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**BASELINE**  
**RESEARCH ON ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND**  
**INCLUSION IN DECISION MAKING PROCESS**  
**OF THE ROMA WOMEN AND YOUTH**  
in: Vitez, Travnik, Donji Vakuf, Prnjavor, Modriča and Vukosavlje

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## SUMMARY

According to available sources for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Roma are the most numerous and the most vulnerable national minority, whose position is characterized by a high degree of social exclusion. For the purpose of drafting this report of research on public policies and strategies, which was, as a baseline project, made under the CARE International Balkans 'Active Roma Youth for Rights and Inclusion', funded by the European Union Program: European Instrument For Human Rights and Democracy, we have performed the insight of the available data on this population<sup>1</sup>. The results show that the position of Roma families and living conditions in their settlements are more than bad, compared with the rest of the population, and that a greater number of Roma families still need organized state support. The latest indicators on Roma needs, which are listed in the Action Plan for Roma for 2017-2020<sup>2</sup>, still point to the need for strategic actions to reduce the exclusion of the Roma population. The basis for undertaking the strategic activities of Roma inclusion is contained within the framework of The Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina for addressing the issues of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>3</sup>. In addition to this Strategy, due to the position of this minority, there is a need for specifying the support for social inclusion of Roma according to the Law on Protection of Rights of Members of National Minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in order to ensure sustainable and long-term support to Roma men and women, as long as relevant indicators point to the degree of their exclusion. The Strategy was adopted in 2005, in the context of the obligations of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-15 and the European Union Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. In addition to the area of housing, employment and health care, the area of improvement of Roma educational status is regulated by the special Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina on Roma Educational Needs, revised and adopted by Council of Ministers (CMBIH) in 2010. This plan only focuses on actions to improve the education of the Roma population and fully depends on sectoral measures of the entity level of authorities in BiH in the field of education that should implement targeted actions for the Roma population.

The implementation process of the Strategy for Roma has been ongoing since 2008 and continues by adopting the Revised Action Plan 2013-2016,<sup>4</sup> which inherited the initial Action Plan,<sup>5</sup> and the new Action Plan 2017-2020 is in the phase of adoption. All these documents were issued with the consent of the Entities and Brčko District governments, considering the

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<sup>1</sup> Census of Population (1992) and 2013, Registration of Roma Needs (2010) Research on Multiple Indicators on the Status and Position of Roma Children and Women (2012) (MICS 4)

<sup>2</sup>The survey was conducted by the MHRR in 71 municipalities and as a result: the questionnaire was filled in by 31 local communities and expressed the needs for 4,650 Roma families as follows: for 729 Roma families have the need for adequate housing care; In the area of health care (data from 23 local communities) it is stated that 867 Roma do not have any health insurance, of which 416 Roma from the categories of children, elderly and persons with disabilities are also not covered by health insurance, in the field of employment, the employment services of the Entities and Brcko District BiH have provided data on their records now have a total of 3,141 unemployed persons who declared themselves Roma at the time of registration.

<sup>3</sup> Available at:

[http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/ljudska\\_prava/Odbor\\_za\\_Rome/Strategija%20BIH%20za%20rjesavanje%20PROBLEMA%20Roma.pdf](http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/ljudska_prava/Odbor_za_Rome/Strategija%20BIH%20za%20rjesavanje%20PROBLEMA%20Roma.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>Available at:

[http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/ljudska\\_prava/Odbor\\_za\\_Rome/Revidirani%20Akcioni%20plan%20Bosne%20i%20Hercegovine%20o%20obrazovnim%20potrebama%20Roma.pdf](http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/ljudska_prava/Odbor_za_Rome/Revidirani%20Akcioni%20plan%20Bosne%20i%20Hercegovine%20o%20obrazovnim%20potrebama%20Roma.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Available at:

[http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/ljudska\\_prava/Odbor\\_za\\_Rome/Akcioni%20plan%20za%20rje%C5%A1avanje%20problema%20Roma%20u%20oblastima%20zapo%C5%A1javanja,%20stambenog%20zbrinjavanja%20i%20zdravstvene%20za%C5%A1tite.pdf](http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/ljudska_prava/Odbor_za_Rome/Akcioni%20plan%20za%20rje%C5%A1avanje%20problema%20Roma%20u%20oblastima%20zapo%C5%A1javanja,%20stambenog%20zbrinjavanja%20i%20zdravstvene%20za%C5%A1tite.pdf)

competencies and the type of proposed measures. Action plans, in addition to education, cover areas of employment, housing and health care. Within the context of the planned measures and activities, the state level (Bosnia and Herzegovina) appears for the first time in a way to provide funds (grants) directly helping the lower levels of government to implement appropriate programs to provide direct support to the Roma population. Based on the above, it can be concluded that Bosnia and Herzegovina, using the regional initiative (Decade), has created a strategic basis for action. Strategic approach, for the time being, is dominantly oriented to the social inclusion of the Roma population.

Based on the insights into other strategic documents: *the Framework policy for early childhood development in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Policy for early childhood development of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Policy for early childhood development of Republic Srpska*, we note that **there is an additional possibility and a basis for achieving improvement in the position of the total population of children and how these documents emphasize 'marginalized groups of children', which do not explicitly mention Roma children but include them.**

The marginalization of Roma children is relevant, and the degree of vulnerability of Roma children can be noticed based on data provided by the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR)<sup>6</sup>. Data related to the area of education show, for example, the coverage by pre-school education: the overall rate for Roma children is 5.3%, and for the total population 13.6%, the rate for primary education for Roma children is 64.2%, and for the total population of 90.6%, the rate of enrolment in secondary education for Roma children is 16.3%, and for the total population 78.5%, the rate for enrolment in higher education is 2.5% for Roma, and for the total population 50.2%.

Also, data obtained under the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS<sup>7</sup>) research, show:

- the percentage of attending an early childhood education programs for the total population is 13%, while for Roma it is 2%.
- the percentage of early marriages before 18 years for the total population is 0.6% for men and for women 21%, while for Roma men is 10% and Roma women 48%;
- the infant mortality rate, live-born children for the total population is 8 ‰, and for the Roma population is 24 ‰.
- the mortality rate of children up to 5 years for the total population is 8 ‰ and for the Roma population is 27 ‰;
- the percentage of children with development delays, younger than 5 years for the total population is 9%, while the percentage of Roma children is 21%.
- when it comes to low weight at birth, 14% of Roma children weigh less than 2,500 grams at birth, while that percentage for the total population is only 3%.

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<sup>6</sup> From the census data for 2013, data source: Agency for Statistics of BIH in preparation of the RCC Report as part of the multi-beneficiary IPA

<sup>7</sup> Census of Population (1992) and 2013, Registration of Roma Needs (2010) Research on Multiple Indicators on the Status and Position of Roma Children and Women (2012) (MICS 4)

- when it comes to the coverage of 18 to 29 months old children immunization, only 4% of Roma children received all vaccines, compared to 68% of children in the total population.

