

Citizens' Summary: Roma Inclusion Study

Promoting Roma Inclusion under the EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014

BACKGROUND

The Roma are Europe's largest minority, totalling 10-12 million people, of which most are EU citizens. Despite efforts to improve the integration of Roma, many are still facing rising levels of impoverishment, social exclusion and discrimination. The recent economic crisis has further aggravated their situation.

Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway have made the social and economic inclusion of Roma one of the priorities of EEA & Norway Grants for the current funding period (2009-2014). In the countries where there are sizeable Roma minorities – Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia – Roma were included as a target group in relevant programmes. For Bulgaria and Romania, national targets were set. In other beneficiary countries the Roma concern was highlighted in specific programmes.

The current Roma-relevant programmes were assessed in the light of recommendations from an earlier [‘Study on Roma Inclusion under EEA and Norway Grants’](#) prepared for the FMO in 2013. The purpose of this current study was to improve the ways in which progress in Roma inclusion is captured, in current programmes financed by the EEA and Norway Grants.

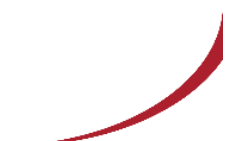
The study examined 47 EEA and Norway Grants programmes relevant for Roma inclusion in 12 beneficiary countries. Of those, 27 programmes in the five focus countries – Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia – were selected for further in-depth analysis.

The selected programmes address Roma inclusion through multiple areas of support. These include civil society, children and youth at risk, correctional services, cultural heritage and contemporary arts, gender equality and countering domestic and gender-based violence, public health, judicial capacity building, scholarships, Schengen cooperation, as well as local and regional initiatives to reduce national inequalities and to promote social inclusion.

KEY FINDINGS

The study presents early evidence that the EEA & Norway Grants have contributed to enhanced Roma inclusion in the present funding period:

- There is evidence of a significant increase in the number of Roma NGOs successfully applying for EEA and Norway Grants, compared to the previous Financial Mechanism.
- High-quality project partnerships have been formed in some of the larger projects between Project Promoters and local NGOs.
- Regarding institutional capacity on Roma inclusion; the emphasis on mainstreaming the Roma inclusion concern has produced some positive effects on institutional awareness and raised the profile of Roma inclusion concern. This is in particular relevant for those state institutions which do not feature Roma inclusion as a key part of their remit.
- The EEA and Norway Grants are well suited to fund innovative or pilot approaches with potential for scaling up or mainstreaming
- Despite inherent difficulties with the definition of ‘Roma’, some specific indicators have been set, notably for programmes in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia.



- Regarding the Roma Inclusion plans developed in the relevant programmes; these are useful policy instruments, in particular those which are well developed with descriptions of how activities will benefit Roma inclusion, with specific indicators and provision for evaluation, and publicity measures.

Some lessons learned were also identified:

- For reporting purposes, there are inadequate definitions and lack of consistent/comprehensive processes for collecting data across the Financial Mechanism
- The source for data for indicators is often project reports but the quality of the data is not specified
- There is not enough emphasis on qualitative reporting when capturing progress on Roma inclusion
- There is limited comparability across countries and programmes in the same area due to the way in which the Roma-inclusion concern was formulated

The report contains further findings, lessons learned and recommendations that will be followed up and inform the development of future programmes.

Download the complete report here: <http://bit.ly/1WBDHje>

EVALUATION OVERVIEW

The evaluation was conducted by PITJA between November 2014 and summer 2015. The study covered 47 programmes that were considered as relevant to or targeting Roma social inclusion in 12 beneficiary countries. 27 programmes were selected for in-depth analysis. The cut-off date for data collection was March 2015.

Purpose of the evaluation

- Examine the effectiveness, efficiency and potential for impact of programmes addressing Roma inclusion.
- Assess progress towards planned results and expected achievements
- Provide recommendations for improving current programmes, as well as Roma relevant programmes in the future

Methodology

- Review of literature and programme documentation
 - Interviews with stakeholders in the focus countries
 - Online questionnaires and telephone interviews with Donor Programme Partners and authorities in the other countries.
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