



## **TAKING STOCK OF LOCAL EXPERIENCES**

A presentation at the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting  
- Side Event -

**Bringing Social Partners Together  
in Facilitating Roma's Integration into the Labor Market**

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# Key Social Actors and Roles

<b>Social Actors</b>	<b>Existing and Potential Roles</b>
Roma community-based organizations, community leaders	Serve as a link/ mediating body between local Romani individuals and other social actors, like businesses and schools; partner for joint initiatives, initiate local projects, social enterprise development for job creation
Other non-governmental organizations	Provide internships, scholarships for university studies, capacity building activities of local social actors/partners, financial support of initiatives, research, litigation to combat discrimination, local facilitation to bring different social actors together, initiate local projects
Labor bureaus/employment services	State support for vocational training and other job integration programs, provide data on unemployment, long-term unemployed, mediate job placement
Educational institutions	Provide qualification of existing and future workforce, research

# Key Social Actors and Roles

<b>Social Actors</b>	<b>Existing and Potential Roles</b>
(Local) governments	Support initiatives with financial contribution, provide jobs through temporary public works or support for Roma mediators/social workers. Responsible for local social and economic planning.
International public orgs. (OSCE, Council of Europe, UNDP, European Comm.)	Provide for internships, jobs for Roma public officers, European policy influence, funding support for initiatives
Private businesses	Practical study for vocational students, temporary employment within 'projects', permanent employment, provide training, accommodation and transportation support
Other public sector bodies (ministries, development authorities, minority bodies, etc)	Support initiatives with financial contribution, subsidies for companies to employ long-term unemployed for a limited period, policy development and implementation, provide work places.

# Mediating vocational training, on-the-job experience and job placement – example in Lom, Bulgaria

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**Social Actors:** Roma-Lom Foundation, Labor Bureau Directorate of Lom, local restaurant businesses, unemployed Roma up to the age of 30 years old.

## **Main components of the process:**

Obtain information on registered unemployed and establish joint action plan among the foundation and the labor bureau

RLF met with the Labor Bureau Directorate to **receive updated information** on the employment rate, level of professional skills among registered unemployed and jobs available on the market, and make **a joint action plan coordinating for implementation of national employment programs and those of the foundation.**

Improve access to information on opportunities

**Organized periodic meetings and distributed brochures** in the four Romani neighborhoods and the town center to explain existing governmental and private employment programs.

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Contractual agreements between the foundation, the labor bureau and local employers for a vocational course and on-the-job experience

Since local restaurants represented businesses with the most job opportunities, a vocational course bartending and waiting was organized. **RLF recommended the participants, motivated them to participate and provided materials and facilities** when needed. The **Labor Bureau provided specialists and instructors, and paid 40% of the minimum wage to the participants of the course.** Through written agreement, **employers also engaged to provide the students with on-the-job experience within their restaurants.**

**Results:**

**Twenty four participants, out of which eight of them were employed** permanently at the end of the program. Since then the foundation has also worked with municipal commissions, the labor bureau and local businesses to set up a **working group to plan, monitor and update the municipal economic development plan.**

# Job creation through social enterprise development - example in Iancu Jianu, Romania

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**Social Actors:** municipality of Iancu Jianu, Roma community initiative group (Humanity Rom)

## **Main components of the process:**

### Establishing a partnership to access resources

The local Roma-led initiative group and the local government prepared a **joint application** to the Romanian government program for the national strategy to improve the situation of Roma' in professional training and income-generating activities, co-financed by the European Commission Phare program. The initial partnership was established through a **written agreement between the local government and the initiative group**. The local government was the main applicant.

### Joint work in preparing the application

In preparing the application, the **local government provided the technical and logistical assistance to complete the application form**, including the feasibility studies for the income-generation activity. In the project they established a **sanitation service for waste removal, which employed 20 people**, mostly yet not exclusively from the Roma community. The closest sanitation service was about 50 km away, so the project responded to the local needs of the market.

