

*Promoting good governance
and Roma empowerment
at local level*

January 2020

ROMACTED at a glance Kosovo *

The official launch of the ROMACTED Programme in Kosovo took place on 31 May 2018 as part of the European Union and Council of Europe efforts in the Western Balkans and Turkey. On this occasion, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with eight beneficiary municipalities: Gjakovë/Đakovica; Gračanica/Gračanicë; Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South; Lipjan/Lipljan; Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje; Ferizaj/Uroševac; Istog/Istok and Obiliq/Obilić.

The action is coordinated and monitored by the Council of Europe Office in Pristina working closely with "Advancing Together", as the support organisation, a focal point for Kosovo and a team of facilitators and local experts.

As part of the efforts to build capacity of local authorities and communities for the process of programme implementation, four workshops on participatory local strategic planning were organised during April and May 2018, in the beneficiary municipalities with the participation of Community Action Groups and Institutional Working Groups. The workshops focused on the ROMACTED methodological steps of implementation.

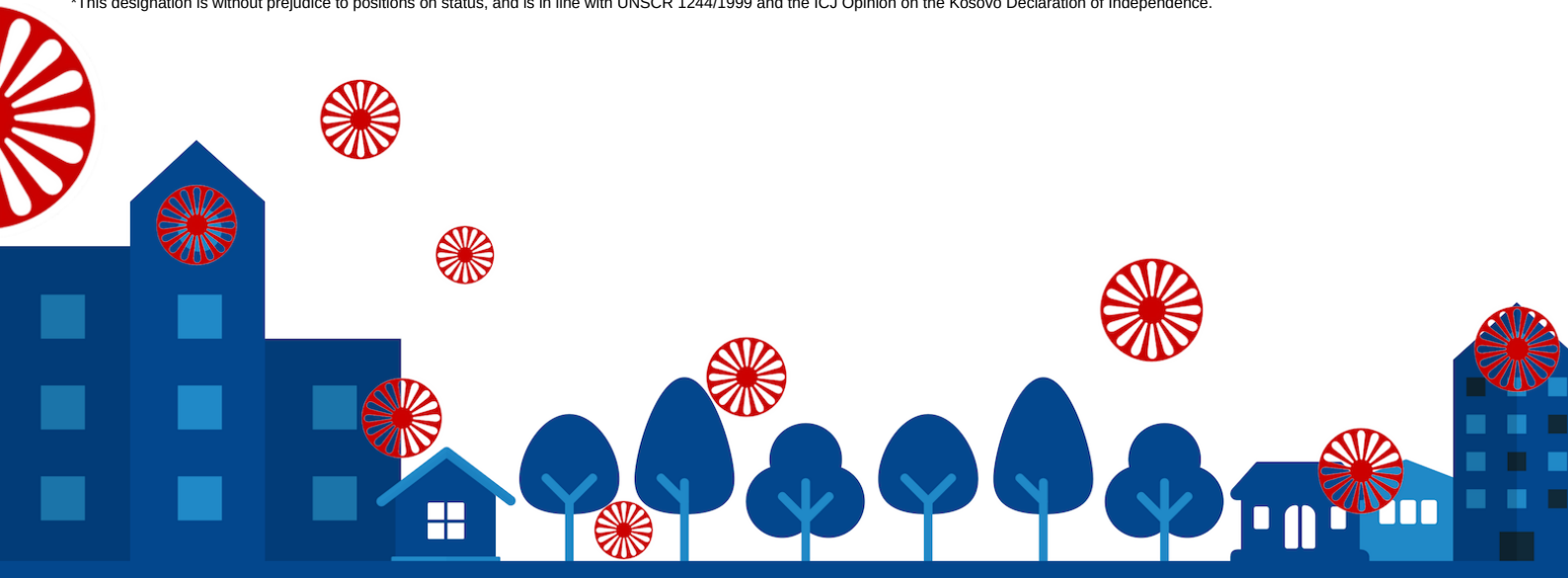
In addition to these workshops, beneficiary municipalities were provided with the following:

- Workshop on 'Principles and Tools for working with the Roma communities at local level' – April 2019;
- Training on 'Project Cycle Management' – June 2019;
- Training on the 'Promotion and Protection of Women's Rights in Kosovo' – November 2019;
- Workshop on 'European Union financial assistance for local authorities - Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance' (IPA) – January 2020.

The Advisory Group meeting took place in June 2019, bringing together the representatives from the local authorities, as well as central and international stakeholders.

A comprehensive Capacity and Needs Assessment study was carried out during 2018, completed in 2019, and presented to the various stakeholders of the programme.

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.



