

Report on the Local Co-ordinators for Roma Issues
Piloted within the Project “Best Practices for Roma Integration”



BEST PRACTICES
for
ROMA INTEGRATION
in the Western Balkans

Author: Dejan Markovic



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Author:

Dejan Markovic

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Author: Dejan Markovic
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Milena Isakovic Suni, Regional Project
Co-ordinator – Best Practices for Roma Integration,
also contributed to the making of this report.



Dejan Markovic was an elected member of the Belgrade City Assembly from 2000 to 2004 and a member of the Council of the municipality of Rakovica in Belgrade. He was the Ombudsman at the municipality of Rakovica from 2005-2010. In 2012, he was acting Head of the Group for improvement of the position of Roma at the Office for Human and Minority Rights of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. He graduated in political science in 2010.

Based on experience in local administration, Dejan became aware of the necessity of the Roma Co-ordinator's position in local self-governments and was one of the proponents of its introduction in Serbia. During his work at the Office for Human and Minority Rights, he participated in the definition of duties of local Roma Co-ordinators as regular staff at the municipal administration.

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Executive summary

The “Best Practices for Roma Integration” (BPRI) project supported innovative programmes and facilitated co-operation between local and national governments, independent institutions and civil society. Expanding upon the experience from Serbia, BPRI piloted Roma Co-ordinators in municipal administrations in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. While most Roma Co-ordinators (often called *referents* in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Local Roma Experts in Albania) were placed in local self-governments, BPRI also introduced a Roma Social Protection Mediator in the Centre for Social Welfare in Jajce, Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had never been attempted before in the Western Balkans. This pilot experience took place in 2012-2014, and the report at hand aims to summarize its results and lessons learned.

There is a debate on whether the creation of Roma Co-ordinators would lead to segregation in public service delivery and if their work would overlap with the activities of Roma NGOs. Nevertheless, in municipalities with a large and marginalized Roma population, the Roma Co-ordinator can play an important role by advocating for new policies or projects (including Local Action Plans for Roma Inclusion), engaging different municipal units and informing the Roma about public services. They should co-operate and co-ordinate with Roma (and non-Roma) NGOs, Centres for Social Work, Employment Service, police, schools and other stakeholders to promote the implementation of local plans for Roma inclusion. At the same time and especially in the longer term, municipalities should seek to raise the capacity of their **non-Roma** staff to work with and provide services to Roma. The Roma Co-ordinator can also support this process.

Roma Co-ordinators working on the BPRI project did not have very strong technical capacities when they started and they were not familiar with municipal



administration. Their level of education was relatively low (only three out of 10 had graduated from university) – higher than the average among the Roma population but still under the minimum required for employment within the municipal administration.

In spite of these obstacles, Roma Co-ordinators showed very strong motivation to improve the status of their communities and acquired new skills over time. A combination of on-the-job training provided by their municipal colleagues and more formal workshops on reporting and local planning provided by BPRI helped them to fit into the public administration systems and establish good relationships with colleagues.

Projects often focus on strengthening the capacities of Roma Co-ordinators, but it is equally important to address the capacities of non-Roma municipal staff who need to initiate new activities and outreach. BPRI organized joint trainings for Roma Co-ordinators and their non-Roma colleagues, as a way to engage them in active planning and build teamwork.

The greatest value of the work of Roma Co-ordinators is the increased outreach by municipal services and awareness raising among the Roma community. This included development of municipal Action Plans for Roma Inclusion, organization of large scale events where Roma could speak directly to municipal or anti-discrimination officials, visiting families living in isolated and poor settlements to inform them about services and encourage them to send children to schools, etc. The sustainability of these initiatives remains in question because of limited municipal funding and the relatively short time span of most international projects, but their contribution to working directly with the most vulnerable Roma and improving their quality of life is undeniable.

1. Background

As mandated by the 2003 OSCE Roma and Sinti Action Plan (Chapter VII)¹, ODIHR has been addressing the situation of Roma and related groups in crisis and post-crisis situations in particular in the Western Balkans region, which has been affected by ethnic tensions and conflicts in 1990s. ODIHR pays particular attention to the situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, including the situation and reintegration of displaced persons from this community.

Many governments in the region have developed Roma integration strategies and action plans, however, their implementation at local level and anticipated impact on the situation on the Roma people in the areas of education, employment, housing and access to services is a long-term process. Western Balkan governments have frequently expressed their willingness to enhance efforts in the implementation of action plans to ensure that Roma are truly benefitting from them. The international community can play a key role in supporting governments, centrally and locally, in this endeavour.

In 2011, ODIHR was awarded EU funding for a regional project in the Western Balkans to strengthen the capacity of central and local governments and mechanisms in dealing with Roma and related groups and enhance the integration of these communities into society. The “Best Practices for Roma Integration” (BPRI) project supports promoting innovative programmes and facilitating co-operation between local and national governments, independent institutions and civil society². The specific objectives of the BPRI project are to:

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- 1 OSCE, Action Plan for Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area, 2003, <https://www.osce.org/odihhr/17554>.
 - 2 More information about the BPRI project is available at <http://www.bpri-odihhr.org>.

- enhance Roma participation in decision making of policies of their concern,
- support governments in their policy making and drafting of appropriate legislation on legalization of informal settlements and social housing,
- enhance Roma participation in public life, and
- foster cross border co-ordination and initiatives improving Roma participation.

The project identified needs and resources for the implementation of national strategies and action plans, and focused on local Roma participation. Two regional reports highlighted good (learning) practices in the fields of housing, anti-discrimination and participation of Roma in decision-making³. These good practices were used as a basis for a common protocol to help local self-governments define and implement initiatives encouraging Roma participation⁴. Special attention was paid to involving Roma women and motivating them to campaign for their interests and rights.

One of the identified regional good practices is the engagement of Roma individuals within the local self-government structures. There is a lack of opportunities for Roma who are able to take positions at the central and local government level and among civil society organizations. This problem undermines the quality of policy planning and implementation. In order to help address this situation, BPRI project developed a specific programme for Local Roma Co-ordinators / Experts/ Referents⁵ (in further text: Roma Co-ordinators) who are placed in local government institutions throughout the Western Balkans.

The presence of Roma Co-ordinator within the local self-government bridges the divide between the Roma communities and the local governments, through a more systematic inclusion of the Roma in local policy development. Drawing on experience from Serbia⁶, the project replicated this approach in three countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro) and the purpose of this report is to summarize this pilot activity.

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- 3 See *Regional Report on Housing Legalization, Settlement Upgrading and Social Housing for Roma* at http://www.bpri-odih.org/documents.html?file=tl_files/new/Housing%20Report/ENG.pdf, and *Regional Report on Anti-discrimination and Participation of Roma in Local Decision-Making* at http://www.bpri-odih.org/documents.html?file=tl_files/new/Regional%20report%20on%20AD/ENG.pdf.
 - 4 Good Practice Protocol for Roma Integration, May 2013, http://www.bpri-odih.org/documents.html?file=tl_files/assets/data/SGWG%20Sarajevo/Good%20Practice%20Protocol/ENG.pdf.
 - 5 The Roma Co-ordinators or referents are persons in charge of facilitating access to services for the local Roma community and advocating for new policies / measures which can improve their position. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is a distinction to be made because Roma Co-ordinators are closely related to the State Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees and their purpose is to co-ordinate activities between local and State level. Roma Referents are limited to a specific municipality and their purpose is to act as liaison officers to better the Roma community and the municipal authority. In Serbia the title "Co-ordinator for Roma Issues" is also used at times since not all Co-ordinators are Roma.
 - 6 In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Roma are also present in the local self-government but through a slightly different model focusing on Roma Information Centres. Their experience is described in the chapter on networking.