The presented indicators indicate that **Roma children are multiple vulnerable and affected population in relation to other groups and need more support.**

When it comes to indicators of realization of policies for early childhood development, they do not contain indicators and information on what is being done to support Roma children, **so it is necessary to adopt and implement specific and affirmative measures, specifically targeted at early childhood development of Roma. It is also important to point out that these policies lack a link to policies that primarily deal with Roma, which needs to be harmonized.**

Generally observed, however, in recent years, there is visible progress in the social inclusion of Roma men and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the latest MHRR report from 2009-2016, the CMBIH allocated financial resources for the implementation of action plans in the total amount of **19,522,000.00 BAM**. As a result of the realization of the funds discharged, certain results were achieved in the following areas of protection:

**Employment and self-employment of Roma men and women:** A total of **4,777,000.00 BAM** (out of the total amount allocated in the period 2009-2016) was given for this program which covered **635** Roma men and women through co-financing programs for employment and self-employment, which were implemented through the entity employment services and the employment service of the Brcko District of BiH, by granting funds for the unemployed Roma. However, it should be noted that after a one-year employment co-financing program implementation, more than 95% of Roma people were fired from work and returned to employment bureaus, and only a small number of them was kept in constant employment, depending on the will of the employer or the sustainability of the projects for self-employment. In the new Action Plan for Roma for 2017-2020, it is planned to further co-finance the employment of another 628 Roma.

**Housing:** A total of **13,023,000.00 BAM** (in the period 2009-2016) was given for this area, of which **711** facilities for the Roma families were built and reconstructed, meaning that around **3,500** Roma men and women or about 10% of the total Roma population in BiH were helped. The Roma Housing Project for the past period includes funds allocated under IPA (5,000,000 EUR), as well as a smaller amount of funds from NGOs and local communities, which are reflected mostly through administrative support, communal infrastructure and donation of construction sites.

**Health Care:** In the period 2009-2016, **1,722,000 BAM** was spent on Roma health care. According to data provided by competent institutions and Roma NGOs, 934 Roma persons have been introduced into the health care system. Various educational and preventive health care programs, raising awareness of the importance of health care in the Roma community, immunization of Roma children and reproductive health and motherhood were carried out.

Education in this area was conducted in cooperation with the Roma non-governmental sector in the local communities, also as preventive programs - screening of specific diseases (cervical cancer, breast cancer, colon cancer).

**Education:** Considering that quality education for Roma men and women is the only way out of the circle of marginalization and social isolation, with the aim of creating equal opportunities in terms of access to quality and sustainable education for Roma children, within the Revised Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Roma educational needs, certain objectives are planned. Through the objectives of this plan, it is envisaged to:

1. include children belonging to the Roma minority in the compulsory elementary education system

2. encourage Roma children to continue secondary and higher education,

3. preserve Roma language and culture,

4. build systemic solutions that will lead to meeting the Roma's educational needs.

According to the implementation reports that are being prepared for each year, the first two and a fourth objectives are implemented, and for the third, there are no activities undertaken. According to the data provided by the competent authorities and NGOs during 2016, a total of **290,918 EUR** was spent on these objectives, and **93,055 EUR** for schoolbooks, snacks and transport to school were specifically provided, also with scholarships for secondary and higher education totaling **102,400 EUR**.

**Local planning:** Progress of individual local authorities needs to be noted. The one number of municipalities have adopted and initiated the implementation of local action plans for Roma. Local action plans were adopted in the municipalities: Travnik, Donji Vakuf, Prnjavor, Bijeljina, Kakanj, and in the phase of adoption is local action plan for the municipality of Tuzla, Vukosavlje, Gradiška, Vitez. The role of young Roma men and women (Roma youth) in realizing local action plans for Roma in local communities is very important because their potential is already visible in communities where they live. Strengthening of Roma civil society representatives, non-governmental organizations and youth in their fight to achieve basic social, economic and human rights in their communities, have created conditions for changes in the municipalities of Vitez, Travnik, Donji Vakuf, Prnjavor, Modruča and Vukosavlje and Tuzla. By educating more than 40 young Roma men and women, former project of CARE International (Roma Youth for right and inclusion), created the capacity for realization of local initiatives aimed at Roma integration in all future project, Beside that, those resources has been used by other projects and initiatives.

**Participation and capacity of civil society organizations with emphasis on Roma youth:**

Although 89 Roma associations operate in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to the experience of MHRR representatives, many Roma associations have a local character and small capacities. Most Roma associations gather a small number of members and no concrete work plans and project proposals have been prepared. Only a few Roma associations have experience in implementing multi-year projects and are partners of one number of international organizations and nongovernmental organizations in the realization of joint projects aimed at Roma. The role of the four established Roma Informative Centres is not specified and their capacities are not adequately used to share information to Roma organizations and communities. The organization and involvement of Roma youth in activism and participation in Roma's and local actions in their community is only in the beginning. In order to improve their participation, it is necessary to define a platform for their cooperation, consolidation and strategic action in the upcoming period, especially for Roma youth.

## 1. Introduction

Despite the significant results in improving the living conditions of Roma people, represented in the previous eight year period of implementation of the plans, we can conclude that Roma men and women in BiH are still in the most difficult economic and social situation. These families have no or modest income, are mostly unemployed and inadequately housed.

Public policies, strategic and planning documents at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>8 9</sup> directly affect the improvement of status of Roma people. The other sectoral planning documents of entities, cantons and Brcko District of BiH also have an indirect influence. These documents also set out different planning activities aimed at improving Roma positions in the field of employment, health care, all affecting the reduction of discrimination.

Although efforts made by the Council of Ministers of BiH (CMBIH), ie the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina (MHRR), are improving in recent years, the new phase of social inclusion should be designed as long-lasting. In recent years, the organization of Roma associations is better. Associations are formed exclusively by Roma representatives, in whose work participate very few representatives of other communities and nationalities, so this approach needs to be changed.

CMBIH ensured Roma participation in policy implementation by incorporating them into the work of the Roma Committee as an official instrument for inclusion. The Roma Committee was established in 2005 by the Council of Ministers of BiH.<sup>10</sup>

When it comes to regional cooperation, Bosnia and Herzegovina joined Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 in 2008. Concerning the process of the continuation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion after 2015, some conclusions have been made concerning the EU member states, which continued to apply these policies through the EU system. Western Balkan countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo (at UN Resolution 1244), Montenegro, Macedonia and Turkey continued the activities of Roma inclusion at national level and regional coordination within multi-axis IPA, approved by the European Commission 2020. This confirmed that the inclusion of Roma remains a priority on the political agenda of the EU and countries outside the EU (in the pre-accession negotiations).

Priorities for these policies are still four areas: education, employment, housing, health care, and the fifth priority, ie solving personal documents in parish registers.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina for Addressing Roma Issues in BiH and Revised Action Plan of BiH for Addressing Roma Issues in the Fields of Employment, Housing and Health Care 2013-2016,

<sup>9</sup> Available at:

[http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/ljudska\\_prava/Odbor\\_za\\_Rome/Revidirani%20Akcioni%20plan%20Bosne%20i%20Hercegovine%20o%20obrazovnim%20potrebama%20Roma.pdf](http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/ljudska_prava/Odbor_za_Rome/Revidirani%20Akcioni%20plan%20Bosne%20i%20Hercegovine%20o%20obrazovnim%20potrebama%20Roma.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> At the 93rd session held on March 8, 2017, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the Decision on the appointment of the members of the Fourth Council of the Roma Committee, which consists of 22 members, 11 representatives of Roma and 11 representatives of institutions.

