestem-romem-kocham-kiwac-sie-na-boisku.html>

RECOMMENDATIONS

For all policy fields

Municipalities and towns in which Roma live should benefit from the Roma Programme by planning comprehensive activities from several areas of support. Local strategies should be developed and implemented in partnership with Roma organisations.

Employment

For the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, coordinator of the state policy towards ethnic and national minorities:

- Future projects in this area need to focus, especially, on transition from vocational and tertiary education to job market, and to dedicate more attention and resources to the learning outcomes of Romani students in terms of skills and competencies.
- Fighting against antigypsyism practices and ensuring equal considerations for the gender aspects in the field of activation projects should be taken into account.
- Funds allocated in the employment area should be increased in the Roma Programme Future initiatives intended to address the unemployment rate among Roma need to focus on the transition from vocational and tertiary education to the job market. In reaching tangible outcomes, the struggle against antigypsyism has to be coupled with stronger mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation.
- Roma and their organisations should be involved in the committees that make decisions on submitting an application for the Roma Programme.
- Combating antigypsyism needs to be coupled with serious improvements of activation programmes. The latter need to be well defined and focused on building and enlarging human and social capital as well as individual skills and competencies. Its basis remains quality education and educational achievements, the foundation of good start and a tool in overcoming antigypsyism.

Housing and essential public services

For the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, coordinator of the state policy towards ethnic and national minorities:

- Support in this area should be focused more on the families who are the neediest what concern their housing conditions (for example, live in settlements lacking basic amenities).
- Roma and their organisations should be involved in the committees that make decisions on submitting an application for the Roma Programme.
- Housing remains one of the most sensitive issue (because of funds it requires) in local context that can generate or reinforce existing interethnic conflicts as well as intra-ethnic tensions. The success of measures to improve housing conditions depends on cooperation of local authorities with Roma community, and to ensure that housing-education-employment measures are planned and implemented simultaneously, but most profoundly on the authorities' treating Roma as partners. Certainly, transparency and clear criteria for providing housing support can only help to build up such a meaningful partnership.
- The issue of antigypsyism consideration should be taken into account.

Impact of health care policies on Roma

For the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, coordinator of the state policy towards ethnic and national minorities:

- Local Roma NGOs are best informed about the needs (e. g. vulnerable situation elderly Roma) of the Roma communities for which they work, which is why the Roma have confidence in them and should be the main contractors of tasks aimed at improving health in strict cooperation with doctors and nurses.
- Roma and their organisations should be involved in the committees that make decisions on submitting an application for the Roma Programme.
- In general, since Roma community health situation is linked to the living conditions, employment and the level of education, future action would require interventions highlighting these links in a comprehensive approach policy. Obviously, more funds shall be dedicated to support interventions in this area to ensure concrete and tangible outcomes in the future. This should include also health care professional's anti-discrimination trainings. The issue of antigypsyism and gender sensibility should be taken into account.

Education

For the Ministry of Education:

- It is necessary to put more emphasis on pre-school education of Roma children. Awareness-raising, antidiscrimination and antigypsyism activities should be intensified and continued.
- Roma and their organisations should be involved in the committees that make decisions on submitting an application for the Roma Programme.
- The work of Roma assistants and Roma teachers should be continued and supported by educational institutions.
- There is a need for regular meetings among students, Roma leaders, and Roma education assistants, this is very often articulated by Roma activists.
- Roma children should be a priority in the next Roma Programme after 2020.
- The issue of antigypsyism and gender consideration should be taken into account.

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