2. Role and Rationale for Local Co-ordinators for Roma Issues

Introducing local Roma Co-ordinators in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro was based on the good practice model implemented in Serbia. Local Roma Co-ordinators were established there within several projects launched in 2003 with the aim to improve the position of Roma through partnership of NGOs and local institutions. The overall objective was to promote the implementation of national strategies for Roma in municipalities and cities. Notwithstanding many problems during this process (some of which persist today, i.e. long-term sustainability and capacity building⁷), these Roma Co-ordinators opened the doors of municipalities for the Roma citizens and enabled better access to services. At the same time, through their work on promoting Roma rights, they helped to overcome prejudices among municipal representatives and create better communication.

There is a debate on whether the creation of Roma Co-ordinators would lead to segregation in public service delivery and if their work would overlap with the activities of Roma NGOs. Nevertheless, in municipalities with a large and marginalized Roma population, the Roma Co-ordinator can play an important role by advocating for new policies or projects (including Local Action Plans for Roma Inclusion), engaging different municipal units and informing the Roma about

7 Andjelkovic, Branka, Marko Obradovic and Jelena Radoman, Evaluation of Efficiency of Local Mechanisms of Social Inclusion in Serbia, CENTER Public Policy Research Centre, January 2013, <http://www.inkluzija.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Efficiency-of-the-LocMechanisms-of-Soc-Inclusion-of-Roma.pdf>.

public services. They should co-operate and co-ordinate with Roma (and non-Roma) NGOs, Centres for Social Work, Employment Service, police, schools and other stakeholders to promote the implementation of local plans for Roma inclusion. At the same time and especially in the longer term, municipalities should seek to raise the capacity of their **non-Roma** staff to work with and provide services to Roma. The Roma Co-ordinator can also support this process.

In Serbia, the Directorate for Human and Minority Rights⁸, in co-operation with the OSCE Mission to Serbia, took the leading role in these initiatives. The work of Roma Co-ordinators in municipalities was funded from EU projects until 2007⁹. In 2008, the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs took over their financing in 20 local governments. Aiming to formalise local action plans for Roma, municipal governments continued to support the work of 55 Co-ordinators until 2014. Through the introduction of Roma Co-ordinators in Serbian municipalities, the Roma population got a direct focal point who advocated for their rights. The introduction of Roma Co-ordinators in Serbia is a successful example of the link / intermediary between the Roma community and local institutions.

Expanding upon this example, BPRI introduced two Roma Referents in municipalities and one Roma Social Protection Mediator in a local Social Welfare Centre in Bosnia and Herzegovina, six Local Roma Experts in Albania and one Roma Co-ordinator in Montenegro¹⁰.

Albania

Through a mapping exercise, BPRI identified the need for local governments to pilot and implement locally applicable capacity building programmes, promoting equal participation of Roma and majority representatives in Albania. Local Roma Experts were engaged in the municipalities of Lezha, Gjirokastra, Pogradec, Lushnje, and the communes of Shushice and Grabian¹¹.

These experts were expected to promote multi-sector co-operation among all stakeholders involved in the implementation and monitoring of Roma integration measures and to promote the principles of good governance. They worked on drafting the Local Roma Action Plans under the guidance of Coaches and the supervision of the BPRI National Project Officer. Within the scope of their work, among other things, they co-ordinated working group meetings for drafting the Roma Local Action Plans, built capacity for co-operation and daily communication between the Roma minority and local administration, and monitored the

8 Later Ministry for Human and Minority Rights.

9 Roma Assistance Programme, 2005-2007, funded from CARDS.

10 For an explanation of different titles given to Roma Co-ordinators, see footnote 5.

11 Communes are local self-government units in rural areas in Albania.

implementation of Roma Local Action Plans (their full Terms of Reference are available in Annex 1).

In addition to Local Action Plan development, the Roma Experts also supported the implementation of small grant projects funded by BPRI and other stakeholders. These concrete activities, often focusing on light infrastructure (i.e. street lighting, road paving, expansion of sewage and water networks¹²) improved the quality of life in Roma settlements and encouraged the municipal governments to keep working in this field.

The Roma Experts had an office space in the building of the respective municipality/commune, which was opened daily. They were supervised by the head of administration / social affairs or similar municipal officials.

Bosnia and Herzegovina


In Bosnia and Herzegovina, BPRI engaged two Roma Referents to work in the municipalities of Lukavac and Bijeljina, as well as one Social Protection Mediator at the Social Welfare Centre in Jajce.

The Roma Municipal Referents co-operated with the representatives of the local self-government and members of the Roma community. Among other things, they provided programmatic support for the implementation of municipal activities related to the Roma community. They established close co-operation with the relevant departments of the municipality with the aim of finding solutions for key issues identified by Roma. As they were often approached by the Roma community for information, they referred them to relevant health, social and education services.

The Roma Municipal Referents submitted monthly reports to the BPRI National Project Officer and contact point at the local self-government. They worked in an office in the building of the local self-governments of Lukavac and Bijeljina.

Similar activities were undertaken by the Social Protection Mediator in Jajce. Under the supervision of the Director of the Social Welfare Centre, the Mediator provided support to implementation of activities related to the Roma population and assisted in updating the database on the needs of Roma households. Special attention was paid to outreach activities, so the Mediator supported the Centre in various campaigns and accompanied social workers during field visits to the

12 A short description of all BPRI small grant projects is available at http://www.bpri-odhr.org/documents.html?file=t_files/new/Small%20Grants%20Documents/Main%20report/ENG.pdf.



Roma settlement. The Mediator also prepared monthly reports and worked from the offices of the Social Welfare Centre.

Montenegro

In Montenegro, one Roma Co-ordinator was engaged in Bijelo Polje as part of the project „Office for Roma issues“ which was supported by the BPRI small grant programme. This project aimed to improve the position of Roma in Bijelo Polje through the provision of legal assistance for civil registration and referral to relevant municipal services. Among other things, the Roma Co-ordinator was in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Local Action Plan for Roma Integration, co-operating with local Roma non-government organizations and the Roma community. The Municipality of Bijelo Polje provided the space for the Office for Roma Issues in Nikoljac settlement.

3. Results

Albania

Drafting of Roma Local Action Plans

For this initiative, the BPRI project contracted six Local Experts to draft Local Roma Action Plans with support from two Coaches in the municipalities of Lezha, Gjirokastra, Pogradec, Lushnje, and the communes of Shushice and Grabian. The BPRI project staff prepared this initiative in consultation with Roma and Egyptian communities and local government representatives.

The process of development of Roma Local Action Plans began by introduction of local and regional authorities, Roma NGOs and local Roma and Egyptian communities to Albania's National Action Plan on Roma. The drafting of the local action plans was led by the responsible municipality/commune supported by the Roma Experts. Each municipality established a working group including the Mayor (in smaller localities) or Vice Mayor, representative of the Local Employment Office, Social Administrator from the local Office of the Social Services, representative of a local Roma NGO and two representatives from the Roma community, representatives from the Office of Education, local Office of Civil Registration, local Housing Office, local Public Health Institution, and the local Chamber of Commerce /local businesses. Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities in Albania (now Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth) and the Roma Technical Secretariat were also actively involved.

This was a learning experience for the Roma Local Experts and they received support from more experienced mentors. More information about the capacity building of Roma Local Experts and municipal staff is available in Section 4.

Under the guidance of mentors and BPRI Project Officer, the local experts identified the priorities of their respective communities. At the beginning they determined the number, social status and priority problems of the local Roma and Egyptian communities, as a base for developing Local Action Plans. The following priorities were agreed on by the working groups and represent the backbone of the Local Action Plans:

<p><i>Lezha municipality:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading houses in uninhabitable conditions • Vocational training for unskilled job-seekers • Employment • Education 	<p><i>Grabian commune:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading houses in uninhabitable conditions • Upgrading the overall infrastructure in Roma and Egyptian neighbourhoods 	<p><i>Shushice commune:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading houses in uninhabitable conditions • Improving road conditions • Education
<p><i>Lushnje municipality:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to communities to be eligible for social housing • Support to get the official legal documentation for houses • Education • Vocational training for unskilled job-seekers 	<p><i>Gjirokaster municipality:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing adequate housing for homeless Roma families • Improving road conditions • Connecting the water and sewage system • Establishing artisanal vocational training • Assisting with civil registration of children who recently returned from Greece 	<p><i>Pogradec municipality:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to get the official legal documentation for houses • Support to communities to be eligible for social housing • Employment • Education

At the end, the councils of all six local governments adopted the Local Action Plans for Roma.