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Step

01

PREPARING THE PROCESS

ROMACTED was initially introduced to the municipal mayors and they ensured their commitment to the overall objective of the programme. The two main ROMACTED implementing mechanisms – the Community Action Groups (CAG) and the Institutional Working Groups (IWG) - were officially established in all eight municipalities during the first quarter of 2018. Two municipalities have established IWG with the support of the mayors. An additional CAG was established at a later stage in Janjevo/Janeve village of the Lipljan/ Lipjane municipality, with the aim of offering better access to the programme. The average number of Roma community members participating in the CAGs is 8 (2-3 women on average). The mayors delegated municipal contact points whose role is crucial in communicating with the local target groups.

Step

02

ASSESSING NEEDS AND PRIORITISING

The initial assessment of the general situation in the communities and the municipalities was carried out during the inception phase; this was done through the collection of qualitative data for the baseline survey in the eight target municipalities. Capacity Needs Assessments were carried out and completed in 2018. The identified and prioritised needs and capacities were used for addressing the issues in the joint meetings held between the CAG and IWG.

Local Action Plans (LAP) for the 'Integration of the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities' are in place in all eight beneficiaries. The actions set are in line with the community's needs, the time-frames fall within the ROMACTED Programme's duration, and plans have been approved by the local assemblies. Therefore, ROMACTED considered working with the current LAP and supporting their enactment and implementation.

In addition to the LAP, the long-term municipal project planning of the beneficiary municipalities considered it feasible to work with the current LAP and support their implementation. The CAG members presented written requests for inclusion of infrastructural projects, which in turn led to the inclusion of projects to improve the infrastructure of Roma settlements in the municipal plans in late 2018. Projects on sewerage, water pipes, and road repairs were implemented during 2019 in some of the municipalities (Obiliq/Obilić and Ferizaj/Uroševac).

Step

03

ADOPTING A JOINT ACTION PLAN

Two cycles of the Municipal Taskforce Group (MTG) meetings have taken place with the CAG and IWG in all eight municipalities. As part of the community mobilisation and empowerment, CAG members took the role of presenting priority needs to the IWG members and discussing them. Two issues were taken up by the municipalities in a unified approach. The first issue concerns scholarships for tertiary education, and the second one, internships for current students. Regarding the first one, Obiliq/Obilić revised the Municipal Regulation on Scholarships and included an affirmative approach for Roma students. Other municipalities, depending on the approach and internal procedures, have either taken a decision to issue university scholarships for Roma students (six in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje; three in Ferizaj/Uroševac) or are in the process of taking a decision on the issuance of scholarships. With regard to internship opportunities within public institutions, beneficiary municipalities have offered a number of internships (2 to 4) for current Roma students. Applications from interested students are expected in each municipality. In addition, the MTG meetings initiated some other actions that were jointly carried out by the community and municipality as follows:

- A radio programme in the Romani language has been initiated on Radio Gračanica/Gračanicë. The programme is broadcast once per week;
- Bilateral meetings took place between Lipjan/Lipljan and Gračanica/Gračanicë municipalities in order to try and find a solution for the provision of transport for secondary school students in Janjevo/Janjevo;
- Action was taken to clean the Ali Ibra neighbourhood in Gjakovë/Đakovica through community mobilisation after an initiative from the municipal contact point. ROMACTED provided 100 caps for the volunteers taking part in the action;
- A number of community requests for specific community needs were addressed to the local and central institutions;
- Issues on environmental protection and safety discussed and actions taken i.e. requesting/ providing trash bins and awareness-raising on the environmental protection in the Roma neighbourhood;
- Systematic medical check-ups for Roma women in the municipal healthcare institutions.

Step

04

FINANCING AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Some beneficiary municipalities (Obiliq/ Obilić, Gjakovë/ Đakovica, and Lipjan/ Lipljan) have allocated funds for the implementation of the Local Action Plans in their respective municipalities. So far, other municipalities have not planned funds for the implementation of the plans, which represents an overall constraint for the implementation of the policy documents concerning Roma inclusion. Through regular meetings with the local institutions and specific training on the importance of the Roma inclusion, Roma-responsible financing has been put on the radar of the municipal officials.

All of the participating municipalities have applied to the ROMACTED Small Grants Scheme and nine projects are currently being implemented.

