

SOCIAL COHESION CONSIDERATIONS

| Roma Community

Roma Task Force meeting | 25 August

2023



Social Cohesion Workshop



9 June 2023



30 participants



25 organizations – including Otaci Municipality and refugee representative

What is SOCIAL COHESION?



The belief held by citizens of a given nation-state that they **share a moral community**, which enables them to **trust each other**

The extent of **trust in government and within society** and the **willingness to participate** collectively toward a **shared vision** of sustainable peace and **common development goals**

In a refugee context, social cohesion calls for a **‘whole of society approach’**,



Main social cohesion challenges and considerations in respect to the Roma community



Characteristics:

- Roma communities (both refugee and local) are not homogenous within themselves and tend to be divided into different groups, which may speak different dialects or even languages, have different traditions and different mind-sets.
- These groups usually have little communication with each other, may face different challenges and the priorities identified by these groups also differ.

Main social cohesion challenges and considerations in respect to the Roma community



Different level of engagement:

- Different access to information and services based on the place of stay, people staying in RACs generally having better coverage of their basic needs, while people who stay with the host community tend to struggle more to meet the urgent and immediate needs of their households.
- The above factors cause obstacles for Roma refugees staying outside of RACs to participate and meaningfully engage in the activities.

Main social cohesion challenges and considerations in respect to the Roma community



Education inclusion:

- Biggest challenges for the Roma community.
- Reported lack of trust between the communities, since many Roma parents report feeling uncomfortable and concerned about sending their children to schools because they do not trust the host community (what is the evidence ?; more details on area rural/urban, North/South/ Centre)
- Issue of literacy of children and the need to adapt educational programme for their needs.
- Non-inclusion of Roma children in the education system is leading to more distance between the communities and precludes opportunities for meaningful interactions.

Main social cohesion challenges and considerations in respect to the Roma community



Livelihoods and inclusion in the labour market:

- Lack of communication, cooperation, and trust between the communities, marginalization, stigmatization and discrimination.
- Lack of economic stability and resources to cover the basic needs creates dependency on humanitarian aid, which has negative effects on the Roma community development and limits the engagement of the community, their participation and voice in the life of the broader community.
- Dependency on humanitarian aid is also negatively perceived by the local community.

Main social cohesion challenges and considerations in respect to the Roma community



Role of the Roma Community Mediators:

- Roma community mediators play an essential role in reaching out to and building trust with the Roma community, including within the humanitarian response and community development.
- Sometimes lack of coordination and collaboration between mediators INGOs, RACs, Local public authorities, and local NGOs.

Recommendations



- Consider the social cohesion, cultural aspects and particular locations context; tailor interventions to the needs and priorities of different groups. Tailor interventions to reach those living outside RACs, through better communication and targeted interventions.



- Involve Roma community mediators at the stage of the project design, implementation and monitoring, recognizing the often-limited time and human capacities of the mediators;



- Promote collaboration and coordination between Roma-led organizations and non-Roma led organizations who are committed to Roma inclusion; organize and promote awareness of and coordination between Roma Community Mediators from across organizations.

Recommendations



- Work closely together with the relevant sectors and the RTF to identify entry points for advancing access for Roma people's access to the educational system and the labor market in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner, while organizing community events that promote trust within and between communities.



- Identify the educational needs of Roma refugee children; Cooperate with local authorities, social workers and school administration, teachers and psychologists on inclusion of all Roma children based on their needs, prevention of absenteeism and drop out;
- Cooperate with public authorities to better inform Roma refugees on employment opportunities and professional training. Identify and address the discrepancies between available vocational trainings and barriers that prevent Roma from participating.

Recommendations



• Combat biases and stereotypes by highlighting examples of successful inclusion and integration of Roma people; Cooperate with the Equality Council and Ombuds Office in combating discrimination by informing the Roma refugees, Roma community, LPAs and service providers on human rights; Invest in the Roma community development.



• Monitor the human rights situation of Roma refugees. Be vigilant for the red flags, which may indicate grave breaches of social cohesion, and which require urgent response.

The Red flags may include:

Open conflicts and tensions between the communities
Discrimination, Gender-based violence (GBV), Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), Bullying, Neglect, Segregation