Open Days

In co-operation with the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, Local Roma Experts helped organize a campaign for the promotion of human rights, including a series of “Open Day” events, and a door-to-door campaign in the Roma and Egyptian communities. The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination and the Mayors signed a Memorandum of Understanding expressing their commitment to ensure protection from discrimination. Every local government assigned an Anti-Discrimination Focal Point who will liaise with the Commissioner’s office, refer any alleged cases of discrimination, and organize periodic Open Days in the future.



Avni Latifaj (on the left), Local Roma Expert in Shushice commune, Albania, with colleagues in the Roma settlement, talking about discrimination

“Open Days” took place in December 2012 and January 2013 in public locations including local schools, the “Shejta Mari” community centre in Lezha, the History Museum of Lushnja, local cinema in Pogradec, etc. Members of the Roma and Egyptian communities, as well as the majority population, attended these open meetings. Over 600 members of the Roma and Egyptian communities, municipal representatives, teachers, and general population attended the six “Open Day” events.

The Local Roma Experts mobilized Roma and Egyptian communities to participate in the Open Days and distributed brochures produced by the OSCE Presence

in Albania containing information on the law and mechanisms for protection from discrimination. In total, 180 Roma and Egyptian households received the brochures during the door-to-door campaign.

Some of the issues raised were the absence of Roma women among municipal staff, discrimination in healthcare services, the inability of Roma and Egyptians to fulfil the criteria specified in the Law on Soft Loans and benefit from social housing, the urgent situation of 17 Roma and Egyptian families sheltered in a very dangerous building in Lezha, the problem of 30 Roma families in Saver who are in the process of privatization and legalization of housing, civil registration problems, discrimination in the classrooms, lack of access to disability programmes, etc.

In addition to these local activities, BPRI also supported the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination to produce a short TV video about its service. Approximately 973,800 viewers throughout Albania saw the video, representing 40 per cent of the total viewers of these TV stations on the given days.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Roma referents in the municipalities Bijeljina and Lukavac focused on the issues of civil registration and education. In **Lukavac**, the mayor asked for more information about the Roma inhabitants who lacked personal documents, so the Roma Referent conducted a survey and identified the main obstacles in this field. After the Roma Referent's initiative and visits to the settlements, only 20 of the most difficult civil registration cases remain to be resolved.

The Roma Referent in Lukavac sat next to colleagues working on project development so she became interested in this field and developed several local projects on Roma integration. In the settlement of Poljice, the municipality resolved water provision problems and a small grant provided by BPRI was used to repair the road. The Roma Referent also participated in the re-development of a housing project that was not successfully funded in 2012. She advocated for this initiative and, together with colleagues in the project development unit, helped to finalize the project proposal. As a result, this project received EUR 130,000 from the national budget for the Action Plan on Housing of Roma, awarded by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees.

In **Bijeljina**, the Roma Referent focused on preventing child begging and participated in bi-monthly meetings of the taskforce formed to tackle this issue. In 2011, different institutions working in this field signed a Protocol of Co-operation on Preventing Child Begging and they continued to work on this issue ever since. The Roma Referent contributed by helping to facilitate communication with Roma families and enabling better access to municipal services. Welfare

assistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina is relatively low and most Roma families do not have any members who are employed (most collect recyclable materials), so the pressure on children to contribute to the household income is increasing.

In addition to two Roma Referents working in municipalities, BPRI also piloted the **Roma Social Protection Mediator** at the Centre for Social Work in Jajce. This is the first time in the Western Balkans that this type of mediator was introduced. The Centre for Social Work conducted a survey on the needs of Roma in 2009 and this data was updated by the Roma Referent in 2013. The data collected in this way is used by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees to identify beneficiaries for its programmes and prioritize needs in the field.

The Social Protection Mediator also visited schools with a high number of Roma children twice a week to track attendance. She visited Roma families living in a settlement 10km outside of town and spoke with parents whose children were not going to school regularly. Regular visits resulted in better attendance but the fines that were introduced also helped the parents to realize the gravity of the situation. Taking into consideration the size of the Roma population in Jajce, there should be at least 15 high school students but there are none. A scholarship was awarded to one student but he dropped out, together with another Roma student.

The Roma Referent from Lukavac and the Social Protection Mediator applied to work in the **census** committee but only the Referent was successful. Two other young women were accepted as census takers because only they had the necessary level of education (highschool degree). In the end, the census could not be implemented because of issues with the questionnaire, but census implementation in other countries shows that the use of Roma census takers is useful for ensuring a better response, especially in Roma settlements. At the 1991 census, less than 9,000 people identified as Roma, while the National Strategy estimates that there are between 30,000 and 50,000 Roma living in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is possible that Roma census takers could help to increase the number of people who declare as Roma and thus help improve the data needed for policy development.

Montenegro

The Office for Roma Issues was officially opened in September 2013 and priority was given to education issues, awareness raising about the Local Action Plan for Roma, administrative and legal assistance, and outreach activities.

1. *Education*

The Roma Co-ordinator met with representatives of education institutions to discuss the plans for enrolment of Roma in secondary schools in the municipality of Bijelo Polje. Meetings were held with the principals of secondary schools from the region of Bijelo Polje in relation to Roma enrolment. High school principals expressed their readiness to contribute to the greater integration of Roma in the education system at the local level.

2. *Promotion of the Office for Roma Issues through the distribution of the Action Plan for Roma in Roma settlements and distribution of school material for children*

The Office for Roma Issues promoted its services through the distribution of 160 copies of the Action Plan for Roma Inclusion in Bijelo Polje and school material for 14 Roma students enrolling in the first grade. The Office also met with Roma families from three Roma settlements in Bijelo Polje.

On several occasions, representatives of the NGO E-ROMA in collaboration with volunteers continued to distribute the promotional material – an abridged version of the Local Action Plan in Rakonje and Strojtanica settlements. They used this opportunity to inform the representatives of the Roma population about the opening of the Office for Roma Issues and invited them to address all relevant issues to this Office.

3. *Providing administrative and legal assistance to representatives of Roma population*

The Office for Roma Issues provided administrative and legal assistance in relation to various problems faced by the Roma community. The Office received and processed a total of 16 requests. Out of this number, eight requests related to housing problems of the most vulnerable members of the Roma population. The rest related to the issue of one-off social assistance and unemployment.

4. *Meetings with the representatives of the most vulnerable Roma families*

Several meetings were held with members of the Roma community upon their request. The reason for calling these meetings was the poor material situation of Roma in Bijelo Polje. The Office was requested to provide assistance for solving these problems. The Office initiated a number of meetings with representatives of the municipality of Bijelo Polje, the Social Welfare Centre and the Employment Office. As a result, 14 students received school material, two people were employment in a utility company and another two were engaged on public works.

4. Beneficiaries

The greatest value of the work of Roma Co-ordinators is the increased outreach by municipal services and awareness raising among the Roma community. Data collection about the number and structure of beneficiaries is challenging because of the limited capacities of Roma Co-ordinators in this field and sometimes a lack of trust or documents among the Roma who seek assistance. Nevertheless, BPRI made a concerted effort in every jurisdiction to work with the Roma Co-ordinators on collecting data and capturing the results of their work.

Albania

In Albania, the Open Day events generated a large interest among the Roma and Egyptian communities – over 600 people came to ask the Commissioner questions and discuss issues in their municipality/ commune (see table below for a breakdown).

In addition, 180 households were visited by the local Roma Experts during the door-to-door campaign, distributing material and talking about discrimination issues.