<sup>11</sup> The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) in Sarajevo co-ordinates the implementation of the multi-beneficiary IPA and has the role of the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat for these countries. The overall objective of the multi-beneficiary IPA activities is that the planned activities affect the reduction of the socio-economic gap between the Roma and non-Roma population in the Western Balkans and reduce the impact of discrimination on Roma women, men and children. The role of the RCC is to: 1) give advice to the governments of the Western Balkans and Turkey on how to implement existing national strategies for Roma and action plans, 2) facilitate monitoring of implementation through NGO networks, and 3) create a repository of data relating to the Roma, with special attention focused on technical assistance from the EU and other donors.



Continuation of the Roma Decade 2020 helps IPA beneficiary countries in designing and implementing strategies and programs to address Roma exclusion. Implementation of country strategies will be implemented in cooperation with civil society organizations, international organizations and existing initiatives aimed at supporting the integration of Roma.<sup>12</sup>

### **1.1. Methodology of the report writing**

This report was prepared on the basis of the need of the CARE International Balkans Project 'Promoting Human rights and inclusion for the Roma Women and Youth', consultations and meetings with representatives of institutions and Roma associations included in project: Jačanje Zuralipe from Vittez and Romani Čej- from Prnjavor, their volunteers and employees engaged within project and also from previous baseline and analysis made for CARE international projects, with written materials and analysis of information obtained from representatives of the institutions.

The main objectives of this research (and foreseen in the Project) are:

- **Overall objective:**
  - Contribute to the promotion and protection of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights of the Roma minority by strengthening Roma civil society organisations and democracy activists in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Specific objective:**
  - To protect and enhance social, cultural and economic rights of Roma women and youth and increase their influence in decision making processes by strictly following the Rights based approach (RBA).

#### **Outputs expected within the Project are:**

- Output 1: Roma women from target municipalities are empowered to participate in social, cultural and economic activities and actively contribute to formal and informal decision making in their communities.
- Output 2: Young Roma activists are effectively using newly acquired skills, advocacy tools and digital technologies to bring positive changes to their communities and influence decision making at all levels.
- Output 3: Local authorities and local Roma CSOs are jointly creating an enabling policy environment and implement activities that ensure better living conditions for Roma population while making sure women and youth are actively participating and benefitting from these interventions.

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<sup>12</sup> The Directorate-General for Enlargement of the European Commission will ensure the binding of the Decade of Roma and EU enlargement processes and create synergies with the mechanisms within the EU framework for the national integration strategies of Roma men and women. The methodologies will be harmonized. The Steering Committee, which will consist of one representative of the RCC, the Open Society Fund and the European Commission, one from each IPA beneficiary country from the Western Balkans and Turkey and one representative of the Roma civil society, will provide overall leadership and strategic advice for this initiative .

## **Indicators for successful implementation of the project are:**

### **Overall:**

- # of new or amended policies, legislation, public programs, and/or budgets responsive to the rights, needs and demands of (Roma) people of all genders
- # of Roma women and youth represented in advisory and decision-making bodies at all levels
- % of Roma CSO represented in the overall Civil Society Sector

### **Specific:**

- # & % of Roma women and youth actively participating in programs that enhance their social, cultural, and economic rights,
- % of women who (report they) can equally participate in household financial decision-making
- # & % of Roma women and youth who take part in formal decision making in their communities
- Influence on # of policies affecting Roma women and youth at national level.

### **Outputs expectations:**

- OP1.1# educational and # business hubs established
- OP1.2# of Roma women have capacity to engage effectively in social, cultural and economic activities in target municipalities
- OP2.1# of policies affected by sharing best practice
- OP2.2 # young Roma activists (at least 40% women) have capacity to mobilize their communities and implement actions
- OP2.3# of local initiatives implemented and documented by effective use of digital technologies
- OP3.1 6 municipal local action groups (LAGs) for Roma inclusion (re)-established
- OP3.2 # of women and youth members of LAGs
- OP3.3# of policies created and adopted by local action groups
- OP3.4 # of local actions in Roma communities implemented

This baseline research was conducted in aligned with mentioned expectations in order of gaining realistic data and clear information about starting position on the field (Municipalities: Vitez, Donji Vakuf, Travnik, Prnjavor, Modriča and Vukosavlje) and before implementation project, in order of valuable measuring influence after completion of the project:

Final aim of this research is to clarify indicators on the implementation of the Project in order of gaining insight about strategy for implementation of the Project.

Second goal of this research is assessment of the capacity of civil society organizations in the Vitez and Prnjavor with an emphasis on the general status of activism among young Roma men and women, the number of Roma women and youth activists in the targeted area, their main activities and level of engagement with an emphasis on the ability to organize, representation of target groups (Roma communities) and community mobilization.

Within this research, the following activities were implemented:

**A-** The following documents related to the Roma population were collected in cooperation with the MHRR and reviewed:

*1) Local Action Plans and strategy for Roma in targeted Municipalities.*

**B-** A questionnaire was made, and an interview was conducted with a total of 13 key actors (direct interviews, communication via mobile and phone- employee persons from Romani NGO and volunteers).

**C-** Other relevant public information, former baseline, and other documents.

## 2. Research results

Main approach within this research was conducting direct interviews with the representative of the Romani NGO engaged in project as partners of the implementation (Jačanje – Zuralipe from Vitez and Romska Djevojka- Romani Čej from Prnjavor, and in each Municipality at least 10 participants (Roma women, youth volunteers and at least two representatives of the local institutions).

According information of the Romani organization here are following data of the Roma population within targeted Municipalities:

- Vitez:139 Roma families
- Travnik: 115 Roma families
- Donji Vakuf: 57 Roma families
- Prnjavor: 58 Roma families
- Modriča: 26 Roma families:
- Vukosavlje: 47 Roma families.

Approximately total number of the members of the families in mentioned Municipalities is: 2500 (More than 60% are women)

Here are data about each segment for the outputs of the project:

- **Output 1: Roma women from target municipalities are empowered to participate in social, cultural, and economic activities and actively contribute to formal and informal decision making in their communities.**

In researching this output, we set up several criteria that for this research could meant empowerment in social, cultural, and economic activities:

- Numbers of the women included in formal or non-formal meetings focused on Roma issue.
- Number of the Roma women participating in created program for economic empowerment.
- Number of the opportunities for cultural or other ways of the social inclusion of the Romani women from targeted Municipalities.

### **Conclusions:**

Considering facts that Roma women are majority within mentioned data in tarded Municipalities, if we look through criteria mentioned before, we can say that there is no formal and that there are only few informal opportunities for Roma women from target municipalities to be empowered to participate in social, cultural, and economic activities and actively contribute to formal and informal decision making in their communities.

The only way of such participation in current moment is through Romani NGO that will organize occasional meetings or working bodies within local communities. Inclusion through projects of the Donors is in current moment the only way for increasing capacities of the Roma women for any kind of the inclusion.