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Synergies and Cooperation

■ Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA) - a complimentary synergy has been developed with regards to building the capacity of local administrations i.e. principles of good governance, Roma social inclusion, project cycle, etc. Cooperation was extended with the Ministry about the indicators on Municipal Performance. A specific indicator has been developed by ROMACTED, based on the format and the parameters of the Ministry, and in line with ROMACTED objectives. This indicator has been shared with the Ministry for consideration;

■ Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST) - synergy created to provide support in education, namely on enacting administrative instructions and/or affirmative action about inclusive policies at municipal level;

■ Office of Community Affairs in Prime Ministers cabinet (OCA) – cooperation has been agreed regarding community-related projects with ROMACTED municipalities. Also, synergies in coordination of the Roma-related issues at policy level have been established;

■ Roma Versitas Kosovo (RVK) – cooperation and support of the fifth edition of the Rolling Film Festival in Pristina. The event gathered film makers of Roma and non-Roma origin who promoted Roma culture and history. The festival was attended by a plethora of interest groups from various backgrounds; In addition, with Roma Versitas, coordination have been established with regard to the data collection about the number and scope of studies of the Roma students in all beneficiary municipalities. Lists of students with detailed information is shared by Roma Versitas. An outreach with potential students was conducted in some of the ROMACTED municipalities together with Roma Versitas;

■ UNDP ReLOaD – information was shared and coordinated with respect to the UNDP ReLOaD grant application procedure for two municipalities, including with Roma NGOs on the procedures of the application procedure. A practice of regular coordination meetings between two programmes has been established;

■ Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Rural Development – cooperation has been established in regard to the agricultural grants for small farmers. The call was coordinated with the Deputy Minister with the aim of distributing the information to potential Roma farmers. ROMACTED identified and shared information with the farmers;

■ Peace Corps - The support team was invited to present ROMACTED Programme during a training event for the 6th cohort of Peace Corps volunteers in Kosovo. Following this cooperation, a Peace Corps volunteer was placed with the Roma NGO to help the NGO Bram for a three-month period to build its capacities and provide support with English language learning.

■ OSCE – coordination and exchange on Roma-related issues has been established specifically with the Department of Human Rights and Communities. In the coordination effort, OSCE staff from the region were invited to participate at the Joint Meetings between the CAG and IWG of the beneficiary municipalities. In addition, OSCE's call for Summer School participants was shared among young CAG members. Several of them participated in the school, which was aimed at promoting cross-regional exchanges and building upon the professional skills of young political experts;

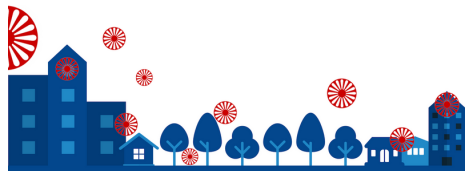
■ GIZ project on Capacity Development in Basic Education (CDBE) – coordination efforts were focused on three joint beneficiary municipalities, with an exchange of information and project-related activities;

■ Advancing Together (ROMACTED Support Organisation) – Synergies and cooperation were developed with the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the Roma Genocide. The educational and commemoration event "Dikh He Na Bister" was held in Krakow and Auschwitz, Poland, and gathered together ROMACTED CAG and IWG members of the beneficiary municipalities and a number of Roma youngsters representing Kosovo;

■ Roma Ashkali Egyptian Women's Network contributed with their expertise to a half-day training with Roma women. This synergy greatly contributed to the sharing of information and increasing knowledge of the legal framework for the protection and promotion of women's rights in general. This expertise could be utilised in future activities concerning women;

■ The mayors of Fushe Kosove/ Kosovo Polje (2018) and Lipjan/ Lipjan (2019) received the 'Most Roma-friendly mayor' prize for Roma Integration in the framework of the project 'Joint initiative to empower Roma civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey', implemented by ERGO Network and Roma Active Albania. The ROMACTED support team has been actively involved in encouraging the local actors to apply for the prize.

Small grants for municipalities



ISTOG/ ISTOK

Construction of the **sewage system** in 'Serbobran' village

GJAKOVË/ĐAKOVICA

Construction of the **sewage system** in 'Ali Ibra' neighbourhood

OBILIQ/ OBILIĆ

Construction of the **community park** in 'Plemetin' village

LIPJANE/ LIPLJAN

Installation of the **street lighting** in 'Medvec' village and

LIPJANE/ LIPLJAN

Establishment of the **Youth/Cultural Centre** in 'Janjevë/Janjevo' village

MITROVICA SOUTH

Improvement of infrastructure in '2 Korriku' neighbourhood (**road pavement**)

FUSHË KOSOVË/ KOSOVO POLJE

Connection of 'Meshari' neighbourhood to **water and sewage system**

GRAÇANICË/ GRAČANICA

Extension of the information space for the **media programme in the Roma language**

FERIZAJ/ UROŠEVAC

Mediation and **prevention of school drop-out** of children from the Roma community