Nevertheless, these efforts represent only a beginning and continued efforts will be needed from the Anti-discrimination Commissioner and Ombudsman. Understanding of discrimination issues and anti-discrimination mechanisms remains low among the Roma and Egyptian populations.

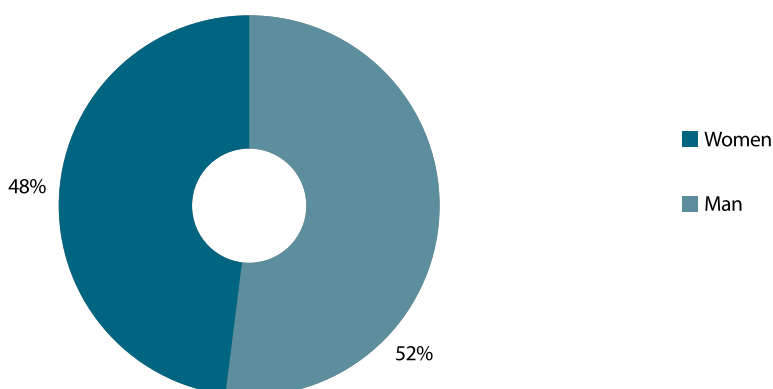


Teacher responding to a Roma mother who complained to the Anti-discrimination Commissioner about the treatment of her child in primary school (Shushice, Albania)

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Open Day events (number of participants)</i>		<i>Door-to-door campaign (no. of Roma and Egyptian households)</i>
		<i>Roma and Egyptian</i>	<i>Non-Roma</i>	
Pogradec	18 October 2012	142	9	50
Gjirokaster	27 November 2012	108	10	60
Grabian	19 December 2012	69	10	20
Lusnje	13 February 2013	137	15	30
Lezhe	22 February 2013	144	3	0
Shushice	28 February 2013	55	13	20
TOTAL:		655	60	180

Interestingly, Roma and Egyptian *women* were just as likely to attend these events as men, especially when they were held in local schools or museums. They often brought along their children and were among the more vocal participants, bringing up questions about education, healthcare and employment.

Gender of "Open Day" registered participants in Albania



Montenegro

Over a period of six months, approximately 250 representatives of the Roma community addressed the Roma Co-ordinator within the Office for Roma Issues in Bijelo Polje. The Office for Roma Issues provided administrative and legal assistance on a broad variety of issues. The Office processed a total of 16 official requests. Out of this number, 8 were related to housing problems of the most vulnerable members of Roma population. The rest dealt with one-off social assistance and employment issues. As a result, 14 students received school material, two people were employment in a utility company and another two were engaged on public works.

5. Capacity building

In all cases, Roma Co-ordinators did not have very strong technical capacities and were not familiar with municipal administration. Their level of education was relatively low (only three out of 10 had graduated from university) – higher than the average among the Roma population but still under the minimum required by the local self-governments.

In spite of these obstacles, Roma Co-ordinators showed very strong motivation to improve the status of their communities and acquired new skills over time. A combination of on-the-job training provided by their municipal colleagues and more formal workshops on reporting and local planning provided by BPRI helped them to fit into the public administration systems and establish good relationships with colleagues.

Projects often focus on strengthening the capacities of Roma Co-ordinators, but it is equally important to address the capacities of non-Roma municipal staff who need to initiate new activities and outreach. BPRI organized joint trainings for Roma Co-ordinators and their non-Roma colleagues, as a way to engage them in active planning and build teamwork.

One of the main programmes providing capacity building in this field is the Council of Europe's ROMED programme. It provided training to over 1,000 people with a Roma background, from local Roma communities, or with a good knowledge of Roma issues. Its second phase, ROMED2, together with a new Council of Europe and European Commission joint initiative – ROMACT, aim to support local partners in 40 municipalities across 10 countries. While these programmes do not necessarily focus on the Western Balkan countries, the Roma Co-ordinators

benefit from similar networking and training opportunities, and are encouraged by meeting colleagues from other countries working on the same issues.

Albania: National Workshop for Data Collection

On 30-31 January 2013, BPRI hosted a national workshop on the collection of local data for development of Local Action Plans for Roma Integration in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAEO). Local Roma Experts, coaches and representatives from civil society and MoLSAEO gathered to discuss the participation of Roma and Egyptians in local decision-making and inclusion of their priorities in the LAPs for municipalities and communes in Albania.



Majko Majko, the Local Roma Expert from Gjirokastër, said: "This experience is not only new for us, but it is as well for our respective municipalities and communes. We are working and learning at the same time. At the beginning, preparing a Local Action Plan seemed very ambitious to me and I didn't know if I could manage. But we are doing it, step by step with the support of our coaches and by learning from each-other."

The main objective of this workshop was to apply in practice the regional good practices by supporting local governments to prepare Roma Local Action Plans and facilitate their implementation. By bringing together Local Roma Experts with the Ministry, this workshop served to:

1. *Unify the methodology for development of Roma Local Action Plans.*
2. *Coach the local experts who are based in the municipality/ commune on Action Plan development and data collection (i.e. determining the number, social status and priority problems of the local Roma/ Egyptian community, as a base for developing LAPs).*
3. *Support the Local Experts to follow up with the municipal/ commune representatives regarding the establishment of a working group for developing LAPs.*
4. *Facilitate working group meetings for drafting the LAPs, how to report to the staff of municipality/ commune and to the Roma Technical Secretariat.*

This workshop was one of the steps in the process of developing Roma Local Action Plans. It helped Roma Local Experts to learn and support each other.

Montenegro: Seminar for development of Local Action Plans for Roma

On 6-9 November 2012, the Seminar for development of Local Action Plans for Roma and Egyptians in the municipalities of Berane, Bijelo Polje and Ulcinj was organized in Milocer. The seminar gathered members of municipal working groups who worked on LAP development, members of the Roma communities, but also representatives of other municipalities in Montenegro that already adopted a LAP in this field (namely Niksic, Kotor, Tivat and Herceg Novi). The seminar was attended by the Roma Co-ordinator and other staff engaged in the Office for Roma Issues in Bijelo Polje. The objective of the seminar was to assist municipalities to develop the final version of Local Action Plans for Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians and encourage them to adopt and implement these plans.

Representatives of municipalities that already adopted a LAP explained that their goal was to develop concrete activities that are necessary to improve the legal, social, economic and housing position of the Roma and Egyptian population. After adoption, the LAPs enabled local governments to secure grants from domestic and international funds, which are necessary for the implementation of concrete projects.

The experience of these three municipalities helped to lead the municipalities of Berane, Bijelo Polje and Ulcinj to understand the importance of LAPs and get ideas for possible measures and funding strategies. Following these presentations, participants were divided into working groups and worked on finalizing the draft LAPs for their respective municipality.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Training on reporting

The Roma Referents and Social Protection Mediator in Bosnia and Herzegovina attended a training on reporting organized by the OSCE Mission for all its staff. The aims of the training were to help with:

- Understanding the various different formal and informal reporting mechanisms
- Explaining the key objectives of various reports
- Explaining the different audiences that read reports
- Understanding how to effectively report on and analyse *positive* events or developments
- Understanding how to effectively report on and analyse *negative* events or development, and how to offer constructive recommendations
- Developing concise summaries of key activities.

The Roma Referents and Mediator submitted monthly reports including information about their activities, any political developments related to Roma inclusion in their municipality, and inquiries they received in the field of social protection, housing, healthcare and employment. However, their capacities to produce quantitative and narrative reports were limited so the training helped them to better understand what type of information is needed and what its purpose is.