Following table is analysis of the inclusion of the Roma women in targeted Municipalities in one year:

Municipality	Numbers of ways of participation	Formal meetings Institutions	Non formal gatherings NGO activity	Numbers of the decision influenced
VITEZ	1	0	5	1
TRAVNIK	0	0	0	0
DONJI VAKUF	1	0	1	0
PRNJAVOR	1	0	3	1
MODRIČA	0	0	0	0
VUKOSAVLJE	1	0	1	0
TOTAL	4	0	10	2

This table is showing that there are no formal opportunities for Roma women participation in economic empowerment, and very rarely are included in NGO activities and rarely in non-formal cultural (celebration of the Roma holidays....) activities. This also is proving strong need for creating instruments, especially for formal Roma women participation.

- **Output 2: Young Roma activists are effectively using newly acquired skills, advocacy tools and digital technologies to bring positive changes to their communities and influence decision making at all levels.**

In mentioned and targeted Municipalities, according statement of the participants in research, there are 30% of the Roma youth. Still, amongst them at least 40% are not included in education system (or they quit after completion of the basic school).

#### Conclusions:

According evaluation made in first phase of the project (gathering of the Roma youth for participation in the project) there are three measurements identified:

- How much Roma youth know about activism – generally?
- How much activist activities the raised?
- And how much activist activities they supported?

This table is presenting real situation in one year before this research completion:

Municipality	Numbers interested Roma youth in Roma activism	Numbers actively included Roma youth activist	Number of self-motivated and created and initiated activist interventions from Roma youth	Number of supported activist interventions from Roma youth
VITEZ	10	5	0	3
TRAVNIK	1	1	0	1
DONJI VAKUF	2	1	0	1
PRNJAVOR	10	5	0	5
MODRIČA	2	1	0	1
VUKOSAVLJE	2	2	0	2
TOTAL	25	15	0	13

If we look data above, we can conclude that there are Roma youth included or educated through former NGO and donors project, but there is lack of the motivation and opportunities for Roma youth activist. There are no initiatives raised form the formal institutions which means the local institutions still do not recognize Roma youth activism as valuable resources for their own filed of the work.

- **Output 3: Local authorities and local Roma CSOs are jointly creating an enabling policy environment and implement activities that ensure better living conditions for Roma population while making sure women and youth are actively participating and benefitting from these interventions.**

To analyze this input, we created following three measurements (one year and current period):

- Number of the opportunities for joint creation of the policies.
- Number of the local bodies for Roma women and youth inclusion for creation of the local policies.
- Number of the Monitoring tolls at the local level within implementation of the current Roma policies.

According information from the participants in research here are data:

Municipality	Numbers formal opportunities for joint creation of the policies	Numbers non-formal opportunities (NGO projects) for joint creation of the policies	Number of the local bodies for Roma women and youth inclusion-active in regular work	Number of the local bodies for Roma women and youth inclusion-resource present but they are not regularly active	Number of the monitoring tolls in local communities
VITEZ	1	3	0	1	0
TRAVNIK	1	1	0	1	0
DONJI VAKUF	1	2	0	1	0
PRNJAVOR	3	5	0	1	1
MODRIČA	0	1	0	1	0
VUKOSAVLJE	1	2	0	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>

### **Conclusion:**

It is obvious that there is no clear formal structure for Roma participation. In almost all targeted Municipalities, there are non-formal, and groups that are active only through various project. This is also greater opportunities for future Local institutions engagements. The resources are there since we do have at least 50% of the included activist, educated and motivated to be include in participation in joint creation of the initiatives, project and actions. What is missing is forma and regular bodies that will act as some kind activity team for planning initiatives, information exchange which will open space for larger inclusion of the Roma women and youth.

Folowing table contain current data in time of research on indicators forseen during implementation of the Project:

Overall objectives				Specific objectives			
Municipality	#of new or amended policies, legislation, public programs, and/or budgets responsive to the rights, needs and demands of (Roma) people of all genders	# of Roma women and youth represented in advisory and decision-making bodies at all levels	#Roma CSO represented in the overall Civil Society Sector	# of Roma women and youth actively participating in programs that enhance their social, cultural, and economic rights,	% of women who (report they) can equally participate in household financial decision-making	# of Roma women and youth who take part in formal decision making in their communities	Influence on # of policies affecting Roma women and youth at national level.
<b>VITEZ</b>	0	1	3	5	1%	3	0
<b>TRAVNIK</b>	1	0	0	1	1%	0	1
<b>DONJI VAKUF</b>	1	0	1	1	1%	1	1
<b>PRNJAVOR</b>	3	1	5	5	3%	5	3
<b>MODRIČA</b>	0	0	0	1	1%	0	0
<b>VUKOSAVLJE</b>	1	0	0	1	1%	0	1
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>

#### Conclusion:

From presented data it is obvious fact that within Roma NGO there are resources but there are no instruments within local institutions for Roma inclusion. There are at least three ways of the formal inclusion expressed through perception of the participants in research:

- Participation in official bodies (that will be formed formally with formal delegation from institution and meet regularly, and be recognized within structures of the local institutions);
- Creation of the local strategies on several levels and importance:
  - Strategies.
  - Policy papers.
  - Activity plans.
- Creation of the team for local action (with clear responsibilities needed for ad hoc reaction and work within specific issues;

## **COVID -19 and Roma population:**

Since this baseline research was conducted in May 2020, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Roma population generally faced with COVID-19 pandemic crisis. This is short overview of the influence of the COVID-19 on Roma population and inclusion of the Roma activist and women during this time:

Since COVID-19 outbreak, many Roma NGOs initiated activities to address the situation within Roma settlements. Usually without basic access to the water, electricity, basic communal services, Roma settlements and Roma population can become greatest health and social risk for all communities and cities where Roma population live. Several major issues are emphasized as greatest need in current situation:

**Food and hygiene:** Without any access to the food and hygiene resources Roma community are now becoming serious risk for all cities. Additionally, since the lockdown, there are limited or no opportunities even for smallest income that Roma families could make on the market or through collecting and reselling materials).

**Education:** Education system now in BiH is transferred to online learning. Within Roma families where there are no basic resources, electricity e.t.c, for many of them this means that Roma children are excluded from education.

**Medical check-up:** Even before the pandemic, Roma population had limited access to the health services. Now, when entire attention of the health system is on COVID-19 this access is completely disabled. This is affecting even more the elderly Roma. Additionally, Roma families are faces with limited/no possibilities for purchasing needed medicaments for chronic medical problems, due to lack of income.

**Long term need:** Even before this crisis, Roma population had very limited access to job opportunities and now the situation will be even worse, due to the crush-down of the economy. Major number of the Roma families will end up below the poverty line.

**For getting clear insight we set up several questions:**

**1. Did you experience discrimination or resentment before the corona pandemic?**

**a. If yes, by whom? Public institutions/local authorities/Mayors/government, fellow citizens**

Almost all participants agreed that question of the discrimination was in some form present before pandemic. It is perception of participant that Roma women or youth/male will face one or more cases of the discrimination:

- In many cases Roma will have low level of the qualifications due problems connected with education (quitting education, exclusion from the educational system)- with such low level of the formal qualifications access to the job opportunity is lower form Roma than non- Roma population.