## Division of roles

The **management of everyday activities is carried out by a local Roma leader**. The **local government donated a 250 m2 piece of land for 25 years**, which can be used for the office of the company and initiative group. They also approved a financial contribution from the **local budget amounting to 10% of the project**, and provided free use of a truck to collect and remove waste.

## **Results:**

The project ended in November 2005, and the **service continues to operate**. The NGO Humanity Rom was established out of the initiative group, and the **local government transferred ownership of the sanitation service and all assets to the newly established NGO**. A new agreement was signed, which continued the cooperation regarding the sanitation service, and the **local authority also took the responsibility to collect the money from the beneficiaries of the service**, and to transfer the money to the organization's account. In the new agreement, the **partners agreed to expand their partnership relation in other areas** such education and health.

# Training and recruiting Roma for employment – example in Svidnik, Slovakia

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**Social Actors:** SVIK clothing factory, Roma vocational school students and drop-outs, Wide Open School Foundation, Secondary Vocational Schools, employment bureau.

## **Main components of the process:**

### Cooperation with the employment bureau and vocational schools to recruit employees

The SVIK clothing factory located in northeast Slovakia sought out cooperation with vocational schools with high Roma representation, in view of **recruiting Roma to work in the factory**, and organizing **courses for re-training of adults** (especially women). They also work closely with the employment bureau and grammar schools.

### Measures for attracting and retaining Roma employees

As part of their efforts to increase incentive to work and to remain in the company, SVIK provides for **coaching and a specialist training system for its Roma employees**. Likewise, the company also offers to **pay travel and some accommodation expenses for qualified staff**, and employs other incentive-building methods such as **summer camps, paying interest on bank loans and kindergarten fees**.



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### Increasing access to qualification among drop-outs

In addition to the general recruitment practices of the SVIK factory, the secondary vocational school of clothing in Svidnik also took part in a pilot project to provide vocational education for Roma students with incomplete basic education. The initiative enabled Roma students to **complete their last year basic education and then continue in the certified vocational course as tailors**. This opened up the opportunity for more Roma to gain access to employment within the factory.

### **Results:**

About **25% of the factory's employees are Roma**. The company looks to **expand its efforts to increase employment opportunities amongst Roma by supporting small enterprises to produce baby clothing** from scrap materials donated from Svik's factories. In 2003, the Director of Svik received the 'prominent ekonomiky' award from the Economic Club in Bratislava.

# TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

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**TREND:** A large proportion of the adult, working-aged Roma population is long-term unemployed and living in disadvantaged regions. Many government-supported programs for long-term unemployed in these areas have had a limited impact, providing for limited qualifications and temporary, subsidized employment.

**CHALLENGE:** How to promote more effective, complex and long-term programs that instil work habits, provide skills that meet labour market needs, prepare businesses for employing Roma?

**TREND:** The predominant experience with labour market integration amongst Roma in Central and Eastern Europe deals with job creation or mediation for unskilled Roma labourers or vocational secondary school graduates.

**CHALLENGE:** How to increase the pool of Roma university graduates, along with greater visible representation in higher levels of the public and private sector?

# TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

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**TREND:** Civic organisations have played an important role in mediating and facilitating relations among Roma community members, businesses and educational institutions. They help prepare social actors, filter recruits, solve problems and serve as a trust factor.

**CHALLENGE:** How to scale-up models of facilitation, which successfully bring different social actors together, especially potential Roma employees and mainstream businesses?

**TREND:** Widespread prejudice toward Roma remains a key barrier to employment, since it can affect relations both within companies and between companies and their clients.

**CHALLENGE:** How to make greater strides in breaking everyday prejudice, while promoting general acceptance and understanding of the need for effective equal opportunity policies and practices?

# CLOSING REMARKS

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The challenges are complex and therefore call for complex approaches, which can only be carried out through greater dialogue, coordination and joint action amongst different social actors from the public and private sectors.