This training should be provided to all Roma Co-ordinators working at the local level, as the results of their work are often not broadly disseminated due to limited reports.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Training for Roma councillors

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a local workshop for Roma elected officials was organized in Konjic Municipality on 22-23 May 2013 in co-operation with the OSCE Mission. The purpose of this workshop was to develop capacities of 11 Roma elected officials (men only) on the functioning of the local self-governments. Due to other duties, only five officials participated in this event but the group enjoyed this opportunity for discussion. A special presentation was prepared on the structure and functioning of local self-governments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, local budgets, councilmen initiatives, establishing partnerships with civil society organizations and citizens, lobbying and networking skills. The Roma activist and former councilman in Nis (Serbia), Osman Balic, presented his own experience and provided insight on how best to influence policy implementation, obtain the necessary budgets and lobby and advocate to get the work done. He also stressed the importance of this type of capacity building for local councillors - as more and more elected Roma may come to the fore, they should know what their role entails.

Study visit from Albania to Serbia


Thirteen representatives of local governments, local Roma experts from selected municipalities in Albania participated in a study visit to Serbia on 15-19 April 2013 to learn more about good practices for Roma integration being introduced in several Serbian municipalities. Specifically, BPRI wanted to show the role of Roma Co-ordinators in different municipalities - depending on the local context, they may be working on issues of civil registration, housing, education, employment or others.



Emiliano Aliu, Young Roma Professional, and Ferit Milanj, Roma Expert from Lusnje (on the right), talking to a Roma resident from Adice settlement in Novi Sad, Serbia

During the visit, participants met with municipal officials from Kragujevac, Pančevo, Stara Pazova and Novi Sad to share experiences. The study visit enabled participants from Albania to visit different types of Roma settlements and think critically about the implementation of programmes that can be introduced by local authorities. Participants also learned more about local action plans that have been created by Serbian municipalities in co-operation with Roma communities and how they are being implemented.

As mentioned above, the municipalities from Albania were being supported by BPRI in preparing their own local action plans for Roma integration. The study visit provided them with an opportunity to learn about the different mechanisms involved in the planning and implementation of these plans. While much



still remains to be done in Serbia, some innovative solutions, such as the introduction of Roma Co-ordinators at the local government level, are helping to improve Roma access to services and living conditions.

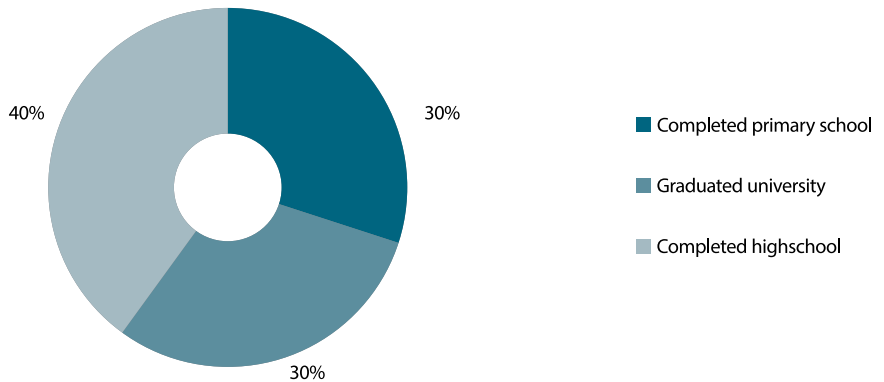
The municipality of Pancevo was one of the first cities to adopt a Local Action Plan for Roma Integration. The Roma Co-ordinator has a specific unit at the One-Stop-Shop centre. She works primarily on civil registration, especially registration of unregistered children to enable them to access public services. Pancevo has adopted a budget for addressing the situation of Roma - this budget is specified according to the lines and objectives of the Roma Local Action Plan.

In the City of Kragujevac, the position of Roma Co-ordinator has been made permanent within the City Administration. The Roma Co-ordinator has to fulfil the same requirements as other public servants in the City (in terms of educational and professional background). The municipality finds the position of Roma Co-ordinator very beneficial in the framework of provision of services towards Roma individuals and families.

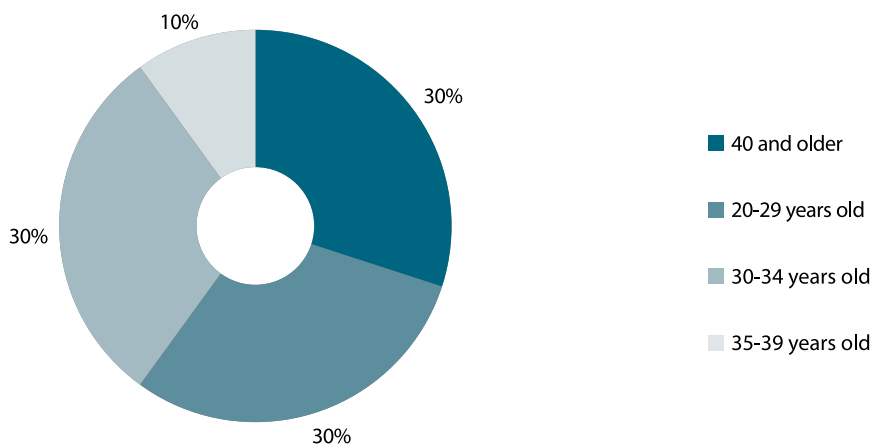
6. Human and technical capacities

Out of the ten Roma Co-ordinators supported by BPRI, 60% were under the age of 35. Most of them had completed high-school (40%) or primary school (30%), while just under a third graduated from university.

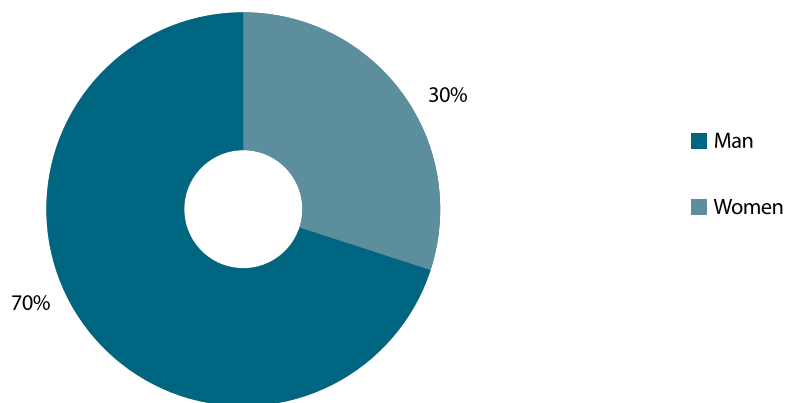
Education level of Roma Co-ordinators supported by BPRI



Age of Roma Co-ordinators supported by BPRI



Gender of Roma Co-ordinators



Only 30% of Roma Co-ordinators were women – all in Bosnia and Herzegovina. After the BPRI project stopped funding the Roma Co-ordinator in Bijelo Polje, Montenegro, the municipality decided to hire a Roma woman for this position, with support from the OSCE Mission. This is a positive change and hopefully more women will apply for these types of roles.



Office for Roma Issues in the settlement of Nikoljac in Bijelo Polje, Montenegro

Technical capacities were very limited but the Roma Co-ordinators made the best of the available space and equipment. Only the Roma Co-ordinator in Bijelo Polje had a computer, while the others had to use the equipment from other colleagues at the municipality. The municipalities had a limited number of computers (in some cases the Roma Co-ordinators' supervisors did not have a computer either), so one could not be provided for every Roma Co-ordinator. In Bijelo Polje, BPRI was able to provide equipment through the small grant.


7. Networking

Initiative of Roma Co-ordinators in Stip and Prilep, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Although many improvements have been made in the implementation of Roma-related policy papers (i.e. National Strategy for Roma, National Action Plans, etc.) in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, there's still much to be done. Co-ordination between state and local authorities in their work on Roma related activities could be improved. Also, appropriate budgetary allocations on Roma-specific activities, both, at the local and central levels should be increased.

In November 2013, two municipal Officers on Inter-Ethnic Relations (commonly known as municipal Roma referents) from the Municipalities of Stip and Prilep approached the BPRI with an idea to establish an informal network of stakeholders that would aim at the more efficient and relevant implementation of various action plan activities. Moreover, the network would serve as a forum for the exchange of lessons learned and best practices among various stakeholders (municipalities, central authorities, NGOs and Roma Information Centers). Finally, the network would work and lobby for the increase of budgetary allocations for Roma-related activities with central and local authorities.