It is fact (according statements of the participants in this research) that regarding women there are several examples of the discrimination even within Roma communities but also in position of the Roam women generally:

- In all 6 mentioned Municipalities there are only 0.1 % Roma women employed (in already small number of the Roma formally employed);
- In 6 mentioned Municipalizes only 0,1 % Roma women are the owners of the property, due tradition but also poverty generate amongst women generally in Roma communities.
- It is perception that Roma girls will at least three time more frequently quit education (for illegal youth marriage or traveling and emigration process, or early marriages (at 18 years...), sometime due traditional believes, sometime due perception of the Roma girls and women, sometime because social or family pressure.



Those data are proving that Roma women have twice less chances for equal treatments, position and access within societies and local communities even without pandemic. In same time more than 80% of the Roma women are responsible for maintaining families (through begging on the street, inclusion in collecting raw materials e.t.c). Biggest obstacle during pandemic was lack of the access to the medical check-ups need in specific cases (cancer indentation, reproductive health...). Since many Roma women are without any income, ownership, job, for them was even harder to access to the health service, especially during pandemic. Even without pandemic, only way for regular medical treatments were provided through various donor projects.

## **2. Did Corona increased discrimination and resentment?**

**If question 1 is answered no: Have you experienced discrimination since the Corona Pandemic?**

### **a. If yes, by whom? Public institutions /local authorities/Mayors/government, fellow citizens**

Explained above...

## **3. Does Corona worsen your economic situation?**

### **a. If yes, how?**

Another impact that is discrimination was employment. If we consider that only 3% of the Roma have formal employment, and amongst those 3% less than, 01% are women, access to the employment was in pandemic one of the major issues for Roma population. More than 85% are included in collecting raw materials as way of providing any income- in pandemic situation all those was blocked and stopped due decrease of communication and travel. That means that even those 85% of the Roma in self – employment was in one day without any income. Other social issues such as violence in Roma communities is increased and during pandemic crisis there is no any mechanism for reaction in this time.

## **4. Do you get support that helps you to be prepared to deal with Corona?**

### **a. If yes, by whom? Offices/local authorities/Mayors/government, fellow citizens, NGOs/organizations**

### **b. If yes, what does it consist of?**

Within distribution of the food and hygiene packages, main role played DONORS and NGOs due lack of the resources from local institutions, this weakness also effected Roma communities, which was in local institutions perception was almost “invisible”. Since Roma community are marginalized and in category of the priority, this situation effected Roma communities in the way that instead being first for support in many cases they were last one.

## **5. Do you have sufficient access to health care?**

### **a. Do you think that other population groups are better served?**

Another case of the discrimination was access to the health services. Since access to the health sector was limited for all citizens, in Roma communities was even more problematic.

There were no mobile health teams available and if we consider that many Roma did not have any health insurance, even in pandemic situation their access to the health service were more limited.

**6. Would you have the possibility to be tested for COVID-19 if you were showing symptoms?**

**a. Do you think that other population groups are better served?**

In all possibilities for testing was at the time of the preparing this report (May 2020) in preparatory phase- for now we can say that Roma will be equally included.

**7. Has your access to the health care system / health care services deteriorated since the Corona pandemic?**

Yes, as described above.

**8. Do you have sufficient access to hygiene to protect yourself from COVID-19?**

As described above, in many cases at the begging of pandemic only through donor support Roma population gained access to the distribution of the food and hygiene packages. State and local mechanism was at the begging to slow to reach those excluded communities.

**9. Are you able to maintain "social distance"**

**a. If not, why?**

Yes. But there are several factors that must be consider:

- Many Roma families are larger families (12- or more numbers);
- Roma population traditionally is connected, way of living includes lots of gatherings, e.t.c. Due to the work of the local ROMA NGO Roma communities are fast informed about measurements of distancing, protection, hygiene.

**10. Do you think that you are treated differently than other population groups (ethnic groups) by the authorities and government regarding corona measures?**

**a. If yes, how?**

In rear cases Roma communities was perceived as isolated and excluded communities. During pandemic situation local structures showed weakness in reaching those communities, in lack of the data about possible crisis and beneficiaries. Only because existence of the local ROMA NGO, those beneficiaries and their need become visible.

**11. Do you think that national measures designed to help the population during the crisis are actually helping you and your community (online education, financial aid, unemployment benefits)?**

Most of the State measurement included only campaign and promotional measurements, raising awareness. The other measurements included limitation and restrictions of the movement. In all those measurements there was no active support for the broad population. For example, if there is limitation of the movement than mobile teams should be installed to reach population in need, such as Roma population. Only restrictions are burdening already excluded population, such as Roma.

**12. Do you receive any information about COVID-19?**

**a. If yes, where does the information come from? Media, Offices/local authorities/Mayors/government, NGOs/organizations, friends/relatives**

**b. Do you feel properly informed?**

**c. If not, do you think other population groups are better informed / better targeted?**

There was one obstacle generally that created situation of the discrimination for Roma population during pandemic. General lack of education is causing lack of motivation for gathering information about possibilities. Even for those opportunities that was present as support in pandemic on local level, Roma families were not informed. The only way of information sharing was through Roma NGO. They had limited capacities, but also created lot of the support through various projects funded by donors.

**13. Which rumors about the coronavirus have you heard / are being spread in your community?**

- It will affect only elders.
- Does not exist.
- It will last only few months.

**14. Do contact restrictions and curfews pose an existential threat to you?**

**a. If yes, how?**

**b. If yes, do you nevertheless stick to them?**

- Losing any way for making any income.
- Fear of losing member of the family because of poverty not only Corona.
- Depending on already weak work of the local institutions.
- Invisibility of the Roma community for Roma issues within local institution will increase.
- Lack of freedom to find ways of maintaining my family;

**15. Does Corona have a strong impact on your daily life?**

**a. If yes, how?**

Beside many psychological problems Roma population is also facing with the situation that there is insisting on online work communication and information exchange. For population with low level of the "online" life, this can be also factor of the exclusion. Uncertainty is creating a lot of fear amongst Roma population especial restrictions included in pandemic strategies. Fear of the Covid-19 in population that has weak health awareness and access to the health services can have catastrophic consequences since there is no any psychological support not only for Roma but also for non Roma population.

## **2.. Local action documents for Roma in selected municipalities**

Based on the data collected by the MHRR, based on the official contact with local community authorities, and in relation to the LAP (Local Action Plan) for Roma, we have reached the following information:

### **2.1.1. Donji Vakuf**

**'Local action plan for inclusion of Roma in the municipality of Donji Vakuf for the period 2016-2020'** (hereinafter: LAP Donji Vakuf), was adopted by the municipality in 2015. The plan states that from the total population of the municipality of Donji Vakuf, 1.3% are Roma (57 families / 175 members) who live in four local communities: MZ Donji Vakuf III (21 households), MZ Donji Vakuf II (20 households) MZ Donji Vakuf I (15 households), MZ Barice (1 household). LAP Donji Vakuf envisages taking special measures-affirmative actions aimed at creating equal conditions and opportunities for the Roma population and eliminating all forms of discrimination and inequality and protecting their rights, reducing poverty and their inclusion in social and political life in the local community. LAP Donji Vakuf envisages concrete measures and activities in the fields of education, employment, health and social care, housing, protection of culture, customs and traditions of the Roma population. Within the framework of the LAP Donji Vakuf, indicators are given not only on the number, but also on the structure of the Roma population (men, women and children, age, number of social beneficiaries and total

average use of living space, etc.). LAP Donji Vakuf contains the baseline data for each of the areas on the basis of which the identified needs, ie, priority areas of action that are elaborated in the areas of protection and provides elements for monitoring its implementation (activities, activities carriers, resources, target group, finances, timeframe and indicators). The establishment of the monitoring commission for LAP Donji Vakuf which will be attended by representatives of Roma non-governmental organizations, is planned. The municipality also envisages the allocation of financial resources up to 10% of the value of the projects planned for implementation and also envisages the use of other donor funds.

