



PROJECT FACTSHEET

Embassy of Switzerland in Albania

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

IMPROVING SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR ROMA IN ALBANIA



Roma communities are one of the segments of Albania's population with the least social care protection. ©UNICEF Albania

Albania's social safety net has to be strengthened so as to address conditions perpetuating poverty and vulnerability among marginalized communities. The current social protection policy focuses mainly on providing financial aid. The Support to Roma Social Inclusion Project, which is implemented by United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), supports a social care reform that addresses the needs of the socially most disadvantaged population.

The main impact of this project will be a functional and sustainable social services system that benefits socially disadvantaged populations including Roma. It builds on the models for child protection services and coordination at the local level developed and tested by UNICEF. It will involve social workers in special services such as those for disabled people, Roma, elderly, children and women in need of special care and protection.

REFORMING SOCIAL CARE POLICIES

The project works to build a national policy framework for municipalities and service providers to fulfil the social and economic rights of the most marginalised populations. Work done so far includes the following:

- Developed and endorsed A National Strategy on Social Protection 2015–2020 and an Action Plan including costs, monitoring tools, and timeline.
- Recognition of the 'social work' profession thanks to a new law adopted by Albania's Parliament
- Updating of job descriptions for 'social worker' and 'psychologist' occupations.
- Outlined a new law on social care services and reviewed legislation with a view to outsource services to non-governmental organisations.
- Defined roles and assignments and developed standard packages for newly formed municipalities on social care services in their territories.

ADDRESSING EXTREME MARGINALISATION

Alongside policy changes the project intervenes directly to address situations of extreme marginalisation in impoverished and minority communities. This is done by involving local governments and line ministries.

- Four municipalities started investing their own resources to promote early inclusion of Roma children in education, sensitized by the "Every Roma Child to Kindergarten" Initiative.
- Together with the Ministry of Education included special instructions and focus on enrolling

most marginalised children in the pre-school system.

- Increased the number of Roma children attending kindergarten, preschool, and benefiting from immunisation and obtaining identification papers.
- Facilitated adoption by the Government of Albania of a Protocol on Child Protection and supported the Child Protection Units at the newly formed municipalities.

BACKGROUND

As recent migration patterns in Switzerland and the EU indicate, there is a high risk of poverty and exclusion among Roma people, well known as a special group in need. Without a functional social protection system able to address key causes of poverty, chances are that inequity (and its related migration) will likely continue. Roma integration in Albania has recently gained importance as it is one of the 12 priorities set by the EU for the EU integration process.

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

NAME

Support to Roma Social Inclusion

THEME

Social Inclusion

COUNTRY

Albania

PARTNERS

UNICEF (implementation)

Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth

State Social Services

Roma NGOs and other civil society organisations

Regional and local government

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

To establish a functional and sustainable social services system

TARGET GROUPS

Roma communities

Government of Albania

PHASE DURATION

26 August 2012 – 31 August 2016

PHASE BUDGET

CHF 3'000'000

FUNDING

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

CONTACT

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