In January and March 2014, BPRI organized two national workshops of this informal network. The events were conceptualized and organized in co-ordination with the municipalities of Stip and Prilep and their respective Roma referents. They gathered some 30 Roma professionals representing a range of institutions, such as municipal authorities, NGOs, and central governmental agencies.



It was agreed that the informal network has four Strategic Priorities: 1) Co-ordination, information and mobilization; 2) Representation and lobbying; 3) Monitoring and Evaluation; and 4) Institutional development and organizational strengthening of the informal network. Its long-term vision is to “unite Roma in the building of a democratic and inclusive society”, while its mission is to “co-ordinate, inform and mobilize for the needs of the Roma community through representation, lobbying, monitoring and evaluation the implementation of public policies in the country”. The key is to advocate for new initiatives in areas where progress is slow, share information and promote joint projects among municipalities/NGOs.

Regional networking

At BPRI regional events, such as the Self-Governance Working Group (SGWG) on Roma Integration, Roma Co-ordinators were invited with their municipal colleagues, which provided an opportunity to strengthen relations, improve understanding, and learn together. The SGWG also encouraged exchange with peers from the Western Balkans region.

8. Sustainability

In Albania and Montenegro, Local Action Plans (LAPs) for Roma Inclusion were adopted in the municipalities where the Roma Co-ordinators were engaged, namely six LAPs in Albania¹³ and one LAP in Bijelo Polje, Montenegro¹⁴.

In Albania, the municipality of Lezha decided to keep their Roma expert, now paid from the municipal budget. Some other Roma local experts also continued to work for municipal administration after BPRI funding ended:

- Municipality of Lushnje: the Roma Co-ordinator will continue to work as a member of the municipal Council.
- Grabian commune and municipality of Pogradec: the Roma Co-ordinators were employed by the Open Society Foundation for a consultancy on Roma inclusion.
- Gjirokaster municipality: the Roma Co-ordinator works at the Regional Directory of Education.

UNDP Albania will also continue to engage Roma experts in other municipalities within their national IPA-funded project¹⁵.

13 In municipalities of Lezha, Gjirokastra, Pogradec, Lushnje, the communes of Shushice and Grabian.

14 In Montenegro, LAPs were also adopted in certain municipalities where Roma Co-ordinators do not exist but which requested BPRI facilitation of this process, including Berane and Ulcinj.

15 For more information, please see the UNDP website: <http://www.rs.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2013/11/11/a-new-programme-to-boost-social-inclusion-in-albania/>.



In Bijelo Polje, Montenegro, the municipality will continue to support the Office of Roma Issues including a new Co-ordinator (a woman) and Field Assistant, both Roma, who will be funded by the OSCE Mission to Montenegro.

Even in countries where these types of mechanisms are more developed and becoming sustainable (i.e. Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), the process took years and numerous pilot projects promoted this approach. Annex 4 includes a list of Roma Co-ordinators¹⁶ and chapter 9 summarizes the financial requirements, as resources for any organization interested in promoting the inclusion of Roma at the local level.

¹⁶ Supported by BPRI but also from other projects.

9. Budget

<i>Item</i>	<i>Approx. amounts</i>
Salaries of Local Roma Experts and their mentors, Albania (6 months)	EUR 22,910
Salaries of Roma Referents and Social Protection Mediator, Bosnia and Herzegovina (11 months)	EUR 7,600
Office for Roma Issues, Bijelo Polje, Montenegro:	
1. Salary (6 months)	EUR 1,500
2. Equipment and activities	EUR 3,500
Field visits and Local Action Plan workshop in Tirana, Albania	EUR 5,000
Local Action Plan workshop in Milocer, Montenegro	EUR 12,465
Study visit of municipal representatives from Albania to Serbia	EUR 9,871
Workshop for Roma councillors, Bosnia and Herzegovina	EUR 2,186
Roma Professionals Network meetings, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2 meetings)	EUR 9,364
TOTAL:	EUR 74,116

10. Conclusion and recommendations

Since 2003 when the position of municipal Roma Co-ordinators was first introduced in Serbia, a series of programmes aimed at social inclusion of Roma have been implemented throughout the region. In 2012-2014, the BPRI project piloted a number of similar programmes in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. Their overall aim was to promote the implementation of national strategies for Roma in municipalities and cities through local action plans and greater outreach.

Local action plans were adopted in most municipalities where local Roma Co-ordinators were engaged and they proved to be an important basis for planning and implementing activities for Roma integration at the local level. They became a reference framework for programmes dealing with the social inclusion of Roma and bring these issues to the foreground.¹⁷

At the same time, local Roma Co-ordinators acted as **intermediaries** between the Roma population and institutions competent for promoting Roma rights and helping to create better communication between municipal representatives and Roma community. Roma Co-ordinators opened the doors of municipalities for the citizens enabling Roma, Egyptian and Ashkali community to address their representative regarding various issues.

¹⁷ Andjelkovic, Branka, Marko Obradovic and Jelena Radoman, Evaluation of Efficiency of Local Mechanisms of Social Inclusion in Serbia, CENTER Public Policy Research Centre, January 2013.

Successful co-ordinators have had at least two roles – as intermediaries but also as **advocates** of Roma rights in the community, protectors and promoters of the Roma community interests. During their engagement through the BPRI project, local Roma Co-ordinators collaborated not only with local government, institutions and NGOs but also state bodies and independent institutions such as the Ombudsman and Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination. Albania's Open Day events, organized in co-operation with the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, are an example of good practice for such co-operation.

In addition, thanks to BPRI project, for the first time in the Western Balkans, a Roma Social Protection Mediator was introduced at the Social Welfare Centre in Jajce, Bosnia and Herzegovina. This Mediator proved to be important for the implementation of activities of the Social Welfare Centre related to the Roma population, especially outreach activities and various campaigns aimed at this population.

The engagement of local Roma Co-ordinators successfully addressed the need for a greater number of Roma individuals within decision making bodies at the local level. They also increased the quality of policy planning and implementation in co-operation with local and state bodies and the Roma community. Placing a local Roma representative in the position of Roma Co-ordinators proved to be a good model for addressing this need, although of course these programmes must include a capacity building component to enable them to function effectively within the local institution.

The experience of the local Roma Co-ordinators in the Western Balkans provides us with several recommendations which could help to improve these types of programmes in the future:

- 1. Co-ordination of implementation of local Roma action plans** – Co-ordinators should perform the duties of a focal point for LAPs. They should be in charge of co-ordination and co-operation with bodies competent for LAP implementation, as well as monitoring and reporting on goals and activities.
- 2. Co-ordination with national institutions** – Co-ordinators should intensively collaborate with competent ministries and state bodies and be actively engaged in development of national policies and their implementation at the local level.
- 3. Social Welfare Centers** – Position of Roma Mediators based in the Social Welfare Centres should be institutionalized. A protocol on co-operation between the local Roma Co-ordinators and Roma Mediators should be introduced as Social Welfare Centers are key actors for resolution of Roma problems. They should work together to facilitate the resolution of the numerous social problems faced by the Roma community.

4. **Co-ordination with local Roma NGOs** – Regular consultations with local Roma NGOs must be conducted in order to update the relevant information regarding the Roma population and co-ordinate activities for addressing the main problems. Local Roma Co-ordinators together with the NGOs should develop joint programs on the basis of the needs of the Roma population.
5. **Trainings** – Additional trainings for local Co-ordinators should be introduced to raise their capacities for working in the local administration, including project management, office and IT skills, mediation and co-operation with vulnerable groups. In addition, the local administration staff should be sensitized and trained to work with the Roma population.
6. **Training for state exam for civil servants**, so that the Roma Co-ordinators can have greater chances for employment within the municipal staffing structure.
7. **Fundraising for the implementation of Local Action Plans** and give the Roma Co-ordinators a lead role in facilitating the process. Through project development and implementation, the Roma Co-ordinators are able to connect different municipal units and institutions who do not always exchange information / co-operate.