In terms of LAP implementation, the current indicators are:

- According to the municipal representatives' statement, no LAP implementation report has been produced so far. The municipality has not appointed a person for LAP monitoring. No interresor monitoring team has been appointed, and the budget has not been determined. They are planning to submit a report on the implementation of the LAP to the MHRR, at the end of the year.

- According to the MHRR indicators in 2010, 9 residential buildings and 4 reconstructions of residential buildings were built for Roma citizens, and during 2016, reconstruction of 6 more buildings was started.

- Based on the interview, Roma representatives in front of the Association "Romska Pravda" stated the following facts:

**1. Participation of Roma representatives:** Roma actively participated in the preparation of LAP together with a representative of the Center for Social Work, municipality and representative in front of elementary schools and actively participated in formulating a strategy for the basic and main priorities of Roma in the municipality of Donji Vakuf. Implementation of the LAP Donji Vakuf has been implemented since this year (2017).

**2. Housing:** From the donor funds, the construction of housing facilities for the Roma has been ensured.

**3. Education:** The Municipality provided funds for the extraordinary placement of primary school for Roma who were not educated or stopped their education.

**4. Monitoring of LAP implementation:** Although a local interresor monitoring team for LAP has not been established, this function is performed by a commission that has prepared it. Also, the monitoring of the OSCE team, which consists of people from Travnik, is now included. Roma representatives are involved in monitoring of LAP and have monthly meetings where new projects are planned, and determine the activities to be carried out in the coming period, such as school visits, employment projects, local community tours, and so on.

**5. Health and social care:** Rights are regulated at the state level, and children up to 6 years of age have the right to any type of assistance completely free of charge.

**6. Employment:** They have information that a new project for employment for Roma youth is being implemented.

**7. Protection of the culture, customs and tradition of Roma:** Roma representatives state that they do not have enough funds for the formation of cultural and artistic societies, or other activities, although Roma youth abound in various talents regarding the customs and tradition of Roma.

**8. Participation of Roma in political and public life:** In the municipality of Donji Vakuf, Roma representative was elected to the Municipal Council.

**9. Suggestions for LAP improvement:** Roma representatives consider that in order to improve the implementation of the existing LAP, more attention should be paid to the culture and customs of Roma, which would also entail the active involvement of Roma youth in the implementation of the LAP. Also, special attention should be paid to the adequate education of non-Roma children in elementary schools, which would significantly contribute to the reduction of discrimination which, unfortunately, is still present.

### 2.1.2. Prnjavor

**'Local Action Plan - Active Participation for Roma Inclusion 2016-2020'** (hereinafter: LAP Prnjavor), was adopted by the Municipality in 2015.

The LAP Prnjavor contains a general introduction on the legal framework and position of national minorities in the municipality, also contains a list of observed problems and previous results on the basis of which the goals and measures have been proposed, as well as activities in the areas of employment, health, education, housing and protection of culture, customs and tradition.

LAP defines 9 problems - areas of action with objectives, project measures, monitoring indicators towards responsible institutions, timing of implementation and funding sources. The LAP envisages monitoring, evaluation and institutional mechanisms for the implementation of LAP Prnjavor. It also envisages the formation of a working group by the Mayor of Prnjavor Municipality which would be tasked with submitting an annual report on the degree of realization of the set goals.

*In terms of LAP implementation, the current indicators are:*

- The report on the implementation of LAP Prnjavor is not made.
- The Prnjavor LAP monitoring body has not yet been established.
- Funds for national minorities and Roma have been planned in the budget of the municipality of Prnjavor, although the budget of the LAP Prnjavor is not defined.

*Based on the interview, Roma representatives in front of the Association "Romani chej" stated the following facts:*

**1. Participation of Roma representatives:** The Roma representative took part in the development of LAP Prnjavor and worked on data collection and informed institutions about the problems of Roma men and women in the area of this municipality. They pointed out to the priorities to be included in LAP Prnjavor, and included 8 key problems that Roma people encounter in this municipality, and the priorities which concern the preservation of Roma

culture, education, employment, construction of infrastructure in Roma settlements, etc. The municipality did not envisage enough funds to implement the LAP.

**2. Housing:** All Roma men and women from the municipality of Prnjavor are stable with housing. Swiss Caritas, MHRR and Prnjavor Municipality have participated in resolving housing issues for Roma men and women. A member of the Association "Romani chej" is always a part of the selection committee. Also, through projects, this Association has solved in one settlement the problem of sewage, landslides, repair of roads, etc.

**3. Education:** The Association 'Romani chej' is one of the more active associations which is in cooperation with other associations of the Roma population. Association of Roma of Prnjavor Municipality, Roma Association 'Romska snaga', together with Association 'Romani chej', organized workshops in which they talked and motivated pupils about the importance of enrollment in secondary education and the completion of high school, as well as higher education, helped and informed about scholarships for high school students. The Roma mediator helped school children to enroll in the school, collect the necessary documents, receive free certificates from the Center for Social Work in order not to pay for enrolling in high school, etc.

**4. Monitoring of LAP implementation:** Although it has been indicated that a working group will be formed and that it will meet once a year at the end of the year and consider the LAP implementation flow, this has never happened.

**5. Health and social care:** The association 'Romani chej' each year works on reproductive health projects for Roma women, workshops and materials production. It is about educations through workshops on the importance of preventive health care, the organization of preventive examinations, the production of brochures, leaflets and promotional materials on health issues, with emphasis on reproductive health, where Roma youth is involved as members of the association.

**6. Employment:** The association informed unemployed Roma men and women about the employment opportunities and funds available through public employment services. They also informed employers about the possibility of employment of Roma people and on existing resources.

**7. Protection of the culture, customs and tradition of Roma:** Roma holidays are promoted through the media. Roma people, especially youth, participate and are the organizers of National Minorities Festival together with the Prnjavor Municipality.

**8. Participation of Roma in political and public life:** Roma men and women vote on the elections, they are on the lists for the elections. Representative of the Association "Romani chej", Snježana Mirković is also a member of the Roma Committee at the level of BIH, for the region of Dobož.

**9. Suggestions for LAP improvement:** The suggestion is to allocate funds from the Municipality budget, and also to set up a monitoring and evaluation team for the LAP Prnjavor.

### 2.1.3. Travnik

**'The Action Plan of Travnik Municipality for Addressing the Roma Problems in the Areas of Education, Health Care, Employment and Housing Care 2016-2020'** (hereinafter: LAP Travnik) was adopted in 2015. In the municipality of Travnik, 459 Roma live in 115 Roma families, of which children (under 18) make up 49%. LAP Travnik was adopted in order to encourage Roma to participate in all social flows and it accesses particularly to health care, changing life habits, improving education, access to information, employment, solving housing problems and generally reducing any form of discrimination. LAP Travnik provides preparatory actions with the aim of developing a data collection plan and mapping needs, improving cooperation with Roma associations and appointing a LAP Travnik monitoring committee. LAP Travnik includes the following areas: education and culture, health and social care, employment, housing and spatial planning. LAP Travnik is designed to identify the areas of action, the measures to be taken, the expected results, the indicators, the relevant institutions for the implementation, deadlines and sources of funds. LAP Travnik also explains the objectives and measures, and envisages the responsibilities of the relevant institutions, which, in accordance with their competencies, each year should provide funds for the realization of the planned activities. It is envisaged the establishment of a commission for monitoring the implementation of LAP Travnik, which will be established by municipal councils. Report on the implementation of LAP Travnik shall be submitted to the office of the Mayor. Publication of the report on the website of the Travnik municipality is also planned.

According to the MHRR data, two new housing units have been built in the municipality of Travnik, two houses and water supply network are sanitized from the grants provided by the MHRR and municipal funds.

*In terms of LAP implementation, the current indicators are:*

A member and group leader, who worked on identifying the needs of Roma, measures, as a consultant, engaged by CARE International Balkans, said that the reason for adoption of the local action plan in Travnik municipality is the fact that the position of Roma in their local community is the most serious social problem. LAP Travnik was therefore adopted as an expression of assistance and support to Roma as a national minority. The LAP is also a strategic document, which is of great importance for the development of the municipality, and a way to allocate funds, which would help to solve the problems of Roma population. LAP includes the following *priorities*:

- Nurture, education and culture;
- Health and social care;
- Employment;
- Housing and spatial planning.

She expressed the opinion that it was necessary to change certain segments and adjust them to better and systematically address Roma problems.

It states that the municipality will provide funds from its own budget and donations for the following purposes:

- a) For the purchase of land for the construction of houses for the Roma that do not have their own land;
- b) For the construction of access roads;
- c) To develop projects for the construction of 11 houses;
- d) For subventions of rents for apartments;
- e) For various reconstructions of already existing houses, apartments, buildings in which live Roma.

For the purpose of monitoring, a local interresor LAP monitoring team was established with the following members: Mara Ištvančić, president, Elmir Adilović - deputy president, Emir Šakić - member, Ivana Natašević - member and Hatidža Muslimović - member.

**1. Participation of Roma representatives:** Since no Roma association has been formed in the municipality of Travnik, the contribution to the development of LAP was provided by the Association "Strengthening-Zuralipe" from Vitez, which was also involved in identifying the needs of Roma.

**2. Education:** In this area they were not reported on the activities undertaken.

**3. Health and social care:** According to the information they have, all Roma have the right to free health treatment, and the Municipality is continuously working on improving hygienic sanitary conditions in flats inhabited by Roma. Roma men and women receive support when enrolling children after birth, in a birth registers.

**4. Employment:** Specific indicators on employment of Roma men and women are not presented.

**5. Housing:**

In order to start up projects intended for housing, it is envisaged:

- a) The purchase of land for the construction of houses for the Roma that do not have their own land;
- b) The construction of access roads;
- c) Developing projects for the construction of 11 houses;
- d) The subventions of rents for apartments;
- e) The various reconstructions of already existing houses, apartments, buildings in which live Roma.

**6. Protection of the culture, customs and tradition of Roma:** The celebration of significant dates for Roma is being realized in the Primary School "Karaula", which is attended by the largest number of Roma children.

**7. Participation of Roma in political and public life:** There is no data on the participation of Roma representatives in local bodies.



### **8. Suggestions for LAP improvement:**

A suggestion is that, in order to better involve Roma representatives, an operational plan for strengthening the activism of the Roma population, especially Roma youth, should be adopted.

#### **2.1.4. Vitez**

##### **1. Activities on the development of LAP for the municipality of Vitez:**

The representatives of the municipality of Vitez were contacted and reported that they had not begun to draft LAP. However, activities, according to the municipal representatives and the MHRR, which are implemented without a local action plan, exist.

**2. Housing:** By 2013, the municipality of Vitez was working on the infrastructure of the settlements inhabited by Roma, while in 2014 8 housing units were reconstructed. Since 2016, work on infrastructure has been underway.

**3. Education:** Roma children attend primary and secondary schools, but there is no special treatment for this population, except for the convenience of having free books. There are no special programs and centers for children and youth related to education, nor available data on how many children complete primary / secondary school and whether they attend kindergarten, pre-school education, or about how many people are involved in school attendance. All activities related to education are implemented by NGOs, after the existence of appropriate projects, but not in continuity.

**4. Health and social:** Health care is regulated through the Center for Social Work. All members of the Roma population have the right to free health treatment and social care in accordance with the law.

**5. Employment:** There is no data on the employment of Roma in this municipality.

**6. Protection of the culture, customs and tradition of Roma:** It is implemented through NGOs at municipal level. The Association 'Mladi Romi' (Roma Youth) is working on strengthening and protecting the culture, customs and traditions of the Roma through the involvement of youth in the folklore sections and the establishment of the Cultural and Artistic Society 'Romi'.

**7. Participation of Roma in political and public life:** Member of the Roma Committee at the level of BIH is Sabahudin Tahirovic from the Association "Strengthening-Zuralipe" for the Central Bosnia Canton.

### **2.2. Assessment of the capacities of Roma associations in the selected municipalities with an emphasis on the work of Roma youth**

Regarding the objective of the research, it should be emphasized that there is practically no information and relevant indicators for a quality assessment of the capacities of Roma civil society organizations. For the purpose of the analysis, we collected data in the selected municipalities of Donji Vakuf, Prnjavor, Travnik, and Vitez, with an emphasis on the general

status of activism among Roma youth, the number of Roma youth associations in the target area, what are their main activities and level of engagement.

As emphasized in the Report on the Implementation of the Revised Action Plan of BIH for Addressing the Roma Problems in the Field of Employment, Housing and Health Care 2013-2016 for 2015, cooperation with Roma associations has not yet been formalized by harmonizing a common platform (protocol) for cooperation as envisaged by the action plan. According to the data available to the MHRR, currently 89 Roma associations are operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### **2.2.1. Donji Vakuf**

In current moment there is no Romani NGO in Donji Vakuf.

### **2.2.3. Prnjavor**

Based on the data collected by the MHRR and the representatives of the municipality, there are three associations registered:

1. Roma Association of Municipality of Prnjavor;
2. Association 'Romani chej' Prnjavor;
3. Roma Association 'Romska snaga' Prnjavor.

Neither of these associations represents an explicit youth association, nor does it have a separate youth forum within the association. Youth within these associations are included in the form of volunteerism and activism in the implementation of various projects, workshops, etc.

### **2.2.4. Travnik**

Based on the data collected by the MHRR and the representatives of the municipality, there are no Roma associations registered in this municipality. There are some ongoing attempts to form an association.