Annex 1: Terms of reference for Local Roma Experts in Albania

Background

As mandated by the 2003 OSCE Roma and Sinti Action Plan (Chapter VII), ODIHR has been addressing the situation of Roma and related groups in crisis and post-crisis situations in particular in the Western Balkans region, which has been affected by ethnic tensions and conflicts in 1990s. ODIHR pays particular attention to the situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, including the situation and reintegration of displaced persons from this community. Many countries in the region have developed Roma integration strategies and action plans, however, their implementation at local level and anticipated impact on the situation on the Roma people in the areas of education, employment, housing and access to services is a long-term process. Western Balkan governments have frequently expressed their willingness to enhance efforts in the implementation of action plans to ensure that Roma are truly benefitting from them. The international community can play a key role in supporting governments, nationally and locally, in this endeavour.

In 2011, ODIHR was awarded EU funding for a regional project in the Western Balkans to strengthen the capacity of national and local governments and mechanisms in dealing with Roma and related groups and enhance the integration of these communities into society. The specific objectives of the project are to: (i)

enhance Roma participation in decision making of policies of their concern (ii) enhance access to civil registration and legal aid services for Roma groups, (iii) empower Roma to benefit from initiatives aiming to legalise or improve their housing situations, (iv) enhance Roma participation in public life and (v) foster cross border co-ordination and initiatives improving Roma participation.

Currently, there is no local self-government unit (LSGU) in Albania that has designed a Local Action Plan to orient policies, projects and activities targeting Roma and Egyptian communities. The OSCE/ODIHR BPRI project identified the need to promote this approach in six LSGUs in Albania, namely the Municipality of Lezha, Municipality of Gjirokastra, Municipality of Pogradec, Municipality of Lushnje/ Saver, Shushice Commune and Grabian Commune.

This initiative is expected to promote multi-sector co-operation among all stakeholders involved in the implementation and monitoring of Roma integration measures. It will promote the principles of good governance. To support this initiative, BPRI seeks to recruit six Local Experts to support Development of six Local Action Plans for Roma Integration.

Objective of the assignment

To strengthen and apply regional good practice by supporting LSGUs to prepare Local Action Plans for Roma Integration and facilitate their implementation.

Scope of the assignment and tasks

Each Local Expert will be responsible for the drafting of one Local Action Plan in the Municipality of Lezha, Municipality of Gjirokastra, Municipality of Pogradec, Municipality of Lushnje/ Saver, Shushice Commune and Grabian Commune.

Under the guidance of Coaches for Local Action Plan Development and the supervision of the BPRI National Project Officer, the Local Experts (hereinafter: the consultant) will:

- Determine the number, social status and priority problems of the local Roma/ Egyptian community, as a base for developing Local Action Plans for Roma;
- Initiate a decision by the municipal/ commune representative regarding the establishment of a working group for developing Roma Local Action Plans in the municipality/ commune where the local Facilitator is employed;

- Co-ordinate working group meetings for the drafting of Roma Local Action Plans, take notes and report to the staff of OSCE/ ODIHR BPRI project and to the Roma Technical Secretariat;
- Facilitate the Coach to prepare in consultation with the municipality/ commune and the Roma and Egyptian communities;
- Prepare and deliver documents regarding Roma Local Action Plan for adoption at the Municipal/ Commune Council;
- Ensure that local Roma NGOs submit their project proposals for drafting and implementation of the Local Action Plan for Roma to the municipality/ commune;
- Build capacity for co-operation and daily communication between the Roma minority and local administration;
- Submit a regular report to OSCE/ODIHR BPRI project and to the Roma Technical Secretariat about project activities, especially the work of the working groups regarding the Roma Local Action Plans, implementation of the Roma Local Action Plan, and thereafter the projects related to the implementation of the Roma Local Action Plan;
- Facilitate communication among the local government and the communities to enhance access of local communities to public services;
- Monitor implementation of the Roma Local Action Plan and submit reports on it.

The expert will have an office space in the building of the respective Municipality/ Commune, which will be opened daily and will strongly co-operate with other representatives of the local self-government.

ODIHR acknowledges the fact that international organizations wishing to promote Roma inclusion can and must carry out their work 'with Roma for Roma by Roma'. Therefore, this consultancy is primarily oriented towards Roma / Egyptian applicants. Women are encouraged to apply.

Location

The consultant will be required to carry out his/her work from the municipality/ commune premises. No travel costs for the consultant are foreseen to be covered by the BPRI project.

Qualifications

- Secondary education;
- Fluency in Albanian language, knowledge of Romani language is an advantage;
- Close co-operation, experience and understanding of the life and problems of the local Roma/ Egyptian community;
- Knowledge of the mandate/competencies and function of the local self-government will be an advantage;
- Familiarity with the Albanian National Strategy on Improving Roma Living Condition;
- Good organization and communication skills;
- Computer skills (Word, Internet).

Deliverables

- Monthly reports on activities undertaken including Action Plan development and consultations with civil society and municipal officials;
- List of civil society organizations in the given municipality/commune and other key stakeholders for the Local Action Plan Development;
- Minutes from the working group meetings;
- By the end of February 2013, finalize the Roma Local Action Plan in the given municipality/commune;
- By the end of March 2013, finalize the process of submitting the Local Action Plan for approval of the respective Council of municipality/ commune;
- By the end of August 2013, complete the first progress report of Implementation of the Roma Local Action Plan.

Annex 2: Terms of reference for the Local Referents in Lukavac, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Background

As mandated by the 2003 OSCE Roma and Sinti Action Plan (Chapter VII), ODIHR has been addressing the situation of Roma and related groups in crisis and post-crises situations in particular in the Western Balkans region, which has been affected by ethnic tensions and conflicts in 1990s. ODIHR pays particular attention to the situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, including the situation and reintegration of displaced persons from this community. Many countries in the region have developed Roma integration strategies and action plans; however, their implementation at local level and anticipated impact on the situation on the Roma people in the areas of education, employment, housing and access to services is a long-term process. Western Balkan governments have frequently expressed their willingness to enhance efforts in the implementation of action plans to ensure that Roma are truly benefitting from them. The international community can play a key role in supporting governments, nationally and locally, in this endeavour.

In 2011, ODIHR was awarded EU funding for a regional project in the Western Balkans to strengthen the capacity of national and local governments and

mechanisms in dealing with Roma and related groups and enhance the integration of these communities into society. The specific objectives of the project are to: The specific objectives of the project are to: (i) enhance Roma participation in decision making of policies of their concern, (ii) provide technical support to governments aiming to legalise or upgrade Roma settlements, (iii) enhance Roma participation in public life and (iv) foster cross border co-ordination and initiatives improving Roma participation.

One of the identified regional good practices is the engagement of Roma individuals within the local self-government structures. The presence of Roma referents within the local self-governments bridges the divide between the local Roma communities and the local self-governments, through a more systematic inclusion of the Roma in local policy development. The project aims to replicate this good practice through engagement of two Roma referents in local self-governments in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Objective:

To support local authorities in implementing programmes to increase Roma participation in local governance structures.

Scope of the assignment and tasks:

Under the direct supervision of the representative of the Municipality of Lukavac, and in co-operation with the BPRI National Project Officer, Roma Municipal Referent will work in an office in the building of the local self-government. The Roma Municipal Referent will co-operate with the representatives of the local self-government and the members of the Roma community. The selected Roma Municipal Referent must submit reports to the BPRI National Project Officer and contact point at the local self-government.