### **2.2.5. Vitez**

Based on the data collected by the MHRR and the representatives of the municipality, there are five associations registered:

1. Citizens' Association 'Strengthening-Zuralipe' Vitez,
2. Citizens' Association - Center for Mothers 'Palma' Vitez (not active)
3. Association „Mladi Romi“ Vitez (not active),
4. Women's Association - Center for Mothers 'Izvor života' Vitez,
5. Roma Association 'Ternipe' Vitez (not active)

Association 'Mladi Romi' Vitez was founded on the initiative of a large number of Roma youth. A great deal of discrimination against Roma, especially young people, poor education, non-education, begging, as well as uncomfortable Roma life were incentives for founding the Association. It was also a way to initiate establishment of the folklore section. Within the

association there is the Cultural-Artistic Society 'Roma', which complements the activism of the association.

The basic constructive goals of this association are:

- education of Roma youth (through the introduction of their own cultural patterns and basic categories of different cultural identities);
- fight against discrimination (introduction of problems of a marginalized group in the context of equality);
- inclusion in the social, cultural and social domains of coexistence (assuming certain positions in the sphere of public life).

General assessment regarding the activism of Roma youth in the target municipalities is that it is in the early stage of development and capacity, and that it is necessary to increase activities aimed at strengthening activism of Roma youth at the local level.

### 3. Laws that improve Roma inclusion - recommendations for improvement

The basic framework for the protection of minorities in the context of the fight against discrimination is contained within the European Convention on Human Rights and Freedoms, and the European Convention on the Protection of the Rights of National Minorities of the Council of Europe<sup>13</sup>. The legal framework and provisions for the protection of the rights of national minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in addition to these international sources, constitute the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>14</sup> and laws on the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities<sup>15</sup>. On the basis of these legal sources, laws and policies that provide practical protection for members of minorities, in this case for the Roma population, are being created. In order to improve the social inclusion of the Roma minority, in addition to the general legal framework, direct support is ensured by the application of sectoral laws that provide various rights such as employment, education, housing, health and social care. Ensuring rights in these areas are an integral part of social inclusion for members of the Roma minority. The adoption and implementation of these laws is the responsibility of the Entities: Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in the Cantons and the Brcko District of BiH.

**In the field of fight with discrimination against Roma,** the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination in Bosnia and Herzegovina has an important impact. Part of the anti-discrimination policy is the process of harmonizing the existing laws and policies of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the laws and policies of the European Union in the areas of non-discrimination,<sup>16</sup> the fundamental rights of freedom of movement of people and the rights of the child,<sup>17</sup> as well as in the field of social policy,<sup>18</sup> in accordance with the values established in the framework of the Revised European Social Charter<sup>18</sup> and other European legal sources, which also form part of the legal framework that has a direct impact on the situation of Roma. The Anti-Discrimination Law is very important and provides an effective mechanism for the protection against discrimination. With the values and possibilities of protection against discrimination, it is necessary to know as many Roma as possible.

The Law on the Protection of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a basic regulation that regulates the rights of national minorities, including Roma. Given that this law regulates the different rights of national minorities, it is necessary to improve in the coming period provisions that specify the obligations of all levels of government with regard to providing support in the context of Roma inclusion, with the aim of treating support for this population as legal help, and not only help through programs.

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<sup>13</sup> Bosnia and Herzegovina signed and ratified on February 24, 2000

<sup>14</sup> Available at: [http://www.mpr.gov.ba/biblioteka/USTAV\\_BOSNE\\_I\\_HERCEGOVINE\\_bos.pdf](http://www.mpr.gov.ba/biblioteka/USTAV_BOSNE_I_HERCEGOVINE_bos.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Law on the Protection of Rights of Members of National Minorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina ('Official Gazette of BiH', No. 12/03 and 76/05); Law on the Protection of the Rights of Members of National Minorities of Republika Srpska ('Official Gazette of Republika Srpska' No. 2/2005); Law on the Protection of the Rights of Members of National Minorities of the FBiH ('Official Gazette of the Federation of BiH', No. 56/08),

<sup>16</sup> Information on the EU legal framework on non-discrimination available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/law/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/law/index_en.htm)

<sup>17</sup> COM (2011) 60, the EU child rights agenda, available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/children/docs/com\\_2011\\_60\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/children/docs/com_2011_60_en.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Available at: <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3ae6b3678.pdf>

#### **4. Recommendations for improving the implementation of selected public policies and strategies for the Roma population and the implementation of the Local Action Plans**

Based on the analysis of public policies, the strategies of local plans related to the Roma population, recommendations are:

- 1. It is necessary to initiate the process of linking public policies and strategies that are directly related to the Roma population with other sector strategies and policies in order to give new dimensions to social inclusion of Roma.***
- 2. In order to improve legislation (especially the law on minorities), it is necessary to initiate specific guidelines on forms of support (affirmative measures) that respect the increased needs of vulnerable groups, in this case Roma, in order to ensure the continuity of the activities of the competent authorities.***
- 3. Improve the system of coordination of local authorities with the non-governmental sector and representatives of international organizations by initiating a networking system in BIH of all involved actors in the implementation of activities for inclusion of Roma.***
- 4. Continue with the processes of international cooperation and promotion of regional cooperation on Roma inclusion issues with the countries of the Western Balkans and EU member states.***
- 5. We recommend the establishment of priority measures for each year individually in the framework of the action plans for Roma at the national and local levels, starting from 2017 and by scheduling the budget according to the priorities.***
- 6. A comprehensive mapping process is needed to gather accurate information on the number of Roma, places they live in, housing needs, employment needs, problems in access to employment, education needs and other social needs by local governments in communities where Roma population lives and to design a process that will include more precise amounts of planned budget funds in priority areas at the beginning of each fiscal year.***
- 7. Strengthen cooperation with Roma associations and harmonize a common platform for cooperation, which should be aimed at involving Roma associations in the process of documenting the needs of Roma, as well as other Roma inclusion activities.***
- 8. We recommend the creation of modalities for better cooperation with international donors and development organizations in order to achieve the objectives and measures from the Strategy and Action Plans for Roma for the period up to 2020, especially in order to obtain comprehensive data on the total funds spent, the purpose of the funds and the number of users of funds and potential plans for the future.***

9. ***Local levels of government should approach the redefinition of LAP - by approaching realistic planning in a way that, based on already identified problems and designed LAP measures, define activities according to opportunities using a new model of the action plan for the Roma by 2020.***
10. ***Modify the approach of action towards the sectors of protection in the way that the state and local plans work on the realization of synergistic measures, especially the measures of employment of Roma with other measures in the field of health, education and social care.***
11. ***The role of Roma youth should be recognized and enhanced by local authorities. The local authorities should target, subsidize and finance the activities of Roma youth. In this regard, it is necessary to devise a special model which will suggested to the local authorities.***

## **6. List of Abbreviations**

BIH- Bosnia and Herzegovina

CMBIH – Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina

MHRR- Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BIH

EU- European Union

CE- Council of Europe

RCC- Regional Cooperation Council

OSCE- Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe

UNICEF- The United Nations Children's Fund

LAP- Local Action Plan for Roma

RAP BIH - Revised Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina

MICS - Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) on Roma in cooperation with the BIH

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