Specific tasks of the Roma Municipal Referent will include:

- provide programmatic support for the implementation of activities of the Municipality of Lukavac related to the Roma community;
- build capacity for co-operation and daily communication between the Roma community and local administration
- in co-ordination with the Municipality of Lukavac, conduct field visit to collect information on key issues within the Roma community;
- provide support to the Municipality of Lukavac in implementation of the national action plan for Roma inclusion;

- establish close co-operation and co-ordination with relevant departments of the Municipality of Lukavac with an aim of finding solutions for key issues identified by the Roma community;
- referring individuals within the Roma community to relevant health, social and education services;
- establish cooperation and co-ordination with other Roma associations, Regional Roma Co-ordinators and Roma Resource Centers with an aim of exchange of information and collection of data on the activities of local and regional level related to Roma
- perform other relevant tasks as defined by the BPRI National Project Officer and the Municipality of Lukavac.

Roma Municipal Referent will prepare and submit monthly reports summarizing their activities and number of assisted beneficiaries through disaggregated according to gender, age, ethnicity and location.

Regular bi-monthly meetings will be conducted to check bottlenecks and progress of the work.

Location:

Roma Municipal Referent will be based in offices provided by the Municipality of Lukavac. Travel within the Municipality of Lukavac will be arranged with the Municipality of Lukavac. Travel outside of the Municipality of Lukavac must be approved by BPRI National Project Officer.

Qualifications/Profile:

- University degree¹⁸;
- Experience living in the local environment, close co-operation and experience with the local Roma population;
- Close co-operation, experience and understanding of the life and problems of the local Roma community;
- Knowledge of the mandate/competencies and function of the local self-government will be an advantage;
- Familiarity with the program of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015;

18 It is not feasible to find candidates with a university degree so Lukavac was an exception in this sense. It is recommended to ask for a high-school degree or in smaller, more isolated communities even just a primary school degree. Please note that the lower level of education can limit the possibilities for the Roma Co-ordinator's permanent employment in the municipal administration, as a university degree is often required.

- Capability and readiness for intensive co-operation and communication with people
- Computer skills (Word, Internet);
- Knowledge of Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language;
- Knowledge of Romani language is an advantage;
- Knowledge of English language is an advantage;
- Good organization skills.

Deliverables:

Monthly reports of activity, delivered by the 15th of each month of engagement.

Annex 3: Terms of reference for the Social Protection Mediator in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Background

As mandated by the 2003 OSCE Roma and Sinti Action Plan (Chapter VII), ODIHR has been addressing the situation of Roma and related groups in crisis and post-crisis situations in particular in the Western Balkans region, which has been affected by ethnic tensions and conflicts in 1990s. ODIHR pays particular attention to the situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, including the situation and reintegration of displaced persons from this community. Many countries in the region have developed Roma integration strategies and action plans, however, their implementation at local level and anticipated impact on the situation on the Roma people in the areas of education, employment, housing and access to services is a long-term process. Western Balkan governments have frequently expressed their willingness to enhance efforts in the implementation of action plans to ensure that Roma are truly benefitting from them. The international community can play a key role in supporting governments, nationally and locally, in this endeavour.

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One of the identified regional good practices is the engagement of Roma Mediators in Serbia. Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia, identified Roma Mediators as a source of valuable information about healthcare services and raised awareness about vaccination, prevention of communicable diseases, social protection and other important health and social services. Taking into account the barriers Roma face in accessing most basic rights in throughout the Western Balkans region, the project is interested in a piloting a practice of engaging Roma Mediators within the social protection system in Bosnia and Herzegovina and contributing to improving access to social services of the local Roma population.

Objective:

To support awareness-raising activities which promote Roma access to rights.

Scope of the assignment and tasks:

Under the direct supervision of the Director of the Social Welfare Centre Jajce, and in co-operation with the BPRI National Project Officer, one Roma Social Protection Mediator will work within the Social Welfare Centre Jajce, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Roma Social Protection Mediator tasks will include:

- provide programmatic support for the implementation of activities of the Social Welfare Centre related to the Roma community;
- assist to maintains Social Welfare Center's database on the needs of the Roma community;
- on weekly basis, accompany social workers to the field visits of the Roma community;
- in close co-operation with social workers, assist individuals within the Roma community in obtaining personal documentation, health insurance and social protection benefits;
- assisting Social Welfare Center Jajce with various campaigns;

- referring individuals within the Roma community to relevant health, social and education services;
- Perform other relevant tasks as defined by the BPRI National Project Officer and the Social Welfare Center.

Roma Social Protection Mediators will prepare and submit monthly reports summarizing their activities and number of assisted beneficiaries through disaggregated according to gender, age, ethnicity and location.

Regular bi-monthly meetings will be conducted to check bottlenecks and progress of the work.

Location:

Roma Health Mediators will be based in the Social Welfare Centre Jajce. Travel within the Municipality of Jajce will be arranged with the Social Welfare Centre Jajce. Travel outside of the Municipality of Jajce must be approved by BPRI National Project Officer.

Qualifications/Profile:

- Woman of Roma ethnicity;
- Completed secondary education;
- Familiarity with conditions in the respective local Roma settlements;
- Knowledge of Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language and preferred knowledge of Romani language.

Deliverables:

Monthly reports of activity, delivered by the 15th of each month of engagement.



Annex 4: Co-ordinators for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Issues at the local self-governments (who attended the Self-Governance Working Group meetings in 2012-2013)

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Local self-government unit</i>	<i>E-mail</i>	<i>Tel.</i>
Albania	Edison KIPTI	Local Roma Expert	Municipality of Lezhe	edison_kipti@hotmail.com edison_kipti@live.com	+355-67-2236-162
Albania	Ferit MILANJ	Member of Council of Municipality, Local Roma Expert	Municipality of Lushnje	Ferit.milanj@gmail.com	+355-68-2803-166
Albania	Arben RUSHIT	Local Roma Expert	Municipality of Pogradec	arben.rushit@gmail.com	+355-69-433-2600
Albania	Majko MAJKO	Local Roma Expert	Municipality of Gjirokastr	majkomajko51@yahoo.com	+355-69-2955-364
Albania	Avni LATIFAJ	Local Roma Expert	Commune of Shushice	komunashushice@yahoo.com	+355-69-368-5901
Albania	Shkëlqim FETAHU	Local Roma Expert	Commune of Grabian	shkelqimfetahu@yahoo.com	+355 684174952
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Begzada BEGANOVIC	Roma Municipal Referent	Municipality of Bijeljina	begzada.otaharin@hotmail.com	+387-66-843-442
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Vernesa ZEKIC	Social Protection Mediator	Municipality of Jajce	vernesa.ramic@gmail.com	+387-63-297-225
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mina FRLJANOVIC	Roma Municipal Referent	Municipality of Lukavac	mina.frljanovic@hotmail.com	+387-61-883-184
Kosovo*	Bashkim KURTI	Co-ordinator	Municipality of Gjakove/Djakovica	bashkim_kurti@yahoo.com	+377-44-386-885
Kosovo	Edi IBRAHIMI	Head of MOCR	Municipality of Gračanica/Gračanice	edi.ibraimi@hotmail.com	+386-49-181498
Serbia	Zorana PAVLOVIC	Co-ordinator for Roma Issues	City of Krusevac	zorana83@gmail.com	+381-61-159-5222; +381-37-440-810
Serbia	Vesna NIKOLIC	Co-ordinator for Roma Issues	City of Pančevo	vesnapancevo@yahoo.com	+381-63-476-5187
Serbia	Radmila ZECIROVIC	Co-ordinator for Roma Issues	City of Novi Sad	izprora@eunet.rs	+381-63-522-342
Serbia	Zoran PAVLOVIC	Co-ordinator for Roma Issues	City of Kragujevac	zpavlovic.kgrom@gmail.com	+381-64-462 5702
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Erol ADEMOV	Officer for Minority Communities	Municipality of Stip	erolademov@yahoo.com	+389-78-472-749
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Samija AJDINI	Officer for Minority Communities	Municipality of Prilep	samitrizia@yahoo.com	+389-76-517-913

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

